FAQ: Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning

What is the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning?

The Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning will be the first of its kind in Canada. It will be unique among Canadian universities with its integrated focus on providing students with experience-based learning opportunities, helping teachers become better teachers and conducting ongoing research into teaching and learning.

Other post-secondary institutions may incorporate some aspects of these concepts, but none have taken the University of Calgary's holistic approach to improving the learning experience for all students and teachers.

How will the institute improve teaching and learning?

Through research, the institute will enhance the learning and teaching experience at the University of Calgary and across the country.

Teachers will have access to leading edge resources, learning spaces and technology, and be given an opportunity to investigate their own teaching techniques. These pioneer teachers will explore how best to reach their students through research questions instructors themselves want answered. There will also be opportunities for students to become the teachers, helping provide vital insight into how they learn best. Lessons learned from these experiments will then be translated to the rest of campus, and beyond.

What is the College of Discovery, Creativity and Innovation?

Research and learning go hand-in-hand. The College of Discovery, Creativity and Innovation, within the Taylor institute, will provide all students with research opportunities from the very beginning of their undergraduate degree.

The College of Discovery, Creativity and Innovation will also bring together students from different faculties to collaborate on finding solutions to challenges facing society. It will ensure that University of Calgary students develop the critical thinking, problem-solving and research skills that will give them the edge in competing in a global economy. Creative solutions sparked by these student collaborations with the guidance of graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, academic staff and other leading experts will also help Albertans tackle some of the world’s biggest issues.

What is the Office of Experiential Learning?

Experiential learning will be at the heart of everything we do at the University of Calgary, ensuring students take a leadership role in their own learning.

The Office of Experiential Learning will be located within the Taylor Institute and will dramatically increase the number of hands-on learning opportunities for students, including internships and service projects designed to provide career-building experiences. This shift outside the classroom ensures learning takes place where students choose to work, volunteer or lead.

What will the new institute look like?

Gibbs Gage/Diamond Schmitt Architects have collaborated to create a cutting-edge two-storey, 4,000 square-metre facility which will become a signature building on the University of Calgary campus.
The new structure breaks free of the classroom mould by incorporating the latest advances in learning spaces. It features designs that enable walls, floors and furniture to be transformed based on the needs of the students using them. A public intellectual space included in the Taylor Institute could be set up as a theatre, a flat floor dance studio, a public lecture hall or a student gathering hub, with risers and floors and walls constantly re-configured to best meet the demands of the user.

Conceived to maximize natural light and weaving the most advanced learning technology throughout the space, the new Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning will serve as an ideal platform to promote advances in teaching and learning.

**How much will this building cost?**

The $40-million Taylor family donation will provide $30 million to construct the new facility on the site of the former Nickle Arts Museum and an additional $10 million in information technology infrastructure upgrades.

**When will it be completed?**

The new Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning will be open to students and faculty in early 2016, in time for the University of Calgary to celebrate its 50th anniversary.