



Sunday, January 10, 2021

Faculty of Business and Communication Studies
4825 Mount Royal Gate SW, Calgary, AB, Canada T3E 6K6

mtroyal.ca/communicationstudies

Subject: Application for Council Innovation Fund – MRU – An AI Powered Digital Twin for Trucks

Dear Priorities and Finance Committee (PFC),

I am pleased to write this letter today in support of the *Mount Royal University – An AI Powered Digital Twin for Trucks* project which seeks to help students have high-impact, purposeful learning experiences while simultaneously partnering with a local Technology development company (BrainToy) and the City of Calgary.

Enabling Change

In this project, a cohort of students will engage in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning methods to develop digital twin models to help optimize truck performance for the transportation sector, especially the small and medium trucking operators in Calgary. This project will be led by Associate Professor, Dr. Rajbir Bhatti (MRU Supply Chain and International Business) and Mr. Armit Varma (BrainToy).

At Mount Royal University, we pride ourselves on providing meaningful student experiences and our connection to the community. The private and public sector partnership between MRU, BrainToy and the City of Calgary offers:

- Opportunities for work-integrated learning, mentorship, and cross-curricular learning
- Empowerment of students to apply critical thinking skill to real-world problems
- Strengthens the pool of Calgary talent in the area of AI and ML

Life Skills – Leadership by Doing

The ability to understand complex problems, identify innovative and sustainable solutions, and develop technical expertise, are all valuable skills in an increasingly uncertain world. I am confident in the proposal by Dr. Bhatti and Mr. Varma, that the outcome from this work will be impactful and a model for future partnerships. This initiative should stimulate others in the corporate and not-for-profit sectors to harness the potential of students and mentors. It will also signal how collaborative approaches can help strengthen and diversify our Calgary economy to help position it for future success.

Investing in this unique *MRU – An AI Powered Digital Twin for Trucks* project would undoubtedly give our students a real-world, meaningful experience that could have significant benefits to our City.

Sincerely,

Brian Traynor
Acting Dean, Faculty of Business and Communications Studies