



September 20, 2021

**Dear Colleagues,**

Wednesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> marks the launch of Canada's newest student competition – the Canadian Academic Entrepreneur Challenge (CAEC) – a competition open to all college and university students.

The CAEC format differs from the typical pitch-style competitions held at many universities and colleges, in that it is accessible to a more diverse group of students. And while the CAEC will definitely appeal to those enrolled in business and entrepreneurship programs and courses, the competition format welcomes students from any discipline or program year. Unlike most competitions, that attract only the most experienced students, the CAEC hopes to introduce the practice and principles of entrepreneurship to any and all interested students.

As a former faculty member, with more than 25 years of post-secondary teaching experience, I can confidently say that there is no substitute for real world experience. Students that are given an opportunity to apply classroom concepts through work terms/internships, student competition and applied projects are more likely to retain and fully grasp the concepts, theories, tools and frameworks introduced in the classroom.

Unfortunately, not all students have a chance to participate in these activities. The CAEC addresses this shortcoming by employing an approachable, step-by-step, question and answer format that eliminates the need for advanced concept knowledge. Moreover, this competition provides students with some market and product guardrails that encourage ideation. That said, the competition will be of particular interest to those students interested in entrepreneurship, sales, product management, marketing and communications.

So, how can you help? First of all, it is my sincere hope that you will take a moment to help promote the Canadian Academic Entrepreneur Challenge on your college or university campus. You can forward this message to faculty members teaching relevant courses, student club leaders and/or any organization/group focused on student academic activities. I would encourage you to forward it to those at your institution or any other that you believe might be interested.

Your help and time are appreciated. Best wishes for a safe and productive Fall term.

**Dr. Derek Hassay**

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