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# Interdisciplinary Consulting Association

For this month's issue, the Lazy Faire had the opportunity to sit down with ICA members Keita Hill, Ranek Kiil, and Andy Cheema to learn more about the various opportunities offered by the Interdisciplinary Consulting Association.

The ICA is a new initiative on campus that brings students across various faculties together to work on their consulting skills. By offering biweekly case sessions, members can develop their problem-solving, team-building, and leadership abilities, which are all universally invaluable skills to possess.

## What is the ICA and what are its objectives?

**Keita:** The ICA is a unique club, as it is open to students across all disciplines, and is focused on showcasing the boundless areas of practise that exist in consulting. The club has two main objectives. The first is to raise awareness of what consulting is, and provide a chance for students to discover how it can help them achieve their career goals after their degree. Secondly, the ICA aims to equip students with the skills needed to tackle cases. We also provide a network for students; those who join our mailing list receive upcoming employer information. In addition, we run industry workshops with experienced consulting professionals; one highlight being a trip to McKinsey & Company in Calgary.

## How does the ICA achieve these goals?

**Ranek:** We hold biweekly case sessions where students can come in and work on a case together. Generally, we have two groups – interviewers and interviewees — and we work through standard cases under an interview context comparable to those found in large consulting firms. Through these sessions, students work on structuring a problem, thinking through it logically, and finding strategies to solve the case. We've also started developing

our own cases; examining situations of interest to us, researching the facts, and then forming a new case for our members to work on.

## How does diversity play its role in the ICA team?

**Keita:** We welcome students from all faculties. Members of the ICA have complementary skill sets, and this allows us to learn from each other. For example, as an engineering student, I've found it helpful to develop my presentation and communication style from ICA members, as it's not something I've encountered often in my coursework.

**Ranek:** All ICA members have common passion for solving problems. Despite having different perspectives, there is a high degree of cooperation between the members, as their ultimate goal is to employ their critical thinking skills to come up with solutions to the cases they work on.

**Andy:** The breadth of experience and diversity of backgrounds in the ICA, to some extent, reflects the diversity of real consulting teams in industry. Bringing different sets of knowledge to the table allows us to tackle a problem from different angles, and come up with an optimal solution that we may not have been able to reach individually.

## Interested in the ICA?

### Be a part of an amazing team!

Visit <http://ica.ualberta.ca/> for more information. A sample case can be found under "Documents". Registration form can be found on the homepage.

## What are some benefits that members can gain from being a part of the ICA?

**Keita:** Aside from developing your problem solving skills, the ICA also provides a great networking opportunity. Not only are members able to meet students outside their own faculty, but we've also started building connections with companies in industry.

**Ranek:** As seen during our session with McKinsey in May, our members have had the opportunity to meet potential employers and see what their workplace is like. There have also been opportunities to meet individuals at various firms in industry, giving our members the ability to better judge potential lifestyle fit, as well as get tips from potential colleagues and interviewers.

**Andy:** Recruitment is a very competitive process, but in reality it is not a zero sum game. The best way to improve your skills is to work with other like-minded students, share resources, and collaborate. Also, because the ICA gives you a chance to embody the role of an interviewer, it gives you the ability to think like the person on the other side of the table, and sharpens your eye for what interviewers are looking for.