



Social Impact Case Study – Axford Impact Series

Alberta School of Business

The Impact Series is an experiential learning activity integrated for all BCom students, starting in the first core business course students take (BUS 101 – Foundations of Business). The Impact Series is a 4-year project, planned to continue in the BCom program at the 2nd, 3rd and 4th year as part of a series of BUS courses (i.e., BUS 202, 303 and 404), where students will address a Grand Challenge partnered with a community stakeholder.

This year, through the generosity of Eric Axford, we have launched the inaugural Axford Impact Series focusing on the issue of Downtown Vibrancy in partnership with the City of Edmonton.

Over 1200 students will form teams and engage in a case study to explore how social, cultural and economic issues impact the issue of downtown vibrancy. As a foundational course, student learning is focused on developing a sense of empathy and systems thinking, while learning about the basics of conducting a case study. Throughout their BCom degree, students will continue to use their business knowledge and skills towards developing more robust recommendations to address challenges. We will introduce additional 'chapters' to the initial Downtown Vibrancy case study, to help guide students towards more actionable recommendations.

BUS 101 – Foundations of Business

We launched the Axford Impact Series by hosting a large event at the University of Alberta's Butterdome, which was able to accommodate all the students (see [Edmonton Journal article](#)). Students heard from Eric Axford, the Dean of the Alberta School of Business and a representative from the City of Edmonton. They also networked with senior business students and alumni.

In lectures, students hear from speakers such as the Executive Director of the Downtown Business Association and receive training on how to approach the case study.

In seminars, students engage in 7 weeks of sessions on the following topics:

- Understanding and Empathy
- Key Issue Identification
- Conducting Research
- Analyzing Data and Evaluation Criteria
- Developing a Recommendation
- Public Speaking and Making a Video Presentation
- Visual Maps

At the end of the term, the top 6 teams (out of more than 240 teams) will be invited to pitch live during the final lecture in front of a panel of judges. Winning teams will receive a cash prize, as well as support and mentoring if they wish to pursue their ideas further.

For more information, contact Leo Wong (Associate Dean, Education) at leo.wong@ualberta.ca.

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