

Brock LINC Annual Report

| 2022-23

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Message from the Executive Director

When you look at the results of this year, the first thought that comes to mind is “growth.” And what growth we’ve had. Our programming has exploded, we’ve supported 133 entrepreneurs (vs. 62 last year), and the number of people completing the Creativity & Innovation domain in the Campus-Wide Co-Curriculum has increased three-fold. But this growth is a result of something a bit more nuanced.

The theme for the 2022-2023 year was really about accessibility, specifically making innovation and entrepreneurship more welcoming and accessible at Brock.

Entrepreneurship has an image problem. It’s viewed as fast-paced, cut-throat, and with value measured in angel and venture capital rounds. There’s an insider’s language that’s riddled with acronyms and terminology that can intimidate and exclude.

In reviewing the previous year’s programming and talking to students and entrepreneurs, we were struck by what our community at Brock was telling us, both explicitly and implicitly. Women-identifying entrepreneurs made up a small number of our entrepreneurship participants, and when probed, we heard a concern that people needed a base level of entrepreneurship knowledge before connecting with LINC programming.

This simple perception, that “I need to know something before I can ask for help,” shifted our entire approach to programming and supports. We are the place where you don’t need to know anything to get started. We explain the acronyms. You can ask the “silly” questions you don’t want to ask elsewhere. There’s no one to impress here — just a place to learn, develop, and grow.

The Brock community is rich with the entrepreneurial spirit. People who make and create products, services, consumables, and technology. Our programs and supports have been updated to support all types of entrepreneurship, whether small business, start-up/scale-up, social enterprise, or intrapreneurship.

Our Creativity and Innovation programming is focused on developing intrapreneurship skills. Also called innovation skills, these skills include technology skills, problem-solving skills, creative thinking, and communication skills. The programs through the Makerspace, Digital Collaboratory and through the Creativity & Innovation workshops are the gateway to accessing the huge range of supports in this area.



This year was the first that we were fully back on campus, and while engagement slowly built up through the Fall semester, it was in full swing by the Winter semester. This was a year of many new programs and events (NAVIGATE, Holiday Market, Campus Store Contest, Innovation Socials), which have helped to establish the start of a strong and robust entrepreneurial community. And new initiatives (like Brock LINC Membership, Entrepreneurs in Residence, and the Student Advisory Council) helped to expand our reach to students and entrepreneurs. This increased activity resulted in a wave of new funding opportunities, with partners like the John Dobson Foundation, Pen Financial, Venture Niagara, and a significant investment in student entrepreneurship with the announcement of the Laura Sabia Entrepreneurial Awards. These are the first steps to building a stronger ladder that better meets the needs of entrepreneurs on campus.

LINC's 2022-2023 year was eventful and there are more good things ahead as we continue to build and grow a robust entrepreneurial community at Brock. We look forward to meeting you at an upcoming program, workshop or event.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Farzana Crocco". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Farzana Crocco
Executive Director, Brock LINC

Brock LINC Overview

The Brock LINC is the university's home for creativity, innovation, research and entrepreneurship. The LINC provides university and community members with opportunities to learn new skills that support innovative thinking and entrepreneurship. With programs that help develop technology skills, further research, explore a creative idea, or start a business, Brock LINC programs, events and services are open to anyone looking for support on the innovation journey.



The LINC focuses on helping people:



Learn

about concepts that support creative exploration, research innovation and entrepreneurship.



Ideate

and understand the tools, questions and approaches that support creative discovery.



Navigate

the ambiguity and uncertainty in the innovation process.



Collaborate

and find new connections to help new ideas grow and flourish.

The Brock LINC is located in a 41,000-square-foot innovation facility in the Rankin Family Pavilion dedicated to inspiring new ideas, using new technologies and nurturing growth. This multi-use space is over two floors and includes:

- Open spaces for networking and collaboration
- A Makerspace to design, build and prototype
- Cutting-edge labs for digital scholarship and virtual reality research
- Entrepreneurial space for early-stage business ideas and start-ups
- Multi-purpose rooms and meeting spaces for learning, events, and sharing

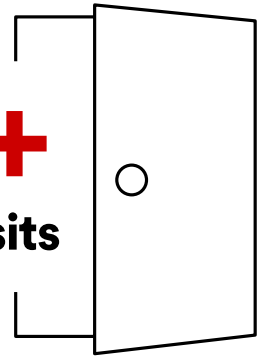




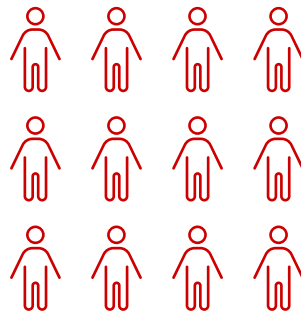
Brock's Innovation & Entrepreneurship Impact

Three-fold year-over-year increase in innovation & creativity domain completions in the campus-wide co-curriculum

1,000+
Makerspace visits



2,866
participants across all innovation and entrepreneurship programs and events

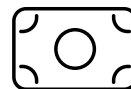


20%
participate in multiple events

40%
from around the world



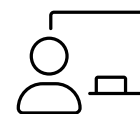
133
Entrepreneurs supported at Brock



\$147,500
funding for entrepreneurs at Brock



4
new awards supporting student entrepreneurship on campus



321
programs, events and workshops offered in 2022-2023

Brock LINC Programs & Initiatives

THE YEAR IN REVIEW



Entrepreneurship Programs & Events

Kick-Starting Entrepreneurship

Kick-Starting Entrepreneurship has been offered at Brock since 2014 through the Goodman Group at the Goodman School of Business. The program officially transitioned to the Brock LINC in 2022-2023 with an updated format to better meet the different needs of students across campus.

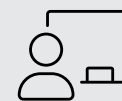
The program was re-structured this year as a set of introductory workshops co-delivered with regional innovation partners, and focused on different elements of starting a small business. Workshops include:

- The Entrepreneurial Mindset
- Market Research
- Business Plan Basics
- Steps to Starting a Small Business
- Pitching Your Business
- Sales & Marketing for your Business
- What Lenders are Looking For

“

As an aspiring entrepreneur, the Kick-Starting Entrepreneurship program was a game-changer for me. The comprehensive and practical workshops provide real-world insights into starting a business. The program gave me the tools and resources to kick-start my entrepreneurial journey.

– Samrath Singh, Brock MBA Student at the Goodman School of Business



102

**participants in
Kick-Starting
Entrepreneurship
workshops**



31%

**attended multiple
workshops**



NAVIGATE

Navigate is a new idea-stage program launched in January 2023. Over 11-weeks, up to 20 teams work on developing a business idea using the Lean Startup methodology, and with a focus on customer discovery. This includes small group work and weekly mentorship. By the end of the program, participants should have 100 customer interviews and a prototype or minimum viable product for their business idea. This program is best suited to problem focused businesses whether in technology, product or service. Participants who complete Navigate receive fast-track consideration for participation in LINCubator.

Pitch Winners:

Milad Nourvand, Brock Master of Science in Management student won the \$5,000 Dobson Entrepreneurial Excellence Prize for his pitch on CareCanada, his artificial intelligence-powered search engine that guides patients to the appropriate health-care professionals.

Alana Perri (BA '13) won the \$2,500 NAVIGATE Community Award for Purple Carrots Drama Studio, which provides arts-based programs and services for youth with diverse physical and neuro abilities.

Gurprince Attlas, a Brock Master of Arts student in Behavioural and Cognitive Neuroscience, won the \$1,000 OSSTF Student Entrepreneurship Award for her custom greeting card business, Diverse Expressions, which celebrates diversity one card at a time.

“

This program helped me take something that was an idea in the back of my head and turn it into a real business that I'm now launching. There were a lot of ups and downs but working in small groups with the mentors and having support and encouragement throughout is what really makes this experience unique.

– Gurprince Attlas, Brock MA student in Behavioural & Cognitive Neuroscience.

19
participants



4
mentors



\$8,500
in funding through
3 pitch awards





LINCubator

The LINCubator is Brock LINC's incubation program, focused on supporting early-stage businesses (recently launched, first customers, early revenue) to build and grow. This program includes customized growth plans, workshops, mentorship from entrepreneurial leaders, peer-to-peer learning and a dedicated desk in our co-working space. This program is best suited to problem-focused businesses.

The businesses in the 2022-2023 incubation program were:

Adjective Noun Studios

Co-founders Agusia Krzywinska & Adam Henderson

Chalk Monkey Labs

Founder Chris Vellucci

Fifth Year

Founder Dan Grzesniak

Collaborative Community Solutions

Founder Krystal Snider

Prime Bidet

Founder Sadoon Khan

“

I really liked and appreciated the fact that information and workshops were given in a very approachable and organized way. As someone with no business background, I was intimidated before starting the program. I found it easy to navigate and understand. I felt supported and I knew I could reach out to LINC staff or mentors at any time.

– Agusia Krzywinska, Adjective Noun Studios

6
businesses supported



6
mentors



\$135,000
in business funding
through Mitacs and
NSERC Lab2Market
awards



Entrepreneurship Co-op

The Entrepreneurship Co-op program provides co-op students with the opportunity to dedicate a co-op work term to developing and launching their business idea with the support of Brock's Co-op, Career & Experiential Education department, and the Brock LINC.

Students are supported over a work-term through coaching and mentorship provided by the Brock LINC. Students also participate in monthly check-in meetings and work toward goals and milestones that they set out for their business venture. This co-op opportunity provides students with the time to further develop their business ideas and explore if entrepreneurship is a viable career path.

The Entrepreneurship Co-op Awards were developed in 2022-2023 with the help of Pen Financial, Venture Niagara and the Brock LINC. Two awards of \$1,000 each are awarded each semester, for a total of 6 awards annually. 4 awards were awarded in 2022-2023:

Emma Kairys, solopreneur and content creation manager

Vincent Von Rose, CEO of Faers, a gender-affirming accessory and clothing line for LGBTQ+ youth

Hannah Balint, founder of Futures of Business, an entrepreneurship camp for neurodivergent elementary school students

Jacob Dekok, solopreneur and founder of a digital marketing agency and media company

In April 2023, a \$500,000 gift from Chancellor Hilary Pearson and Michael Sabia was announced to support students and researchers in the Yousef Haj-Ahmad Department of Engineering and in the Entrepreneurship Co-op program. The Laura Sabia Entrepreneurial Award will provide \$10,000 annually to support a four-month Entrepreneurship Co-op term for up to 5 woman-identifying students at Brock University in a co-op program. The first award will be available in Fall 2023.



8

participants



\$4,000

**in funding from the
Entrepreneurship
Co-op Award**



“

The entrepreneurship co-op has given me time and resources to build on my idea. By resources, I'm referring to the Brock LINC space, mentors and contacts I've been able to make from being in this co-op. This helps me advance my business venture by setting aside time where it is the priority and giving me the tools to work on it. I'm scheduled in, have a space, and have tools to work with. It makes it so much easier for me to work.

– Hannah Balint, Futures of Business





38

vendor applications



18

vendor participants



17/18

vendors were
woman-identifying

Brock LINC Holiday Market

The Brock LINC Holiday Market was a new initiative developed to support hidden entrepreneurs on campus – makers and creators. The event responded to a gap in support for creative businesses and side businesses for students, where women tend to be more active. The market provided a free platform for students, faculty and staff creators to sell their handmade goods. Engagement with women in Brock LINC programming has increased from 10% of participants to 50% of participants following the launch of this event and the Campus Store Contest.

“

This event was my first market. I never thought about putting myself out there like this. This opportunity boosted my confidence and gave me a reason to start selling my creations.

– Idiakhosa Onaiwu-Osayi, ID.heartmade.

Campus Store Contest

The Campus Store Contest was developed to support product-based student entrepreneurs on campus. The contest offered Brock students the chance to display their own retail-based products in dedicated retail space in store and online at the Campus Store. The top applicants participated in a product sales pitch meeting and the winner was selected through a Campus Store social media contest that received 1,400 votes. The winner of the contest gains access to mentorship and resources to continue to develop their business.

Third-year Concurrent Teacher Education student Trinity Samarita was the winner for her clothing brand, Oopsie Daisy Apparel. Her products will be available in the Campus Store from September 2023 to April 2024.

16
applicants
(woman-identifying)



3
finalists



1,400
social media votes



Trinity Samarita

Oopsie Daisy Apparel

Third-year Concurrent Teacher Education student

Community Building Initiatives

The 2022-2023 was a year of new initiatives designed to build the entrepreneurial and innovation community at Brock.

Drew MacNeil (BBA '19) and Evan Sitrler Bates, co-founders of XpertVR, were announced as the Brock LINC's first **Entrepreneurs in Residence**. In the role, they help to coach student entrepreneurs, researchers and community startups in the ideation, discovery and early launch phases of entrepreneurship, building trust and confidence with founders, helping them on their learning journey and providing tangible feedback on their ideas and existing business.

Brock LINC Memberships were introduced this year for student and community member entrepreneurs to access Brock LINC spaces, resources and services at no cost. Membership benefits include access to hot desks, meeting rooms, as well as entrepreneurial coaching and advisory services from the Brock LINC. Participants in Brock LINC programming have membership included.

To support Brock LINC outreach to students across campus, the **Brock LINC Student Advisory Council** was developed this past year. The Brock LINC Student Advisory Council is a group of students selected from each Faculty to act as advisors to the Brock LINC. Students on the Advisory Council will collaborate with staff to share feedback, provide insights on student needs, generate ideas and new initiatives, and be a resource to promote Brock LINC activities in their respective Faculty.

LINC Up! Networking Events brought together the entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem in Niagara for two networking events.

Innovation Socials were launched as a new series of events intended to make innovation part of the everyday conversation at the University. Innovation Socials focus on bringing people together in a casual and social environment to learn or talk about different types of innovation in school, work and everyday life. The first Innovation Socials tackled the topics of Innovation in Women's Equity, and AI Tools in the University.



Creativity & Innovation Programming

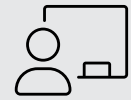
Creativity & Innovation Workshops

The Creativity & Innovation Programming at the Brock LINC was designed to foster the development of creativity and innovation skills, spanning Creativity & Innovation Workshops, Digital Collaboratory offerings, and Makerspace programs. Offered at no cost to the Brock and Niagara community, these supports focused on creative thinking, design, technology, and problem-solving abilities.

Creativity & Innovation Workshops

- 21 workshops and events
- 419 total participants
- 382 unique participants
- 10% repeat participants

Creativity & Innovation Workshops guide participants to develop new ways of thinking through a range of topics from The Everyday Creative Mind, Design Thinking, Ideation, Innovative Thinking and Creative Writing. Workshop sessions were designed to be engaging, interactive and focused on activity-based learning.



308
workshops
and events



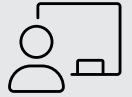
2,372
total participants





87

workshops and events



1,553

participants



30%

Brock affiliated



70%

from around the world



Digital Collaboratory Workshops

The Digital Collaboratory was an updated space that launched this past year, adding additional support into the space that was previously known as the Digital Scholarship Lab. While the Digital Scholarship Lab continues as a program through the Brock University Library, the Digital Collaboratory combines programming and supports from different partners across campus, including Digital Humanities, Computer Science, Engineering, High Performance Computing, and the Digital Scholarship Lab.

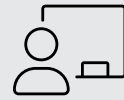
The Digital Collaboratory, located in Rankin Family Pavilion 216, is a space for researchers to experiment with technology. The space is multi-use, and is available as a workspace, event space, and collaboration space where researchers can learn to use digital tools for research and knowledge mobilization.

Workshops and offerings through the Digital Collaboratory range from topics like Intro to PowerBI, Cython: A First Look, Social Media for Research Communication, and Digital Knowledge Mobilization.

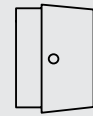
Brock Library Makerspace

The Library Makerspace provides the Brock and Niagara community with opportunities to develop new skills in 3D printing, modelling and animation as well as podcasting through a series of introductory workshops. The free in-person sessions help participants build their confidence working with 3D modelling and printing tools, laser cutting, circuitry, embroidery, podcasting, music production and more.

The Makerspace helps to bring ideas to life through new and emerging technologies. Examples from the past year include supporting entrepreneurship students with prototyping their ideas, the creation of a 3D modelled heart and femur to visualize anatomy, and helping a faculty member to print a 3D replica of an object in the Department of Classics and Archaeology Cypriote Museum as part of a research project.



200
workshops
delivered



1000+
Makerspace
visits



400+
individual
makers



300+
prototyping projects
developed



Approximately
300 hours
booked in the audio
and video labs



Brock University

Niagara Region
1812 Sir Isaac Brock Way
St. Catharines, ON
L2S 3A1

brocku.ca/linc

