

A scenic view of the Toronto skyline across Lake Ontario. The CN Tower is the central focus, with its reflection clearly visible in the water. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. The city's skyscrapers and the Rogers Centre are visible in the background.

HEQCO: Student Pitch Competition

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Problem Statement:

First Year Students have problems transitioning from high school.

There are resources to address these problems on campus but are underutilized.

User Persona



Aliyah

Age: 17
North York
University of Toronto
Engineering
First Generation Student
Parents from Jamaica

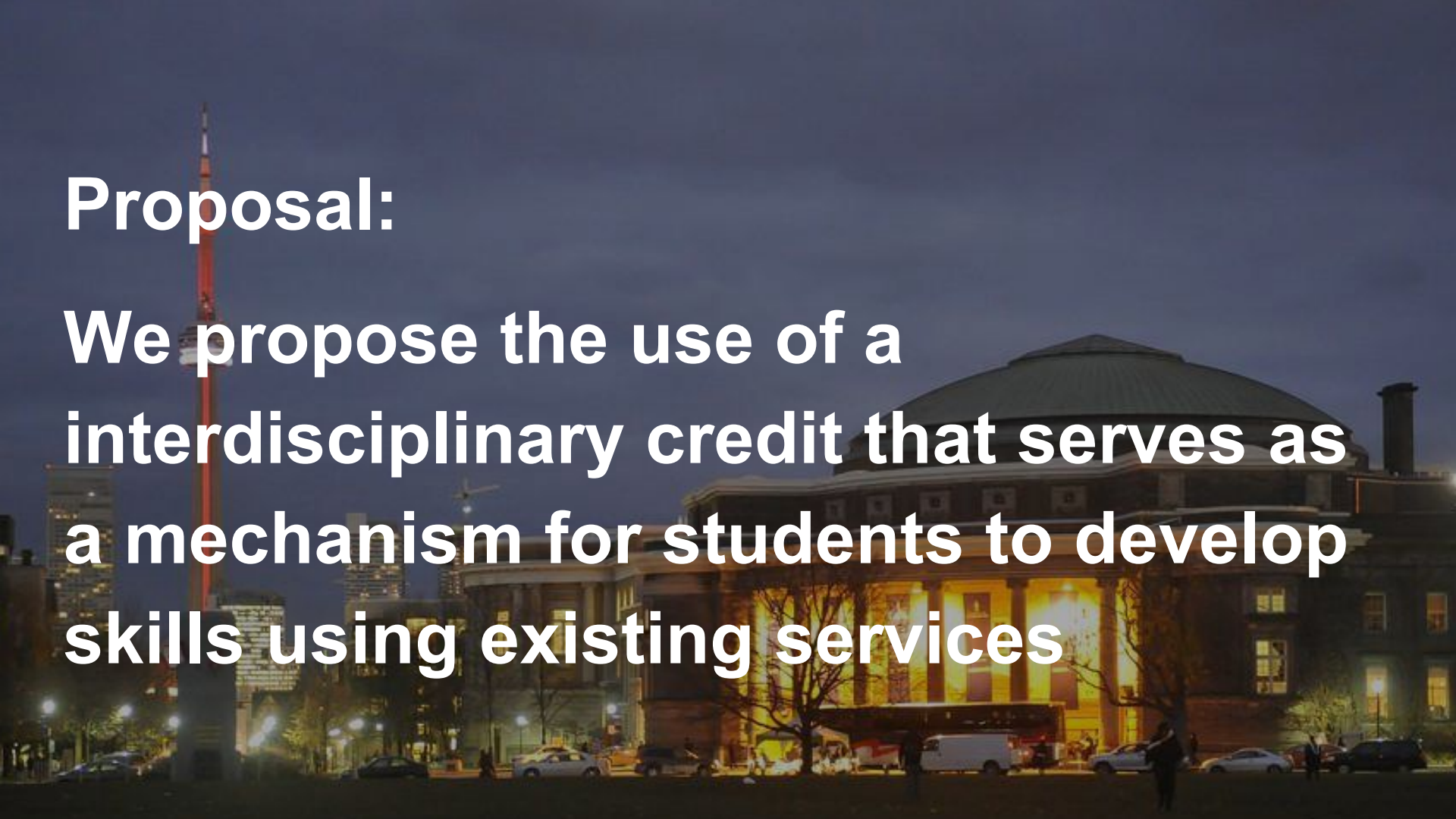
“ Attending university is a big milestone for me and my family, I feel so overwhelmed! This is completely new for me.”

- First of her family to attend university
- Excited to attend university
- Will be living out of home for the first time

- Overwhelmed with the new experience
- Worried that she wouldn't transition well
- Does not know of the services available to her

Proposal:

**We propose the use of a
interdisciplinary credit that serves as
a mechanism for students to develop
skills using existing services**



Types of Resources Identified

Academic

Academic Support and Facilitation

Academic-Related Workshops could equip students with necessary skills.

- 76% of institutions offered campus services.
- Institutions suggested that students entering post-secondary education are **underprepared academically**. (Schrader and Brown, 2008)

Social

Community Involvement

Engagement has a compensatory effect on first-year grades.

- Increased engagement resulted in **0.04 points** increase in GPA (Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie & Gonyea, 2008).
- Effective educational practices benefits **all students**, especially students of color (Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie & Gonyea, 2008).

Service

Accessibility on Campus

Mental and Sexual Health Education/Support

- 49% of students in a major educational institute cited mental health as a *critical problem* (Hashem, Al Khawaja, Edhah, Hashmi and Al Akill, 2014).
- 68% of Canadian youth have had sex before the age of 20.
- Only **1 in 3** Canadians understand what giving consent means (Ontario Physical and Health Education Association, Statistics Canada).

How It Can Be Implemented

1. Incorporate participations grades in campus activities into first-year courses

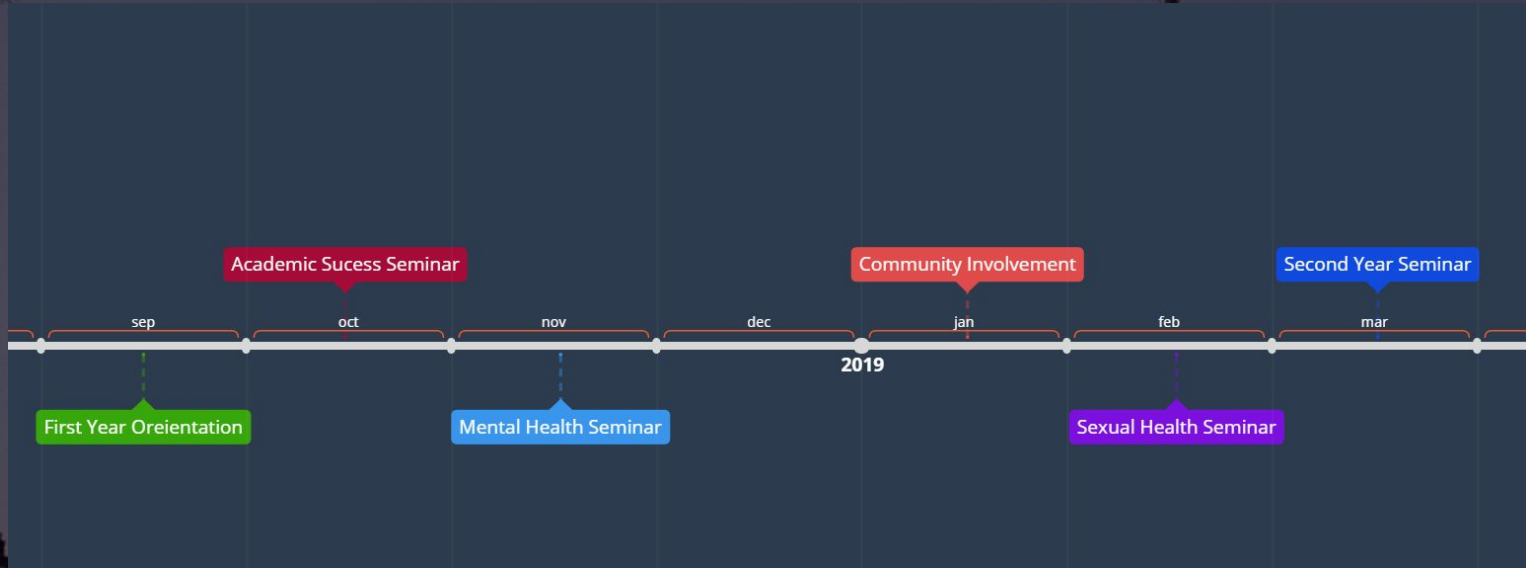
Example: 2 - 5% of course grades based on campus involvement

2. Students have to earn certain amount of credits from campus activities, in order for them to graduate

Example: Students have to fulfill certain hours of campus involvement or participate in group activities with other first year students

3. Offer a variety of workshops that the students can choose but should meet the requirement for the credit

Example Timeline



Feasibility: Cost and Resource Efficient

Use the Existing Services on Campus



User Persona



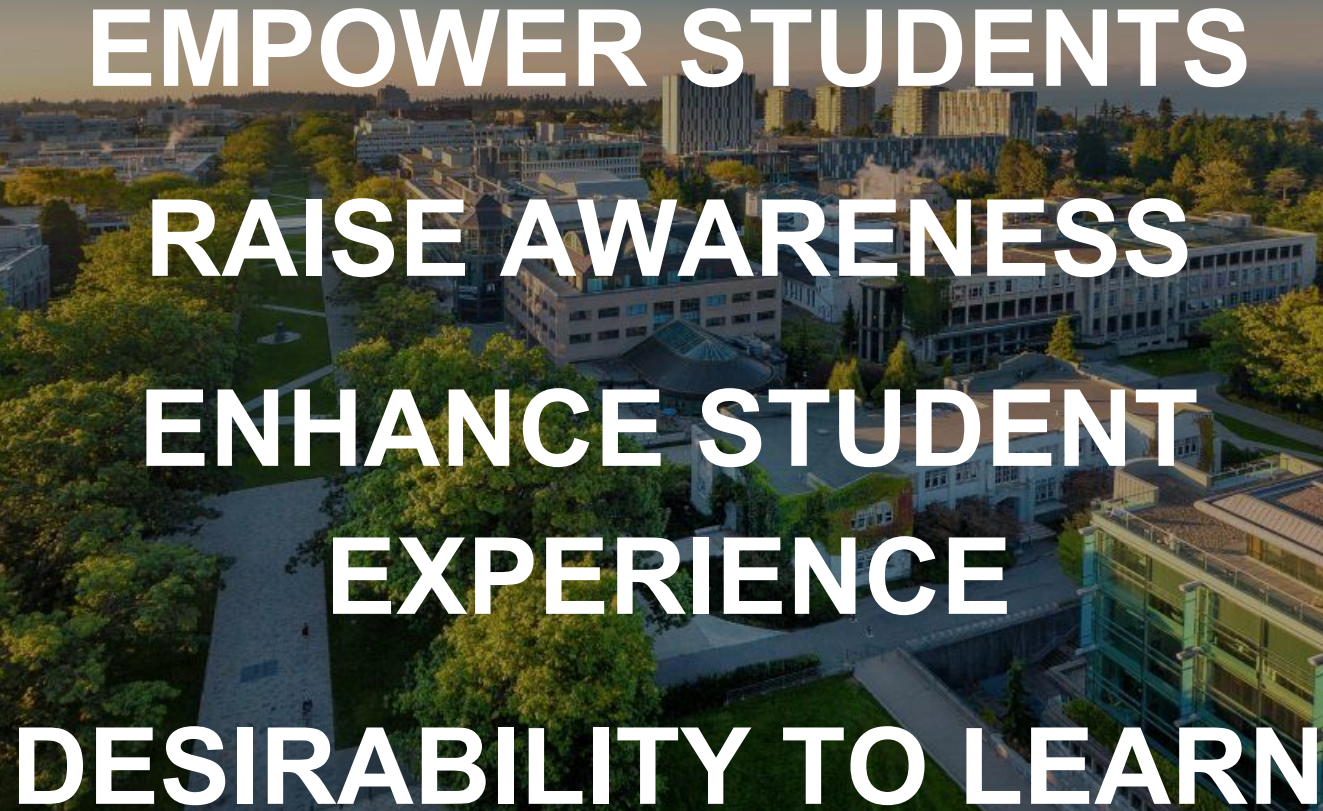
Aliyah

Age: 21

4th Year Chemical
Engineering Student

“ At first, I found the workshops to be tedious but in the end I found it to be very meaningful and introduced me with a network of friends!”

- Feels confident after the credit
 - Aware of the services available
 - Have a sense of belonging in the community
 - Succeeding Academically
- **She feels that there could be room for improvement for the workshops**

An aerial photograph of a university campus during the golden hour. The scene features a mix of modern academic buildings with large glass windows and older, more traditional structures. Lush green trees are scattered throughout the campus, particularly in the foreground and middle ground. A paved walkway leads through the trees. The sky is a clear, deep blue, suggesting a late afternoon or early evening setting. The overall atmosphere is serene and academic.

EMPOWER STUDENTS
RAISE AWARENESS
ENHANCE STUDENT
EXPERIENCE
DESIRABILITY TO LEARN