



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

Labour Relations Strategy

A framework for moving forward

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1. Introduction & Background

The Executive Leadership Team (“ELT”) of the University of Calgary (the “University”) recognizes that a comprehensive Labour Relations Strategy is required to ensure alignment with the University’s Eyes High vision and supporting academic and research goals. Further, any Labour Relations Strategy needs to fit into the broader Vice President Finance & Services Foundational Plan.

The labour relations function is an integral component of the University’s operations and must be managed by ELT not only to ensure consistency with priorities, but also to ensure full consideration of the risks, costs and impacts of decisions. The Labour Relations Strategy identifies long-term themes and incorporates focus areas and operational actions. A coordinated strategic approach to labour relations will successfully contribute to University’s initiatives, provide clear accountabilities, enhance labour relations understanding, enhance communications and relationships and drive outcomes.

a) Eyes High, Vision & Mission

The University depends on the contributions of all employees and those acting on behalf of the University to create a high-quality learning and research environment and support the [Eyes High](#) strategic direction.

The Labour Relations Strategy is intended to provide a framework to guide the employment relationship and assist in fulfilling our goals.

b) Institutional Priorities

The Labour Relations Strategic Plan aligns labour relations with the institutional priorities found in the Academic, Research and Vice President Finance & Services Foundational Plans.

Academic Plan Priorities	Research Plan Priorities	Foundational Plan Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talent Attraction, Development and Retention • Sustainability • Connection with Community • Internationalization • Leadership • Inter-disciplinary • Teaching and Research Integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match Strengths with Opportunities • Increase Research Capacity • Create a Dynamic Environment to Promote Research Excellence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling Excellent Learning and Research • Operate with Excellence • Be a Critical Part of the University Family • Identify and Mitigate Risk to the University

Together, these priorities form the roadmap that will lead us to our Eyes High objectives.

c) Environmental Factors

There are a number of different external elements that have a direct and significant impact on the University’s approach to labour relations.

Specifically, the Alberta economy is vulnerable to any set of circumstances that could reduce the demand for Alberta’s resources. This creates uncertainty and directly impacts government and private sector funding and investment in post-secondary institutions.

In addition to the macroeconomic factors, additional factors influence the priority setting environment, including:

- Changing student population and demand
- Competitive climate for talent within support staff, management and academic roles
- Competition amongst post-secondary institutions
- Increased specialization
- Economic pressures due to population growth and rising employee costs such as pension and long term disability (LTD) premiums
- Change of provincial government direction

KEY STRATEGIC LABOUR RELATIONS THEMES

The University has identified four key long-term labour relations themes. These themes recognize the relationship between our foundational strategies and building a collaborative work environment to achieve Eyes High.

I. STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

Our work encourages excellence when we successfully align our labour relations/people management strategies with institutional priorities.

II. CREATING A FLEXIBLE AND RESILIENT CULTURE

Our work responds to change with flexibility, creativity and innovation when we proactively identify opportunities and challenges.

III. ENCOURAGING A RESPECTFUL, ENGAGED AND ENABLED WORKFORCE

Our work nurtures respect and enables employees, managers and leaders by applying our skills and knowledge to ensure effective and informed decisions.

IV. EXPANDING EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Our work supports education and development when we commit to ongoing improvement and development of employees, managers and leaders.

Each theme aligns labour relations activities with the University's core values and institutional plans. In turn, these themes provide the ability to focus on operational actions that drive organizational excellence.

ACHIEVING RESULTS

Focus Areas

The following focus areas are derived from the Key Strategic Labour Relations Themes and will assist to set priorities, as well as to continue to offer timely and transformative labour relations support.

Focus Area #1: *Growing Labour Relations Capacity across the University*

This *Focus Area* means building internal capacity and enabling leaders to make informed decisions and achieve operational goals. This will be achieved through the following strategies:

- a) Build confidence of leaders and managers in labour relations knowledge and application while ensuring there is an enhanced understanding of the strategic opportunities present in labour relations.
- b) Leverage information management tools to capture institutional knowledge and support informed and contextual decision-making.
- c) Increase labour relations capacity and understanding across the University.

Focus Area #2: *Proactive and Strategic Labour Relations*

This *Focus Area* means building a flexible and resilient culture where collaborative relationships are nurtured and long-term sustainable objectives are prioritized. This will be achieved through the following strategies:

- a) Create an environment of effective consultation that promotes relationship development.
- b) Strengthen relationships with employees through communication.
- c) Promote collaborative and timely dispute resolution.
- d) Undertake comprehensive labour risk management.
- e) Ensure governance coordination

- f) Foster internal engagement and practice effective change management.

Focus Area #3: *Strengthening the “One University” Approach to Employee/Labour Relations*

This *Focus Area* means building an engaged workforce that enables all leaders and employees to align with the University’s vision and goals. This will be achieved through the following strategies:

- a) Enhance collaborative and consistent labour relations approaches across employee groups.
- b) Prioritize and resource effective collective bargaining.
- c) Ensure the University is able to recruit, engage, retain, and develop management staff and senior leaders required to support the achievement of organizational goals.
- d) Strengthen focus on HR Policy Development.