



## Gurkaran Chowdhry

Written by Sara Evans, M.Sc. Trainee



Gurkaran (Karan) Chowdhry completed a BSc in Physics at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario in 2018. During that time, he worked in the soft matter physics lab of Dr. Kari Dalnoki-Veress, where he worked on predicting wrinkling in thin films. After his undergraduate degree, he decided to continue studying soft matter/biophysics. He completed an MSc in physics at Dalhousie University under the supervision of Dr. Laurent Kreplak in close collaboration with Dr. John Frampton from the School of Biomedical Engineering. He developed and characterized a contact drawing method to manufacture collagen fibres with a high level of control. His research is the basis for the spin-off company, 3D BioFibR.

3D BioFibR began in March 2020 and was incorporated in June 2020. Before the launch of the company, he participated in Ready2Launch, the precursor to Lab2Market. This program was a useful introduction to business. While pitching to Innovacorp for the Early Stage Commercialization Fund (ESCF), he met Kevin Sullivan, who was later hired as the CEO of 3D BioFibr.

Karan switched from focusing on science to the business side and became the Director of Business Development and Operations. He took on this role because he enjoyed the technical communication aspect. One of his main day-to-day tasks is to talk to companies. He pitches their current technology to try to make deals. He also learns about current needs and works on driving the R&D of the company to meet these needs. Karan is also in charge of the IP portfolio and writes new patents. He also raises investments. In the transition from science to business, he had to learn many new skills on the job. During business pitches, he would try new things and get instant feedback based on whether or not



a deal was made or funds were raised. The feedback leads to constant improvement.

Karan enjoys working in a start-up environment. It is fast-paced and fun. Because start-ups are resource-poor, there is more creativity. His favourite part of the job is talking to people. His least favourite part is sitting at his desk and writing grants.

He advises current students to learn what's important so that they can prioritize tasks and not burn out. Say yes to new experiences.