

# SynBridge hosts province-wide iGEM skills workshop

The 2019 International Genetically Engineered Machine (iGEM) season launched at the beginning of March with the annual geekStarter Wet Lab Skills workshop hosted by the University of Lethbridge's own SynBridge Maker Space.

Led by Dr. Laura Keffer-Wilkes, teams from Lethbridge, Canmore, Calgary and High River got to experience hands-on synthetic biology lab techniques. Concurrent seminars introduced teams to wiki coding, ethics in science and iGEM basics. Nicole Meurs, Science Facilities Manager, led the students on a tour of the new Science and Academic Building, which was a huge hit with participants.

"I'm really excited about the upcoming season and seeing all the enthusiasm from the students," says Sydnee Calhoun, adviser for the Lethbridge High School team, who led sessions on scientific research, writing and an introduction to iGEM.

The teams will meet again in the spring and summer for additional iGEM events. In the meantime, the Lethbridge team is looking forward to working hard on their project. The Lethbridge high school team is comprised of students from Winston Churchill High School, Lethbridge Collegiate Institute, Chinook High School and Catholic Central High School.

You can review the 2018 projects and accomplishments of the [university](#) and [high school](#) teams on their wiki websites they have created. Also, follow the high school team's progress on social media: [@LethHS\\_iGEM](#) and [@lethbridgehsiGEM](#). The U of L team can be followed here: [@LethbridgeiGEM](#) and [@LethbridgeiGEM](#).

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## Lethbridge Team Sponsors

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### **ABOUT iGEM:**

iGEM, the International Genetically Engineered Machine Competition, is the largest synthetic biology community and the premiere synthetic biology competition for both university and high school level students. iGEM inspires learning and innovation in synthetic biology through education, competition and by maintaining an open library of standard biological parts, the Registry of Standard Biological Parts.

Combining molecular biology techniques with engineering concepts, students work in interdisciplinary team to create novel biological systems. At the beginning of the competition season, each registered team is given a kit of 1000+ standard interchangeable parts called BioBricks from the Registry of Standard Biological Parts. Working at their own schools, teams use these parts and new parts of their own design to build, test, and characterize genetically engineered systems and operate them in living cells in an effort to address real-world issues. Along with submitting their newly created BioBricks to the Registry of Standard Biological Parts, teams are required to actively consider the safety implications of their work and document their projects on team wiki pages. At the end of the competition season, teams converge at the Jamboree event to showcase their research. Teams present their work through posters and oral presentations, and compete for prizes and awards, such as the coveted BioBrick trophy.

For more information about iGEM, visit their website [http://igem.org/Main\\_Page](http://igem.org/Main_Page).

### **ABOUT SynBridge:**

SynBridge Maker Space is part of the experiential learning ecosystem at the University of Lethbridge. Overseen and operated by the Alberta RNA Research and Training Institute (ARRTI), SynBridge provides access to infrastructure that otherwise would not be available to interested students, graduates, post-doctorate researchers and faculty to explore their creativity and ideas. This one-of-a-kind facility is particularly important for nascent entrepreneurial bio-engineers and business-minded scientists, reducing the often insurmountable start-up costs. SynBridge also engages with our local community through support

of iGEM teams and DIYBio groups.

For more information on SynBridge, visit our website [here](#).

**About geekStarter:**

Let students team up and tackle real-world problems, and they will move mountains. It's that kind of opportunity that edacity's geekStarter program provides. Our program engages students in finding and solving real-world challenges, and building solutions based in emerging Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields. The project-based learning experience encourages entrepreneurial thinking and includes hands-on workshops and skill building events. Our program supports teams' participation in prestigious competitions where students can share their real-world projects with other young scientists and entrepreneurs, as well as with leaders in STEM. Through emphasis on multi-media presentations and networking, these events provide students with opportunities to celebrate their successes and build a community of peers across Alberta and the world.

For more information on geekStarter, visit [here](#).