

WIL Intersects Everything

Comparative Analysis of Diverse Types of
WIL
across Two Post-Secondary Institutions and
Implications for WIL Practice

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Lands Acknowledgement

We are gathered during this session on Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc territory, situated within the unceded ancestral lands of the Secwépemc Nation.

We also acknowledge that those in the room likely come from unceded and traditional territories of many First Nations whose peoples have been stewards of the lands from time immemorial, including the territories we call home – those of the x^wməθk^wəy'əm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.



➤ **Capilano University**

- **funded in 1968**
- **enrolls approximately 12,700 students each year in 90 different programs**
- **in 2019 CapU Lonsdale campus opens**
- **opens CapU Squamish campus in 2024**
- **opens the Fulmer Family Centre for Childcare Studies in 2025**
- **35% in bachelor programs, 43% in diplomas/ associate degrees, and 12% in certificate or short credentials**

Timeline

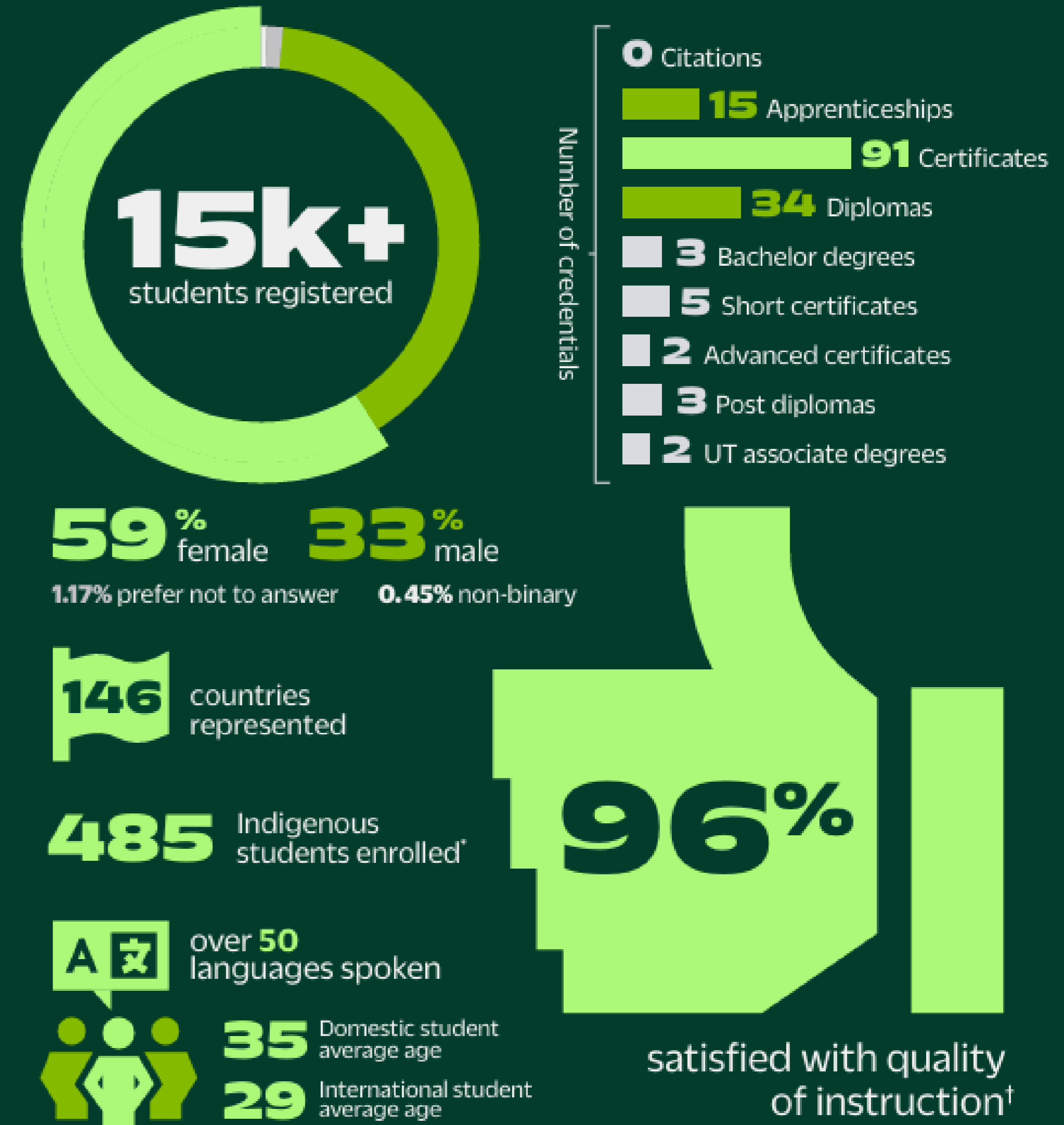
- **1880** – 1-room school on the future site of VCC in downtown Vancouver
- **1949** – Vancouver Vocational Institute built on same site (houses Vancouver’s first high school) – expanded in 1964 to include the Vancouver School of Art
- **1965** – becomes Vancouver City College, BC’s first autonomous community college and the 2nd in Canada (expands to 2 campuses) ***Official VCC anniversary**
- **1970** – adds the Langara campus
- **1974** – Officially Vancouver Community College (1979 – Vancouver School of Art separates to become Emily Carr, 1994 – Langara campus becomes a separate school)
- **2019** to present – Campus master plan (will include affordable social housing, clean energy infrastructure, and expanded community services)
- **2023** – secured **\$271 million** investment from provincial government to build the Centre for Clean Energy and Automotive Innovation (scheduled completion 2028)

Campuses

2 campuses in the heart of the city. On-campus facilities – services provided by students as part of applied skills programming:

- Two gourmet restaurants
- Cafeterias
- Asian culinary buffet
- Auto shop
- Salon and spa
- Dental services
- Bakery

VCC student demographics



* CDW Oct 2023, Institution Demographics, FY 2023-25
† 2023 BC Student Outcomes Survey of former Diploma, Associate Degree and Certificate Students, Trades, and Apprenticeship; data prepared by BC Stats

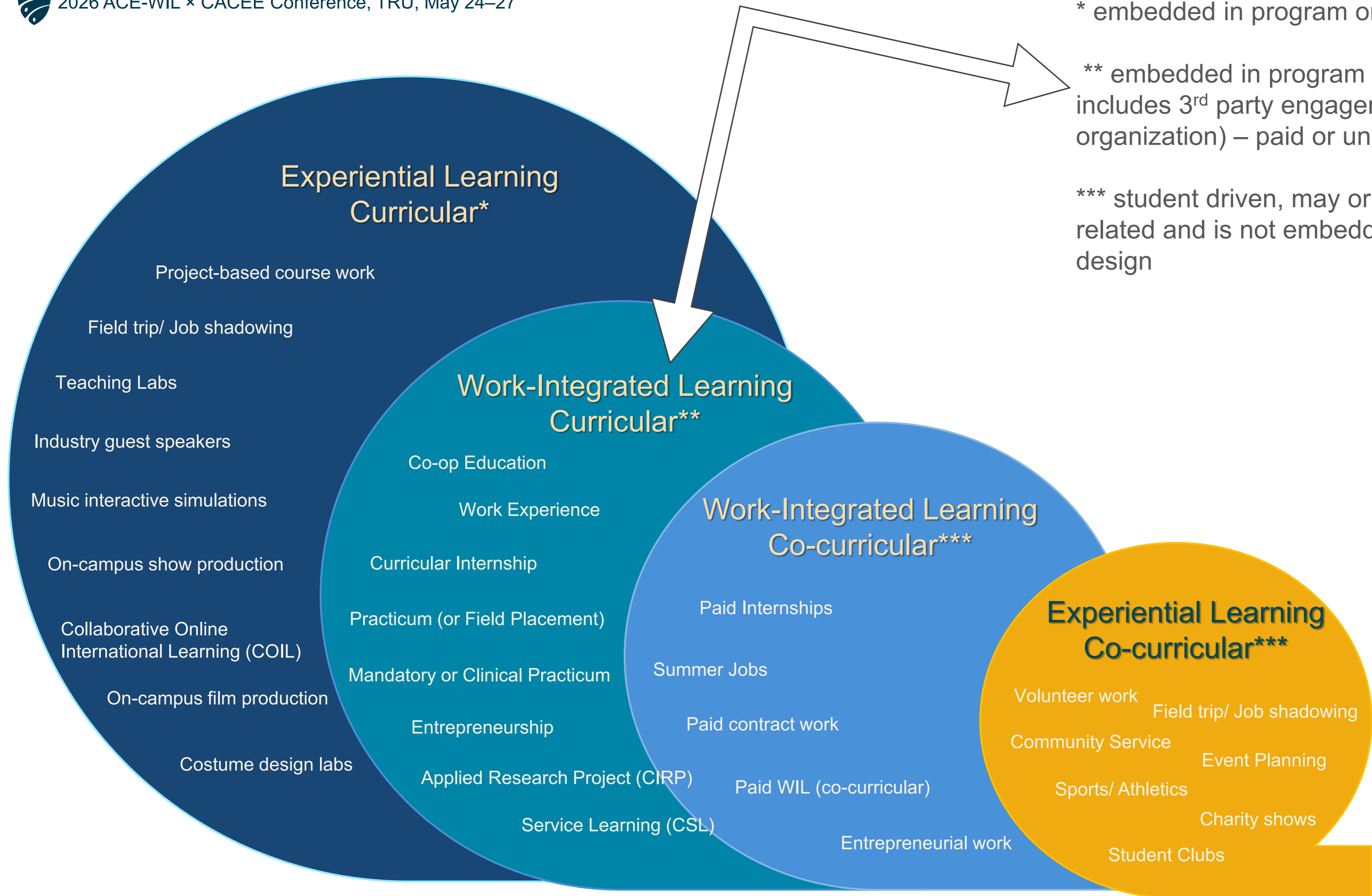
CapU WIL Overview

CapU counted **1,760** WIL experiences over the past academic year, including co-op, work experiences, field placements, internships, and professional practicums.

- **8 types of Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) at CapU**

(following CEWIL Canada)





* embedded in program or course design

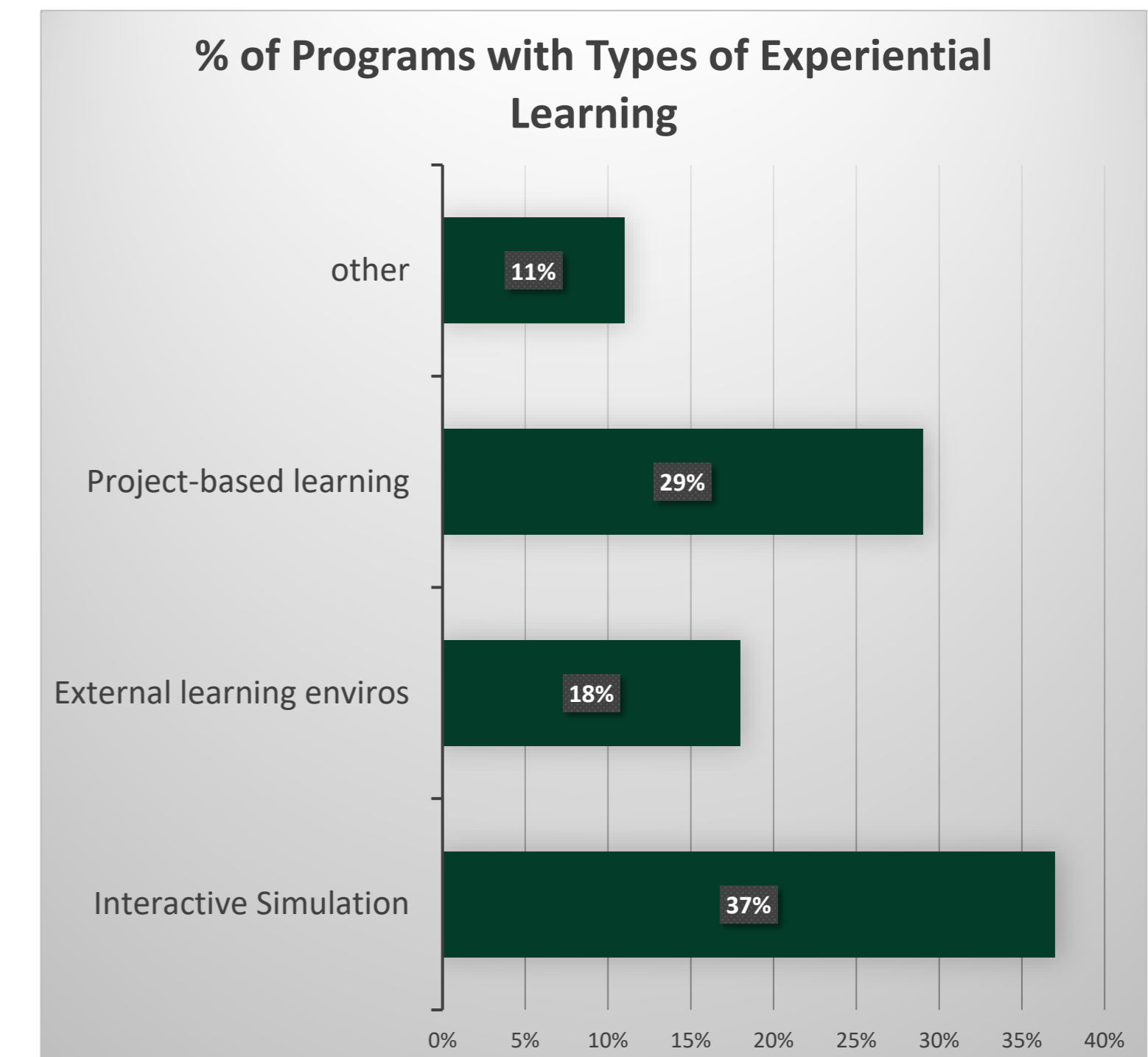
** embedded in program or course design and includes 3rd party engagement (partner or host organization) – paid or unpaid

*** student driven, may or may not be program related and is not embedded in program or course design

VCC WIL Overview

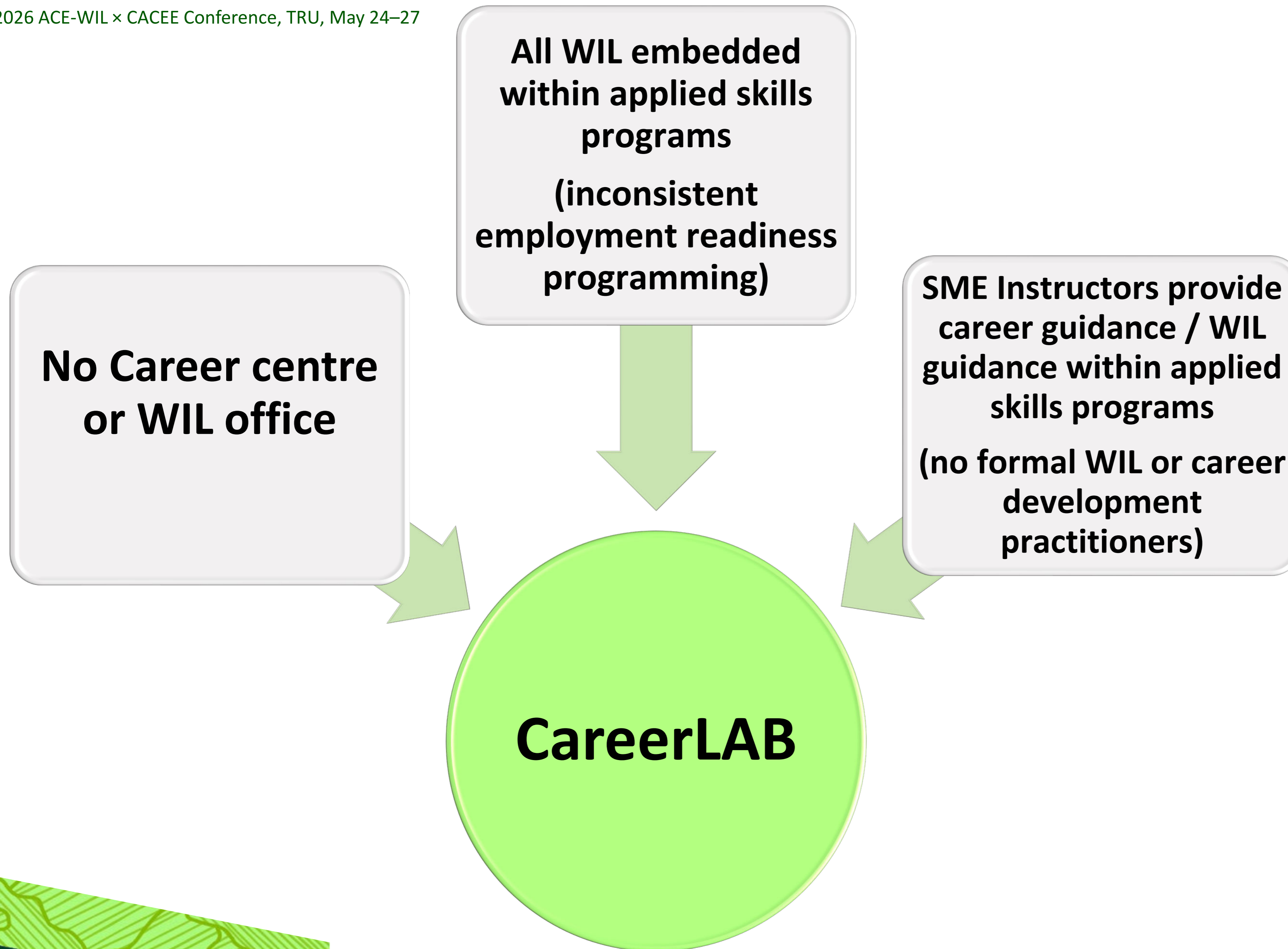
- 100% curricular
- 1007-1900 placements/year
- 60-71% of applied skills programs include WIL
- Intended as direct pathways to employment
- Embedded as required component of cohort-based applied skills programming (end of program)
- Employers primarily sourced from teacher connections
- **No co-op – Primary WIL Types:**
 - ✓ **Work experience (mostly 3-4 wks, full-time, unpaid)**
 - ✓ **mandatory professional practicums/clinical placements**
 - ✓ **Apprenticeship**
 - ✓ **Service Learning**

(term 'practicum' widely used for most WIL)



The story behind CapU WIL

-  Jan 2024 – starting from a decentralized landscape, a small university wide WIL unit was formed
-  Aug 2024 – unit moved under the office of Academic & Provost
-  a vision started to form under the guidance of the Associate Vice-President Academic, with consultations from two WIL committees
-  focus shift to partnership development, acting as a central hub that connects all faculties, optimizes logistics and networking by engaging partners through one central point of contact
-  Apr 2025 – work towards a WIL framework has began and a university wide consultation plan was developed
-  Mar 2026 – a WIL policy and procedure were implemented, allowing us to further expand our WIL ecosystem



The Story behind VCC WIL



The Role of VCC CareerLAB

(established 2017)

- Professional development for faculty & staff
- Curates and develops CD and WIL theory & standards informed resources
- Consults on WIL programming design and delivery
- Pilots innovative and collaborative career guidance & WIL activities in close collaboration with departments
- Advocates for all **career readiness and WIL programming** and related administrative practices across the institution to be informed by professional career development and WIL theory and best practice.
- Initiatives engage both individual faculty/staff, departmental units, and wider PSI structures (ex: EDCO, risk management, etc..)

Managed through the VCC Partnership Development Office – under the umbrella of the VP Students Services and Community Development (team of administrators and support staff, no faculty).

CareerLAB helps VCC faculty & staff to embed professional career development and work-integrated learning theory and practice into existing and new career guidance/employment readiness and WIL activities, resources, and programming for students.

Note: No direct student service, except through limited collaborations with VCC departments.

The WIL Influencers

WIL Types Activity

small group discussion

2026 ACE-WIL × CACEE Conference, TRU, May 24–27

The Three WIL Models – our definitions

Decentralized:
individual academic departments or faculties manage their own WIL programs, with little or collaboration.

Semi-centralized:
central view on overarching systems and individual departments oversee field-specific activities.

Centralized:
a central office manages all types of WIL (co-op, field placements, internships) for the entire institution.

CapU: why a semi-centralized model?



combines the strengths of both; uses a central unit for broad admin tasks and leaves specific WIL decisions to the faculties

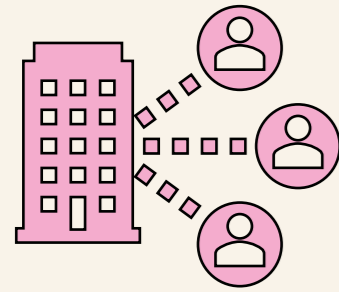


a central WIL unit handles university-wide initiatives (standardized reporting, legal contracts, quality frameworks) while faculties manage industry-specific training and mentorship



supports departments to develop and integrate quality WIL that best fits each program





allows students to work in interdisciplinary teams on real-world issues by facilitating the integration of community and industry research & projects into courses



amplifies WIL experiences for students through WILCAP, an internal CapU program, launched by WIL and PCD



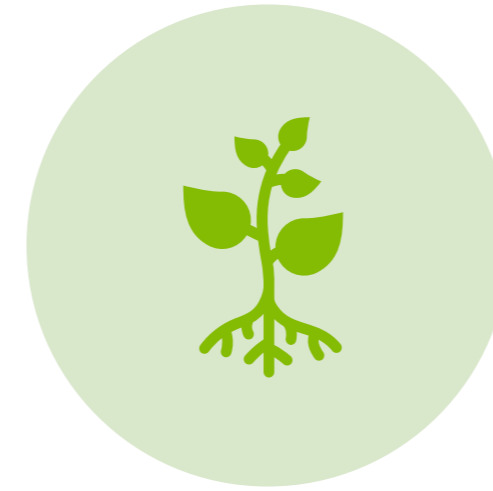
provides funding application support and WIL grants/stipends distribution and

CapU – benefits of a semi-centralized WIL ecosystem

The VCC Experience – Benefits of a Decentralized Model



Experiences highly tailored to specific discipline



Facilitates diverse forms of WIL (community & industry research & projects, etc.)



Professional requirement– ex: mandatory professional practicums/clinical placements and apprenticeship.



Supports strong industry connections (faculty actively involved in industry)



Students supported by faculty & staff they already know and trust rather than orient to another PSI unit.

CapU – challenges to support a semi-centralized model



resources/ time allocated to collaboration and working on a university-wide WIL framework



building comprehensive communication processes with each Faculty



socializing the framework, identifying the types of WIL, and building trust



- Inconsistent terminology & practices and lack of shared definitions create barriers to WIL expansion through access to external resources
- Hinders data informed WIL decision-making across the institution
- No central point-of-contact and inconsistent practices for employer and industry partners
- Inefficiencies as departments duplicate similar programming
- Administrative duties unnecessarily fall to faculty
- Critical WIL components often overlooked & under resourced (employment readiness & employer engagement)
- Challenges comprehensive understanding of WIL and Career Development theory and best practice in programming (no formal experts with mandates to guide programming)

Decentralized Model Main Challenges

The VCC experience

WIL Models Activity

small group discussion

Comparative Analysis

Intersecting Factors in WIL Practice

A. Navigating diverse types of WIL

Cap U

- WIL facilitates diverse types of WIL, such as partnered projects and community service-learning, university-wide
- Improved, one-stop communication and consistent processes
- Value-added to logistic supports, partner matching, and data management
- Goals: facilitate interdisciplinary partnered projects and support the development of more work experience terms

VCC

- Formal definition for WIL and definitions for relevant WIL types – now required to be used for all new and revised courses/programs
- Added WIL specific questions to program review/renewal forms
- Developing a WIL framework to inform governance structures on WIL best practice when reviewing and approving programming
- PD for staff to build awareness of diverse forms of WIL

Intersecting Factors in WIL Practice

B. Institutional structural context

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- WIL is reporting directly to the Associate Vice-President Academic and is part of the Academic & Provost Office
- WIL is working closely with Academic Initiatives and Planning (AIP), the Centre for Teaching Excellence (T&L), Risk Management, CDC, and two (2) WIL Committees
- Few schools use Orbis to manage their WIL experiences – we're working on adding a module for each school
- A university-wide committee ensures each Faculty participates in the WIL ecosystem

VCC

- Collaborated with Security & Risk Management office to add WIL agreements to new Contracts Administration policy (central storage of signed agreements & use of a vetted template)
- Added CareerLAB to the consultation list for new program design prior to presentation at curriculum cttee
- Created shared site to collate all WIL and employment readiness resources & best practices (CareerLAB, SharePoint site), collaborating with Centre for Teaching & Learning to create cross links
- Slow encouragement to use Symplicity to manage WIL process, contacts, and placement info

Intersecting Factors & Top Wins

C. Socializing WIL practice across all collaborators

Cap U

- Build a clear collaboration roadmap to include all university areas intersected by WIL
- Involve all players in WIL reality to increase recruitment, retention, and ensure job readiness at graduation time
- Use standardized language and definitions university-wide to streamline curricular WIL data sharing
- WILCAP – amplify all types of WIL experiences for CapU students within university operations/support units

VCC

- Intentionally engaging cross-institution structures that influence WIL: Curriculum and EDCO cttees, Centre for Teaching and Learning, International Education, Quality Assurance Cttee, E-Learning, and Advisors
- Focus on alleviating pain points to build champions
- Offering to pilot activities to incentive change, demonstrate value, and foster allies
- Engaging at different levels – teaching faculty, leadership, service units – and encouraging shared dialogue

➤ **WILCAP**
➤ **internal WIL experience program**

CapU collaboration example:

(WIL, PCD, academic units, operations & support)



- **elevates the availability of WIL experiences on campus**
- **leverages all types of curricular WIL, including applied projects**

Resources: from decentralized to semi-centralized

- a central unit in the Academic & Provost office to reach curricular WIL university-wide
- an internal WIL framework
- WIL specialized resources under Teaching & Learning
- data analytics capacity and support
- room for funding & grants application support
- a one-stop process for partnership outreach and development



WIL Intersects Everything

Institutions

teaching departments

international
education

registrar

IT

human resources

governance ctees

facilities

deans/directors

student services

risk management

curriculum development

support staff

business developers

▶ diverse WIL does not always fit easily with one particular side of the institution, especially in decentralized systems, with limited or no dedicated staff

Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employment readiness, evaluation/assessment• Faculty/teaching staff?

Logistics
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contacts and info management• Support staff?

Business Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employer Engagement & risk management• Administration?

▶ all those involved with the program and curriculum development pathway must understand basic elements of WIL best practices

▶ recognize the opportunity and build structures for collaboration across institutional silos

WIL Intersects Everything

beyond Institutions

academia
industry
technology
non-profits
human resources
municipalities
facilities
small businesses
NGOs
global warming
supply chains
life perspectives

Elevate quality WIL for our students

- ▶ dedicate resources to WIL program development
- ▶ streamline communication channels with WIL champions university-wide
- ▶ revive external advisory committees and reimagine partnership development
- ▶ use enhanced collaboration, clear frameworks, and strong data analytics

Thank you for joining us!

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