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AI4SafeMines Student Competition: Global Finals Results are in *Student innovators from around the world bring AI-powered mine safety solutions to Saskatoon*

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SASKATOON, SK – The AI4SafeMines Student Competition Global Finals led by International Minerals Innovation Institute (IMII) took place on September 24, 2026, during the ISSA Mining Safety Conference in Saskatoon, with Team TS^2 being selected as the competition winner.

"The AI4SafeMines Student Competition showcased incredible collaboration between industry, researchers and students to solve real-world health and safety challenges in the mining sector," said Kevin Mooney, Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board vice president of prevention and employer services and ISSA President. "We congratulate all of the winners and participants for their creativity, talent and dedication to improving mining safety through innovation."

Pre-pitch competitions organized by IMII in Canada, the National Safety Council of Chile for Southern South America, the Consejo Colombiano de Seguridad in Columbia engaged a total of 36 teams comprised of 105 students. Five teams advanced to the global finals competition; their team names and school affiliations are summarized here:

- Team Statera, originally Holy Cross High School and University of Saskatchewan, and now at USask, University of British Columbia and Singapore.
- Team TS^2, University of Saskatchewan
- Team IMSA, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile
- Team MineAlr, Universidad Francisco de Paula Santander in Columbia
- Team Turtlesell, Saskatchewan Polytechnic and Southern Alberta Institute of Technology

The AI4SafeMines student competition was launched earlier this year and challenged students to explore how artificial intelligence can be applied to real-world health and safety challenges in mining. Finalists were provided with seed funding, mentorship across AI and mine safety and business pitch coaching.

After months of work developing their technology and their business proposition, the final pitch competition showcased the results in front of a large live audience at the ISSA Mine Safety Conference in Saskatoon. While all teams were engaging and impressed our panel of judges, Team TS^2 comprised of students Shruti Karen Kaur, Talia Iwanchysko and Sahas Mittal, was successful in capturing the \$6,000 scholarship prize. This team's project Smart Dome is focused on leveraging AI to address mine safety challenges with detecting potash storage dome failures and product contamination.

The competition's head Judge Jason Belanger, ISSA organizing committee member and Manager Mining, Metallurgy and Technology at Cameco, has been with the competition from its beginnings and was the originator of the idea of creating a student competition involving AI to run alongside the conference.

Belanger expressed how impressed the judges were with the student pitches. “It was so rewarding to see the student teams pitch their final products. It was clear from the pitches that the students developed a clear understanding of the mine safety challenges they were addressing and the AI innovations they shared were truly impressive,” said Belanger.

“We saw a great opportunity with AI4SafeMines to bring together emerging talent, AI and real-world mining challenges, but I think the outcomes have surpassed all of our expectations,” said Lesley McGilp, Executive Director of IMII. “The competition formed new partnerships and connections, developed innovative technology and provided a great learning opportunity for all involved - the students, the mentors and with the global finals presentation, the ISSA conference audience.”

While the selection of the competition winner represents the conclusion of the inaugural AI4SafeMines student competition, many of the students are exploring how to continue to advance their technology and some are considering entrepreneurial ventures following graduation. Organizers are also exploring potential for a second rendition of AI4SafeMines in 2027.

Stay up to date on the AI4SafeMines Student Competition at: [AI4SafeMines Student Competition | IMII](#).

Supporting the next generation of innovation

IMII gratefully acknowledges the Canadian Chiropractic Research Foundation, whose sponsorship has helped make the AI4SafeMines Student Competition possible and the support of KPMG, who facilitated the involvement of Sean Wise as a pitch coach for the competition. Their support, along with industry volunteers, has provided students with opportunities to develop their ideas, access mentorship and coaching, and bring their innovations with conference attendees from across Canada and around the world.

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About IMII:

The International Minerals Innovation Institute (IMII) is a member-based consortium comprised of industry, academia, government and solution providers. IMII champions innovation, workforce development and thought leadership activities to drive the advancement of the Saskatchewan minerals sector.