

## SIMSA, IMII, and Partners Further Culture of Innovation in Saskatchewan Mining

The International Minerals Innovation Institute (IMII) and Saskatchewan Industrial and Mining Suppliers Association (SIMSA) were pleased to co-host a DEMOday 2024 Launch event on January 18, 2024, the first of three days centred on innovation in mining.

A mining hackathon followed on January 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> for the students of the University of Saskatchewan in collaboration with the Tech Innovation and SIGMA program at College of Engineering at the University of Saskatchewan.

The IMII released a list of [42 innovation needs](#) on behalf of its minerals member companies – BHP, Cameco, Fission Uranium, Mosaic and Nutrien, and a total of 70 persons from innovative suppliers and mining companies were in attendance for the DEMOday launch. The launch event facilitated many great discussions between suppliers and industry and was seen as a big success this year by mineral company attendees.



*SIMSA's Industrial Concierge James Bulmer at the IMII DEMOday event.*

In an affiliated event, a total of 50 people persons from Nutrien, SIMSA members, University of Saskatchewan Students and faculty attended the Hackathon the day after DEMOday.



*Students and Industry attend Hackathon opening.*

The Hackathon is an event where students brainstorm solutions to the same 42 industry's needs and present their solutions to a panel of judges.



*Students presenting their Hackathon solutions.*

For over 24 hours students worked in 9-groups of 3-5 students, to “hack” or propose solutions to the list of the 42 Innovation Industry needs that the IMII released as a part of DEMOday. Students ranged from Grade 10, all the way to doctoral candidates.

SIMSA’s Industrial Concierge James Bulmer stated, “We are very proud and appreciative of the 9 groups of students, ranging from grade 10 to doctoral candidates, as well as faculty and industry who attended the Hackathon. Everyone came together to create an amazing event that both promoted innovation and the mining industry, that produced high quality ideas and presentations.”

“I and my industry colleagues were impressed with the ideas and concepts the students developed in a very short time,” said IMII’s Executive Director Al Shpyth. “Both innovation and hackathons build on problem-solving, and Saskatchewan’s minerals industry is open to potential new solutions from bright and talented young people.”

#### **Hackathon Speakers:**

- Al Shpyth, Executive Director at International Minerals Innovation Institute (IMII)
- David Yee, Executive in Residence for USask Technological Innovation and SIGMA
- Jonathan Lipoth, Executive Director at Co. Labs
- Tom Kishchuk, Nuclear Specialist for SIMSA, Executive in Residence for USask Technological Innovation and SIGMA
- Tate Cao, Assistant Professor, La Borde Chair in Engineering Entrepreneurship

**Event Video [Link](#)**

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## **Background of the Tech Innovation and Entrepreneurship program at the College of Engineering in University of Saskatchewan**

The Tech Innovation and Entrepreneurship program in College of Engineering in University of Saskatchewan aims to teach the fundamentals of innovation and entrepreneurship to students and practitioners (both known as learners hereafter) through a proven educational framework. We leverage six aspects of existing resources including Events, Courses, Programs, Infrastructure, Experts, and Outreach Efforts. Our belief is that The Fundamentals of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Can be Taught in Classrooms. Over the past decade, we have trained and developed innovators both as entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs, leading to many HQP (Highly Qualified Personnel) contributing to the economy via various paths.

Our current program contains two portions: the classroom and the experiential lab. In the classroom, we provide traditional education to the students through curriculum-based pedagogy. In the lab portion, we provide mentorship, education, and funding to committed innovators via a summer program called [SIGMA](#).