This year, we also extended our cohorts to a four-month duration to improve Associates’ experience and to reduce time pressure associated with delivering the program. This change aligned nicely with university semesters, bolstering the overall interest in our program. Incredibly, nearly half of this year’s Associates moved to Calgary for the program, demonstrating the Lab’s strength as a means of attracting new talent to the region.

In year 2, three cohorts of Associates learned AltaML’s methodology to transform business through responsible applied AI. Within each cohort, teams working with the founding industry partners—ATB, TransAlta, Spartan Controls and Suncor—tackled a machine learning use case from ideation to working model to recommending new business and data initiatives. The Associates also advanced promising use cases from earlier cohorts, and overall, worked on 20+ AI projects across the finance, utilities, industrial and energy sectors.

Demand remains high: in two years, over 2,700 individuals from across Canada competed for around 125 spots in the Lab, with a completion rate of 98% for the 4-month program. The overall employment rate for alumni is 91%, and the rate for in-market hires, i.e. data science roles in Calgary, is 73%, with some individuals finding jobs outside Calgary and some returning to study. Undoubtedly, the economic impact of attracting, and especially retaining, these professionals to our region is significant.

The immense momentum of the Lab inspired an extension of the model to the public sector, and GovLab.ai was launched in May 2022. Talent accelerators are a key avenue to help position Canada as a leader in the digital economy, particularly in responsible and ethical applied AI, and we could not have asked for better founding partners to help us build the Applied AI Lab into the success that it is. We look forward to another great year!

Nicole Janssen and Cory Janssen
Co-CEOs, AltaML

Seemingly in the blink of an eye, another year of the Applied AI Lab is complete. There was a palpable excitement when we were finally able to welcome Associates into the office under a hybrid work model, and it’s been great to build relationships in person. Over the past 2 years, relationships with the Lab’s industry partners – Suncor, ATB, TransAlta and Spartan Controls – have deepened, with each new cohort of Lab teams tackling new use cases while maturing use cases from prior cohorts. The Lab truly showcases a collaborative approach to innovation and long-term value creation for all partners, and we are so proud of the team making it all happen.

From deepening relationships with top universities, to recruiting top talent for each new cohort, to providing leadership and mentorship to teams, to delivering value to the industry partners, their accomplishments add up to create massive impact. This includes a hockey stick effect for the careers of emerging talent, an acceleration of the AI journeys of our partners, and attraction to and retention of talent in Calgary.

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BY THE NUMBERS (SO FAR)

ASSOCIATES

2711 Applications
For 125 positions

98% Completion rate
123/125 Associates

37% Moved to Calgary
45/123 Associates

Highest education levels:
- 4% PhD
- 3% Diplomas / Certificates
- 29% Bachelor’s
- 62% Masters

Most common alma mater:
- LightHouse Labs • McMaster University • SAIT • Simon Fraser University • University of Alberta • University of British Columbia • University of Calgary • University of Lethbridge • University of Toronto • University of Waterloo • University of Windsor

EMPLOYMENT

91% Employment

73% Associates hired into data science roles in Calgary

7% Associates returned to school in a related program

$75-100K
Average reported salary

Roles our Associates get hired into:
- Data Scientist
- Machine Learning Developer
- Software Engineer
- Data Analyst
- Data Engineer
- Business Analyst
- ML / AI / Data Science Internship

Select employers hiring our Associates:
- AltaML
- AlphaLayer
- AMII
- ATB
- City of Edmonton
- Deloitte
- Holometrics
- Suncor
- TD Insurance
- University of Calgary

SECTORS
- Tech • Financial services • Energy • Big 4 consulting firms • Post-secondary institutions • Public sector

Translating to the workplace

We were thrilled to work with AltaML to identify our ML/AI hiring needs and to screen candidates from their alumni pool. We selected and hired a great Applied AI Lab alumni, who ended up seeing our project through.

It was clear early on that the AltaML model works: our new hire went straight to work interpreting our business and strategy requirements and translating them into a meaningful project plan with clear milestones and deliverables, ultimately spotlighted in a demo to advisory board members at Google and at Amazon.

We were so pleased with the entire process and would recommend AltaML without reservation.

Matthew Cudmore
Co-Founder, Memory Anchor

Access to mentorship, the key to talent acceleration

From left to right: Jenny Lien (Data Science Manager), Jill Macdonald (Calgary Managing Director), Emma Lait (Year 2 Associate), Hera Tahir (Senior People Partner)
Holding a Bachelor of Applied Science in Computer Engineering, Jamyl Johnson applied to be a part of Cohort 6 of the Applied AI Lab. Already skilled in coding and back end operations, his goal was to gain hands-on experience in developing real world solutions.

Fast forward to 2022, Jamyl was selected as an Associate for the Applied AI Lab and began working at AltaML with TransAlta as the industry partner. Jamyl said he saw the opportunity as a stepping stone to get his foot in the door and accelerate his career trajectory.

“The biggest thing I’ve learned was actually being able to understand what it takes to put a model into development from start-to-finish,” he explained. “Working with AltaML and TransAlta really emphasized the business side of things with presentations and collaborations.”

On top of that, Jamyl said the firsthand experience with exploratory data analysis (EDA) in the Lab prepared him for his current role as a data scientist with headversity.

“I would not have my current job if it weren’t for taking part in such a well-rounded program,” he said.

Our amazing partners

ATB is thrilled to join AltaML, along with other industry partners, on a journey to invest in Alberta’s experienced AI talent pool. With a wealth of tech talent, a world class AI research institution, and a unique “can-do” spirit — we believe Alberta has all the pieces needed to be a global center for applied AI.

Att B, we’ve seen the benefit of welcoming 37 AltaML Associates to our organization as part of multiple cohorts, each joining a cross functional team that is working to solve real business challenges. Each cohort has built on the success of the previous one by taking on increasingly complex challenges spanning client segmentation, sizing, and product recommendation. Through the Applied AI Lab we have been able to rapidly test new ideas that bring us closer to our clients and their specific needs. Our opportunity as a corporate citizen is to continue to raise awareness around the opportunities and challenges we are trying to solve with this technology.

We are proud to be part of building the next generation of AI/ML talent alongside AltaML in support of Alberta’s future.

Dan Semmens
SVP & Head of Data and AI, ATB Financial

Mentorship from a team of AI experts

Having completed her PhD in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Alberta, Laleh Shamaei applied to Cohort 6 of the Applied AI Lab, with the goal of learning how to apply machine learning to real-world problems.

Once accepted, Laleh relocated from Edmonton to Calgary and was placed within AltaML’s ATB team. During her time at AltaML, Laleh was able to use her engineering expertise to find analytical solutions to help advance ATB’s client needs.

“It was a great opportunity to work on real-world use cases with mentorship from a team of AI experts, and a life changing experience for me,” Laleh explained.

During her time in the Lab, Laleh was able to improve her communication skills, build her problem solving abilities and deepen her machine learning skills. She credits the hands-on experience to setting her up for success in the workforce.

Laleh is still living in Calgary, having secured a permanent position as a Consultant with Deloitte Omnia, within the Data Visualization Group.

“The biggest thing I’ve learned was actually being able to understand what it takes to put a model into development from start-to-finish,” he explained. “Working with AltaML and TransAlta really emphasized the business side of things with presentations and collaborations.”
Looking to jump-start your career in tech?
altamlailab.com/applyassociates

Looking to hire industry-ready data science talent?
Contact Hera Tahir: hera@altaml.com

Looking to accelerate your Analytics and Data Science Practice?
Contact Pranav Jha: pranav@altaml.com

The AltaML Applied AI Lab is supported in part by the Calgary Economic Development Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund.

Cohort 8 (Year 3 Associates) in action at the Calgary office.