

Transcript for ACE-WIL Town Hall: Talent MATCH and More!

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HELENA PRINS:

Hello, everyone. My name is Helena Prins, and I'm an advisor here with BCcampus, and I'm also on the professional development committee of ACE-WIL. I'm so glad that you decided to join us for this lunch hour. We are recording this session and the recording will be shared with all registrants, as well as on the ACE-WIL website. Kim Pham, one of the ACE-WIL board of director members, will start our gathering in the right way. Thank you, Kim.

KIM PHAM:

Hi, everyone. My name is Kim and I am the co-op staff at Selkirk College. I am very honoured to be able to deliver the land acknowledgment today. This is my first time, actually, so please bear with me. Selkirk College acknowledges that we live and instruct upon the traditional and unceded territories of the Sinixt, the Sylix, the Ktunaxa, and the Secwepmc peoples. In order to perform the land acknowledgment today, I just wanted to share with you a little bit of a story. I went to an Elder and asked him for help to help me pronounce the name. And after multiple times trying, he said Kim, you're getting it. And the fact that you're trying that's what matters. I think that the fact that we are trying towards reconciliation is what matters. Thank you for having me today. I will be giving it back to Anna.

ANNA JUBILO:

Thanks very much, Kim for that land acknowledgment. Yes. Thank you all for joining us today. I'm very happy to introduce our Talent MATCH team. Debby Reiss, who's the project manager for the Talent MATCH program. Miranda Maslany who's the non-profit career coordinator for Talent 4 Non-Profits and Alana Hibbert, the career coach for Talent MATCH program. They're going to be giving us a bit of a summary of what the program has been able to accomplish through the funding provided by the ministry from COWIL to funding. And with that, I'm just going to pass it on. And I believe, is it Debby that's going to start us off? Is that right? Okay. Thanks very much, Debby.

DEBBY REIS:

Yes, Thanks so much. Give that a moment and I'll pull up my script. Great. Yes. Hi everyone and thank you so much to BCcampus for hosting us today and for everyone for attending. Again, my name is Debby Reese and I'm the project manager for the Talent MATCH program. And I also want to introduce you to Talent MATCH's career coach Alana Hibbert. She provides resources for students and to Miranda Maslany who has been our non-profit career coordinator for our sister program, Talent 4 Non-Profits, which supports non-profit organizations across BC in general, as well as the students looking for work in the sector.

So Talent MATCH and Talent 4 Non-Profits are considered a joint project. And we are one of the many COWIL funded projects that have been funded through the Ministry of Advanced

Education and Skills Training. Next slide, please. Please bear with me as I get very thirsty when we're doing these. So Talent MATCH kicked off in early 2021 as a collaboration between the BC Museums Association, the BC Alliance for Arts and Culture, go2HR, which is the BC tourism and hospitality industry's human resources association, as well as ACE-WIL. Next slide.

For those who may not know, MATCH actually stands for museums, arts, tourism, culture and hospitality, and Talent MATCH's main goal has been to increase awareness amongst MATCH employers about co-ops and other forms of work-integrated learning placements. And to support organizations from these sectors to access student talent by providing information about funding, connections to schools as well as resources for recruitment, onboarding and more, and through one-on-one support. Next slide.

We're in I guess we're wrapping up phase two of the COWIL funding. And in that phase two, Talent MATCH expanded to support students considering work in the MATCH sectors, as well as extending to non-profit organizations more generally, which falls under the Talent 4 Non-Profits brand. The next slide.

So phase two started in October of 2021. And since then, we've presented or hosted 15 online events. These have included funding sessions with Canada Summer Jobs, three different student work placement program partners, and a Young Canada Works partner. We also presented discussions with students, alumni who've done work placements in arts and culture and tourism roles. We did a presentation on research into youth leadership and participation in cultural organizations, as well as general information sessions about how the program works and how to hire students. Miranda attended ECO Impact 2022 and the Royal Roads Career Day, where she was able to network on behalf of Talent 4 Non-Profits. And meanwhile, Alana and I were able to host tables at the BC Tourism and Hospitality conference as well as Pacific Contact, which is a performing arts conference. We're also just back from the Art BC conference that just happened over the weekend and the Volunteer BC conference. And we'll also be attending the joint BC Museums Association and Heritage BC conference next month, as well as the Vantage Point's Boss Conference mid-November. And both of those, you can still register for. The next slide, please.

In addition to all of those events and webinars, we created about 15 resource documents as well. These included student-focused resources ranging from networking guides, tips for finding your own work placement, sources of free or low-cost training, how to be a good mentee and tips on finding housing. Resources for employers included tips on successful onboarding and off boarding, how to be a good mentor and information on wage subsidies. We also built sector-specific recruitment guides that outlined programs that employers can recruit students who are studying the fine and performing arts. GLAM, which is galleries, libraries, archives and museums, and the tourism and hospitality sector. We also have built a recruitment guide focused on marketing and design rules. And one that's in the works focused on business administration. And we really encourage you to have a look at these resources and to share them with the employers and students you work with. They're currently found on the Talent

MATCH, Talent 4 Non-Profits and the Talent MATCH for Students pages on the ACE-WIL site, as well as in the resources sections of the website. Next slide, please.

So overall, I would describe our project as an awareness and education campaign. And I want to send a special thanks to our partners the BC Alliance for Arts and Culture, Go2 HR and the BC Museums Association, who shared our content regularly through their social media channels and newsletters. Other umbrella organizations also shared our content, such as the different tourism associations across the province, multiple art sector newsletters, as well as Vantage Point and other non-profit service organizations. So that's just an example of some of the images. Yes, we also managed ad campaigns on LinkedIn and through Charity Village. And these directed people to ACE-WIL's post an opportunity portal. And we're currently running a media campaign in student newspapers directing students to the resources we created. Suffice it to say we've been pretty busy and we know it's been working. Next slide, please.

So in this graph, you can see the number of positions that were posted through ACE-WIL's Post an Opportunity portal, which is a great tool for employers to post jobs at multiple schools at once. You can see phase one of the program, which was February to September of 2021, resulted in a big jump to the number of positions posted. For MATCH postings, this was approximately a 569% increase over 2019 numbers, which is that first column there. See, I don't like to compare to 2020 because we all know what happened in 2020. So I like to compare it to 2019. I feel it's a little more fair. And you can see in phase two, which is the last column there, there has been even more of a jump. Part of that is because phase two does cover a longer time period. But I also believe it's because the momentum of the Talent MATCH program in phase one, as well as the addition of Talent 4 Non-Profits, which you can see by looking at the orange section there. This only accounts for non-profits that are not part of the MATCH sector. So the orange is non-profits that are not MATCHed, and the green is MATCHed sector, which includes non-profits as well as profits in those sectors. The next slide, please.

So here you can see this growth again; however, it's broken down by year rather than by the phase of the program. Nevertheless, you can see that the growth of MATCH and non-profit jobs. And just to remind you, this is reflective of the number of positions posted and not postings, as many postings promote hiring more than one person in any given position. Next slide, please.

So part of phase two for us included working with Majid Khoury and his team on a qualitative research project. So they conducted in-depth interviews with employers and students from across MATCH and non-profit sectors with reach across the province. The results helped us decide what resources to build, which we want you all to access and share, as I already mentioned. But what we want to do today is share some of the findings from that study, as well as our observations from the past two years in hopes that you can take away some useful information and implement this knowledge into your own practices. So next slide, please.

This slide is a summary of their findings and I want to dig in a little deeper into a couple of these. So one finding from the research was surprising is that most of the employers who were

part of the study said they had been co-op students themselves. And that was part of their motivation to hire a student. They saw this as a way to give back to the community rather than as a means of succession planning at their own organization. Next slide, please.

So while Talent MATCH couldn't take advantage of this, it makes sense for WIL coordinators to expand their reach to alumni to see if there are opportunities to grow student work placements through them. The next slide.

So funding and flexibility around funding was also identified as an issue. Accessing funding is an obvious barrier for non-profit organizations, which includes many arts and culture organizations. One issue is that there's a lack of funding programs that would allow organizations to hire outside of the summer semester. Both the Canada Summer Jobs program and the Young Canada Works program are meant for summer placements. Meanwhile, the SWPPs are available year-round, but because of their net new requirement, it isn't a program that most small organizations can access regularly. A growth year over year for them is just not sustainable. So while the SWPP is great for their first application, it's unlikely they're able to access it again the next year. I know that CEWIL is working on advocacy to do away with the net new requirement. And this would help these smaller and non-profit organizations a lot.

I think we're all well aware of the struggles around placing international students and the fact that they're not eligible under most of the funding programs. We ourselves hired an international student to be our design and marketing assistant last semester. And he researched funding programs where international students are eligible and found one that was interesting at UBC Okanagan. It provides a wage subsidy of up to 50% to a maximum of \$5,000 to hire an international student from UBC Okanagan. Funding for this grant is provided from UBC's international student financial assistance and awards budget and is 100% funded through international undergraduate student tuition fees. We wondered if this is a model other schools could use to support employers to hire international students.

So since many of the employers we support are from small arts and cultural organizations, another funding flexibility issue is around having to hire students as employees. Both the SWPP and Canada Summer Jobs program require that students are hired to staff. And many schools also have this as a requirement for student work placements. Hence, this becomes a barrier to organizations that are simply not set up to have staff and handle payroll deductions. Even if they're able to provide mentorship and the full number of hours. I think it's also important to note that gig and contract work is really common for arts workers. I'm sure if you speak to most working artists, they have multiple contracts on the go and they would be considered self-employment when they do their tasks, are self-employed when they do their taxes. And this is especially the case when you're just starting out in that industry. We suggest that post-secondary institutions offer flexibility around accepting contract positions for WIL placements and further offer self-employment training on managing contract work and preparing their taxes, especially for students who are training to be artists. Finally, another suggestion for flexibility to come out of the research is to offer students sharing arrangements. I know many schools allow part-time co-ops that fall over eight months rather than full-time for one

semester. But frankly, many organizations just don't have enough work or funding to allow this. As such, additional flexibility could be a student working two part-time jobs over one semester, or possibly having two organizations share a student employee with the students splitting their time between the two. So next slide, please.

So when it comes to the student jobs themselves, employers expressed confusion regarding what is suitable for student work placement. They're not sure what tasks to assign or what level of responsibility is reasonable to expect. The funny thing is often when I would speak to WIL coordinators and ask them to provide examples of suitable rules or projects, many of them just said anything. And I know from experience that some of this depends on the student and their previous work experiences. But it's nevertheless a challenge to figure that out when you're planning to host a student. We created a job posting template to help employers with this. But the research actually suggested that they would appreciate having example job postings to draw from. Some observations from the employers who hired students is that they tend to be lacking and soft skills. They're often missing customer service experience or the experience of working with a team in an office, or lacking problem-solving skills. They cite that they seem to be too academically focused. Even though students are being seen as tech savvy, they often don't know how to manage their email or work calendar. Alana is actually working on a guide to help with the e-mail management issue. But it would be useful to encourage students to get work experience outside of co-ops, including retail work, food service, and getting involved in student organizations. And most importantly, to include that in their resumes and rely on those experiences as a source for answers during their interview questions. Next slide, please.

I want to highlight the challenge employers experience when they're looking for information on hiring a student. It's really, really difficult to find information about co-op and WIL programs on many websites for post-secondary institutions. And often when you do find that information, it's targeted to students rather than employers. And sometimes when you e-mail, especially if you reach out to a specific department you think might have information on a program, no one responds to your email. So part of the solution to this is updating your websites to make it easier for employers to find information on how to hire a student. But part of this is also connecting with people across the institution so that they know how to direct questions about hiring. And also going back to that academic bubble, to get out of that academic bubble and practise some good customer service when people reach out to you looking for information.

Another solution we think is ACE-WIL itself. In putting together the recruitment guides that I mentioned, I learned that information on WIL programs is hard to find. But ACE-WIL is a great place for all of that information to live. But WIL connections at each school do need to update their pages on the ACE-WIL site regularly. And what would be even better is if a school could host a database of all the WIL options around the province. And if this could be accessible to employers looking for information on different programs, what sorts of roles those students could fill, the timing and duration of those placements and who to contact for more information. The next issue we want to talk about is housing and I'll pass things off to Miranda to cover that.

MIRANDA MASLANY:

Hi, everyone. Thanks so much for being here today. My name is Miranda Maslany. I'm going to cover an issue that came up both in our research, but also talking one-on-one to employers. And through some of the Q&A conversations we had in our webinars. So as we all know, the housing crisis is worsening over all. This is definitely not a student-specific issue, but something that I've noticed is listening to the news that it's been coming up more specifically in a student context. So it's students are having challenges in finding, finding housing, even in the context of just moving to a new city to go to school. There is a case where CBC interviewed a student who said, I have to defer my program because I couldn't find housing, or students who are living in vans are coming up with really creative solutions in order to be able to live in the city where they're studying. So it's becoming a real issue. And of course, this is amplified in a work-integrated learning context, where a student needs to move for a very short period of time, often to a new place where they may not know the lay of the land. So it's just a real, a real challenge. And we are working on a couple of different kind of things to think about here.

So one of them is that helping students make sure they have all the tools that they can to search for housing. So giving them the best possible chance. I've started building a resource on the housing search process. And I'm actually going to leave a link in the chat here. I would love to have your feedback on it. I've had a couple of people look at it and I've used my research and gotten a better understanding of what would be important to include and resource like this. But because this housing issue is become such an issue for students, I really want to make sure it's the most robust resource possible. And my role is ending soon, but the Talent MATCH team will be supporting the design and getting it up onto the ACE-WIL website. So please have a look in the coming months for that, as it'd be great to share with students that are in that position.

I also want to say that my biggest hope is that ACE-WIL members will continue to talk about this issue and develop opportunities for research, collaboration and advocacy on student housing. In particular, I think there'd be so much value in ACE-WIL members convening for a town hall or similar event to develop possible solutions. The people that I've spoken with during my time at ACE-WIL there's a lot of legacy knowledge around housing issues for students, as well as resources that have been developed in the past. So I feel like if there's more opportunities for cross collaboration, there could be some really cool solutions. Whether it's at the advocacy level, developing more resources for students or collaborating and partnering with other organizations that support students. So I'll leave it at that. And I'll pass things over to Alana for the student perspective.

ALANA HIBBERT:

Hello everyone. Thanks, Miranda. Gaining a better understanding of the perspective of students who are interested in working in museums, arts, tourism, culture, and hospitality has been an important goal of Talent MATCH for students, as well as obtaining greater insight about the barriers for students looking for jobs and careers in these sectors. The research project, in conjunction with my individual discussions with students as well as outreach to WIL coordinators across the province, indicated some interesting takeaways about student interests for WIL in the MATCH sector. We learned that students tend to be more familiar with WIL as an

option in programs such as science and business. And are perhaps less familiar with the benefits of WIL for degrees outside of these areas. The exception to this occurs with students who are enrolled in academic programs that are directly related or applicable to MATCH. In which case, the WIL component is often a draw for these students who are already entering these programs with prior interests to working in these fields.

For students who are enrolled in academic programs that aren't specifically geared towards eventual careers in museums, arts, tourism, culture, and hospitality, however, there appears to be less interest and understanding about working in these areas. Also affecting student interest in these sectors are concerns about wages and the sustainability of careers in these areas. We heard from students who questioned the benefits of pursuing WIL placements and MATCH, particularly when the wages offered were often equivalent to other entry-level positions. Students sometimes framed their concerns about wages and career sustainability as being at odds with other important factors in their decision-making about employment, such as their desires to pursue work opportunities that make an impact and to work for organizations that are in alignment with their personal values. Next slide, please.

There appears to be a need for continued conversations with students about how MATCH jobs might fit into their long-term career goals and plans, as well as the need to continue connecting how WIL experiences in the MATCH sector can be used to leapfrog into other areas and employment for students. And thank you. I will pass it back to Debby.

DEBBY:

Great. Yeah. That's it for our presentation. So thanks again, everyone. I know that we have time for questions, so feel free to put your questions in the chat or you can, I think, raise your hand. Helena was saying. We can manage that as well. If you want to ask your question rather than type it out. Yes. I'm hoping there are questions. I mean, I appreciate the feedback about seeing the job postings have been getting to your organizations and that it's helping with placements. I'm glad to hear that.

I see there's one question saying I might have missed it, but wondering how much longer the program initiative will run. Yeah, we're actually scheduled to wrap up by the end of the year. So I will be working on basically after the two conferences we have coming up, as I mentioned, we are going to the BC Museums Association and Heritage BC conference at the beginning of November and Vantage Points BOSS conference mid-November. After that, my focus will be on updating all of our resources as much as possible before the end of the year. Then all those resources will stay up on the ACE-WIL website for people to access. And our partner organizations will continue to have that website listed on their own websites as a resource to hire students. Let's see more questions. Is there a plan to sustain this work after the ministry funding ends? That's a great question, Julie. Like I said, I know that the resources will remain on the website, so there will be some sustainability for that. Beyond that, I'm not quite sure. I don't know. Someone is just asking to share the UBC Okanagan subsidy. I can see if I can find it. And maybe if Miranda or Alana wants to take the next question while I dig around for that.

MIRANDA:

I see Claudia. Claudia, you have your hand up.

CLAUDIA:

Yeah. Thank you, Miranda. I just wanted to say, so I have many years of experience in this field. I was adding it up the other day, 28.5 years actually, and I have to say that this program, I have never seen such a success program of this type. Like the three of you, and I know that others that have been involved as well, kudos to each of you because the postings that have come in, the types of work, all of that, the advocacy that you've done for this sector. It's just, you've just done such a phenomenal job. Like I just am in great admiration and thanks for all of your work. So that's just what I wanted to say. Like really, really well done.

DEBBY:

Thank you so much. I'm glad to hear that. Thank you.

CLAUDIA:

And that's also a plug for the ministry. Send more money, keep this going because it would be a real tragedy if we can't keep this momentum up in some way. DEBBY: So I've just found the link. One sec. This is the link to the UBC Okanagan program. If you want to take a look, I think you do have to click through once you are on that link though to find, like it's a drop-down menu. If that's helpful. I see Julie asking about the UBC Okanagan contact was Jamie. I'm not sure. Like I said, we had our own student last semester and he dug into and contacted a bunch of people asking about school-specific funding for international students. So he's the one who found it. But yeah, I just thought it was such a great example and hopefully one that other schools could potentially look at as a way to fund international student placements themselves. And Julie, you've made a comment here about bringing this idea forward for advocacy through BC WIL Council. I'm wondering, maybe you could elaborate on that. I'm not quite sure what you meant by that.

JULIE:

Sure. Hi Debby, and thanks to the group. It's really exciting to hear your work. I think we're soul sisters. I was hired back in 2000 to start the Arts Co-op program at UBC. And we, about 30% of our students each year work in the MATCH sectors. And so, yeah, just lots of shared experience with you in innovating this kind of work in building resources. Debby, I was just thinking Claudia and I and perhaps others here, I can't see everyone, our school's reps, Anita, I see. Our school's reps on the BC Work Integrated Learning Council, which is an advocacy group. There's one representative from each school and together we work on different kinds of issues. So we're a standing committee of the association, BC WIL, ACE-WIL BC. And I just thought your work has essentially tested proof-of-concept with this coordinated approach to working with MATCH sectors on behalf of WIL students and all the BC post-secondaries. So I just thought this might be something that our council could pick up and think about because clearly you've had really excellent results. And I know Brian is probably thinking there's no more money from the ministry. And I know there's not right now, but maybe there's some ways forward. I think it'd be worth exploring. So maybe Claudia and I and Anita and Natasha also sits on the council. I

can't see, again I'm maybe missing some of our members that are in this town hall meeting, but we could do that for sure in the weeks ahead.

DEBBY:

I see some thumbs up there. I see Allison has put up her hand, and Allison's my supervisor.

ALLISON:

I just wanted to say that these three have just been such an amazing team. They have been, I've been providing management support, but it has been entirely really been the initiative and the energy and the passion that they've put into this. They've done such great work. And I do think that part of the sustainability piece like there's the ideas that are coming up about how to sustain the program itself in some form. But I also do think that they've created amazing resources and I suspect that many people, for whom these resources would be helpful, still don't know about them. I think that some kind of a communications plan around sharing these resources, you know, presenting at other places when the project is gone to share them and continue that dialogue, I think are things that can absolutely be done within, within our existing model in existing people to carry on some of that work. Because when you're in the middle of it, there's so much energy that goes into creating it and staying on top of that, that, the things that would allow it to flow forward over time. We haven't reached that yet, so I just wanted to say that and add my, add my thanks publicly to the great work of Debby, Miranda, and Alana.

DEBBY:

Thanks so much. I know that Anna and I have a plan, a loose plan to meet sometime in the next couple of months to talk about handover. Like, for example, I really, really want to push that database idea to you guys because I have spreadsheets of information from all the WIL coordinators that I've talked to you about all these different programs. And it's really hard to find that information without one-on-one meetings with them. And I'd really like to make that more available somehow rather than spreadsheets in my Google Docs. It looks like Julia's mentioning that CEWIL is also creating a database, which is fantastic. I mean, you should reach out to them and see if I can give them my information. Yeah. Any other questions before we hand things back? Right. Well, thanks again so much to everyone and thanks to Miranda and Alana for presenting their portions of this and thank you so much for all the praise. It makes me feel like I've done a really good job and it makes me feel proud. Thank you.

HELENA:

Thank you so much. Really inspired, as I said in the chat there, I just love the solution-focused strategy, focus suggestion, focus presentation that gives us an idea of how to move forward. So it's my pleasure to tell you a little bit more about our upcoming fall professional development opportunity. Some of you may have attended a session in May this year with Dr. Candy Ho, who spoke about our work in relation to the UN sustainability goals. That recording and resources are still available on our ACE-WIL website. Given the importance of that topic, and dare I say, currently palpable importance of that topic, our fall session. will also have a similar yet different theme. Just also know that you didn't have to attend the spring session to fit in with the fall PD. And we invite anyone to join the fall PD that's interested. The title for the fall PD is Learning and

Teaching the United Nations Sustainability Development Goals. The facilitators will guide you through exploring the goals, which ones are relevant to your teaching, and also facilitate and help you start some creation of strategies for building or enhancing meaningful learning experience in this area. And your facilitators for that session will be Crystal Tremblay from UVic. She's a CIFAL. Ken Josephson, also from UVic, and Rhianna Nagel, also one of our ACE-WIL ProD committee members. We're excited for that session. Please block off two hours on November 21st. We will have some opportunities for you to also connect with your peers from across the province. That's something that we always enjoy doing. And we will post the link to register in the chat. It was also provided to you yesterday in our ACE-WIL newsletter, so don't miss the opportunity for more learning and connecting with your peers across the province. So Anna, I'm handing it over to you for some final words.

ANNA:

Thanks so much, Helena, I've heard through the discussion today that many of you agree that this has been valuable hearing from our colleagues, from Talent MATCH about the projects, a number of the insights they gained through it and what they've been able to achieve. I heard a number of connections being made and, an awareness being brought to WIL, but also ACE-WIL in our province in this sector. I'm really happy that a number of the resources or the numerous resources that Talent MATCH has been able to create and is still creating will be able to be housed on the ACE-WIL resource hub for all of our members to access and share. So I'm really looking forward to sharing that out once it's ready. So thank you, Debby and Alana and Miranda for all your work with this. I do hope that ACE-WIL will be able to continue to build on this work. Miranda, I took note on your possible topic for a town hall and student housing. I see that Brian Train from the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training is here with us today. So I do want to thank Brian for his support and also the ministry for COWIL phase two funding for Talent MATCH. I'm making this all possible. I want to make sure that I don't forget to thank Helena Prins and the rest of BCcampus support team. So we have Kelsey and Abigail with us for their invaluable support and allowing us to offer and run these sessions. So thank you very much. I know it is a really busy time for everyone. And this is our first town hall of the academic year. So I just wanted to thank you all for attending. We're going to aim to post this recording so that others who are busy and just weren't able to attend can still access this on ACE-WIL site in coming weeks or through the BCcampus site. So wishing you all a lovely rest of your day. Bye everyone.