

## 407 ETR celebrates National STEM Day with a push for more diversity in collaboration with York University's Lassonde School of Engineering

**TORONTO, November 8, 2023** – Today, on National STEM Day, 407 ETR and York University's Lassonde School of Engineering are highlighting the need to continue to dismantle systemic barriers for underrepresented groups in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math).

Together, they are working to help underrepresented youth pursue STEM-related careers through specialized learning opportunities for high school students in Ontario.

In July 2023, [407 ETR announced a \\$400,000 donation to York University's Lassonde School of Engineering's k2i \(kindergarten to industry\) academy](#) for the 407 ETR Work Integrated Learning Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Fund and the 407 ETR Path2STEM Fund.



### Fast facts:

- Only 2.7% of post-secondary certificates, diplomas and degrees in STEM were earned by Black Canadians 25 years and older.
- *Engineers Canada* reported that only 0.6% of engineering students enrolled in accredited programs identify as Indigenous Peoples.
- Women make up less than 5% of the trades field and make up only 18% of licensed engineers in Canada.
- The k2i academy works with publicly funded Ontario school boards and since it began in 2020, the program has employed 400+ high school students and 130+ undergraduate STEM mentors. 100% of students successfully completed their credits this summer with the course median over 90%.
- 407 ETR is invested in diversifying its workforce and has set a target to increase diversity of its leadership and management teams.
- Approximately half of 407 ETR's workforce touches a STEM-related position and today one-in-four of its IT-related opportunities are filled by a woman.

407 ETR's funding is specifically geared to help the k2i academy expand its offerings to students who are underrepresented in STEM, including women, Black and Indigenous youth and those from low-income communities. "I have been with k2i academy for almost three years, first as a student mentor, then a mentor lead and currently, program assistant," says Gbemisola Anuoluwapo Akerele, recent Lassonde Computer Science graduate. "It has been a memorable and rewarding opportunity because I can see students I mentored grow and develop an interest in STEM and some majoring in STEM degrees. I love witnessing the growth and development k2i academy has achieved in less than five years, and I can't wait to see more!"

Through this collaboration, 407 ETR aims to increase opportunities for a more diverse workforce in STEM-related positions. "We're working to ensure that our workforce reflects the diversity of the communities we serve. To achieve better representation across the board, we need to ensure the talent

pipeline is filled with a diverse pool of candidates,” says Javier Tamargo, President & CEO, 407 ETR. “That’s why we’re proud to be part of this program which is addressing some of the systemic barriers that make it difficult for students to pursue academic paths in STEM.”

### **About 407 ETR**

Highway 407 ETR is an all-electronic open-access toll highway located in the Greater Toronto Area in Ontario, Canada. The highway spans 108 kilometres from Burlington in the west to Pickering in the east.

407 International Inc. is the sole shareholder of 407 ETR and is owned by:

- Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPP Investments) through indirectly-owned subsidiaries (50.01%);
- Cintra Global S.E. which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Ferrovial S.A. (43.23%); and
- AtkinsRéalis, formally known as SNC-Lavalin (6.76%).

### **About Lassonde School of Engineering and its k2i (kindergarten to industry) academy**

Located in the heart of the multicultural Greater Toronto Area, [Lassonde School of Engineering](#) at York University is home to engineers, scientists and entrepreneurs, representing a diverse community of students, faculty, staff, alumni and partners. With 12 undergraduate programs, seven graduate programs and a host of certificates and accessible study options, Lassonde is shaping the next generation of creators who will tackle the world’s biggest challenges and devise creative solutions through interdisciplinary learning opportunities. Lassonde’s creators think in big systems rather than small silos, design with people in mind and embrace ambiguity.

Lassonde’s k2i academy is an innovation sandbox where diverse communities and collaborators connect, engage and design solutions to systemic barriers to STEM opportunities, education and careers for those underrepresented in the sector, including women and non-gender conforming people, Black and Indigenous Peoples. The initiative brings STEM to life by working alongside school boards to offer science and engineering programming in classrooms, providing innovative work-integrated learning experiences, and partnering with community organizations to provide unique, hands-on STEM opportunities. Since launching in 2020, k2i has grown to reach 27,000+ students, teachers, families, and community members, spending 230,000+ hours in virtual and face-to-face engagements.

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