



# RESEARCH2REALITY

Shining a light on research & innovation.

## Solving Problems With a Little Bit of Everything

An interview with University of British Columbia researchers:

**Peter Zandstra**, Biomedical Engineer, Director, UBC School of Biomedical Engineering

**Nadine Truter**, Graduate Student, UBC School of Biomedical Engineering

**Laura Stankiewicz**, PhD Student, UBC School of Biomedical Engineering

**Nika Shakiba**, Biomedical Engineer, Assistant Professor, UBC School of Biomedical Engineering

and **Alexi Michael**, Master's Student, UBC School of Biomedical Engineering

### Peter Zandstra

Biomedical engineering is a great catalyst for bringing together different disciplines and different perspectives. But I think one of the things that's also very exciting about biomedical engineering is it's also emerging as an independent discipline in and of itself, where people are able to both work with others to solve problems, but actually start to think about what are the important ones to solve, and have the skills and knowledge base to start solving them as leaders of those teams.

### Nadine Truter

When I learned about biomedical engineering I was like, wow, this is perfect. Because I'm really interested in the human body and how it works, and also why it doesn't work. And then also I'm really interested in like math and problem solving and coming up with solutions.

TODAY'S RESEARCH. TOMORROW'S REALITY.



### **Laura Stankiewicz**

I think the coolest thing right now is the fact that we have all of these old problems that we have been studying for decades, and now we have new technologies that can look at them in a whole new way. So for example, in my research I'm studying a human organ, whereas before we can only look at this problem in mice, and as we all know humans are not large mice. And using these new technologies, we can get so much data from a human sample that we can really feel like we're using that sample for a good purpose.

### **Nika Shakiba**

What I love about the (UBC) School of Biomedical Engineering is that it really fosters this community where interdisciplinary, diverse thinkers can meet and exchange expertise — not really work in silos and, you know, communicate via email, but really like meet head to head and exchange ideas in a way that you can't always get. I think that's the beauty of biomedical engineering. That's always drawn me here.

### **Alexi Michael**

The interface between healthcare and medicine, and even engineering and computer science, these are all different things that I have to work with throughout my research. And what's really exciting about that is that you start to get new perspectives into what things are actually working. So I never really had a background in computer science or programming or anything like that. It really gave me the opportunity to learn these new



things. So I find that every different class that I had to go to, I learned something new. I met someone who had experience in a new field that I didn't know about. I got to just experience and learn a lot of cool new things.