



UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY

*energizing*   
**EYES HIGH**  
Strategy 2017-22

**Focus Group Working Paper**

January 2017

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# 1. Executive Summary

The University of Calgary invited members of its community to participate in a series of focus group sessions. The purpose was to seek advice about necessary changes to the *Eyes High* strategy that will advance the university toward the achievement of its vision by 2022. Focus groups were employed to investigate the three (3) foundational commitments of the *Eyes High* strategy as well as two (2) additional areas – campus culture and student experience. The objective was to help the Energizing *Eyes High* team better understand the impact that the *Eyes High* strategy has had from the perspective of students, faculty, staff, alumni and other members of the University of Calgary community.

Focus group participants were asked to evaluate four or five factors listed under each foundational commitment as well as two (2) additional areas on a 5-point scale from 1 (low) to 5 (high) on “Where are we now?” and “Where should we be?”, and then make recommendations for changes. This approach is based on Kim and Mauborgne’s ERRC (Eliminate, Reduce, Raise, and Create) concept as an abridged analytic tool to develop organizational strategy.<sup>1</sup> With mean scores (“Where we are now”) on the quantitative data in the range of 2.1 and above, it seems clear that participants are generally supportive of factors identified within the five (5) commitment areas under investigation. The overwhelming response is for the University of Calgary to “raise” or put additional effort and resources into each of the five commitment areas. Qualitative responses were analyzed using qualitative data coding.

Shown below are focus group results grouped within each of the five (5) commitment areas.

## **Sharpen Focus on Research and Scholarship**

### Focus

- Eliminate or broaden the “six thematic areas”;
- Shift the focus from the “volume” of scholarly work to the “impact”; and
- Encourage exploration and serendipitous discoveries.

### Collaboration

- Provide resources / incentives for increasing interdisciplinary collaboration;
- Build a culture of collaboration that integrates faculty and graduate students; and
- Build collaborations with community stakeholders and international partners.

### Support

- Increase support for the administrative side of research projects;
- Increase support for purchasing and maintaining equipment;
- Improve working conditions for post-doctoral scholars;
- Ensure graduate student stipends satisfy minimum employment standards; and
- Allow graduate students to keep their stipends after winning external awards.

### Translation

- Provide more support for entrepreneurship and commercialization;
- Review the measurement of research impact;
- Share research with the community via tools such as infographics and webinars;
- Find ways to integrate research into course materials; and

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<sup>1</sup> See Blue Ocean Strategy Tools, [www.blueoceanstrategy.com/tools/errc-grid/](http://www.blueoceanstrategy.com/tools/errc-grid/).

- Broaden the number of measures in the areas of collaboration and translation to capture and encourage quality and activity in professional schools, arts, social sciences and the hard sciences.

#### Results

- Relabel this factor given confusion about its meaning; and
- Broaden the definition since it seems to imply “building partnerships with corporations”.

### **Enrich the Quality and Breadth of Learning**

#### Leadership, Governance and Evaluation

- Maintain resources and support given to the governance of teaching and learning;
- Increase resources / attention towards finding appropriate methods of assessing teaching quality; and
- Ensure the commitment to teaching cascades throughout the academy.

#### Quality of Instruction

- Increase incentives for teaching faculty to participate in professional development programs; and
- Provide training for teaching assistants and doctoral students to improve quality of instruction.

#### Programs with Identifiable Outcomes

- Prioritize the need to engage in curriculum review throughout the university;
- Develop the appropriate tools for mapping student outcomes to course andragogy;
- Ensure students are able to translate their academic skills into job-related requirements; and
- Improve the content of course outlines by linking identifiable outcomes to course activities.

#### Engaging Students in Research and Experiential Learning

- Increase the experiential content of courses; and
- Increase research opportunities for undergraduate students considering graduate studies.

#### Flexibility

- Maintain activities: despite confusion about the label, the university is moving in the right direction; and
- Investigate flexibility in testing methods.

### **Fully Integrate the University with the Community**

#### Engaging Our Community

- Address the tension between doing more for international versus local communities;
- Focus on engaging with the local community; and
- Increase communication on the university’s role in community-based projects.

#### Service to Community

- Continue to work with the community on approaches to diversifying the economy;
- Increase access to the university facilities by reducing participation costs; and
- Identify metrics and communicate the university’s contribution to the community.

#### Collaborative projects

- Increase numbers of collaborative projects by working with a broader range of organizations; and
- Increase interdisciplinary collaborations to address community issues.

### Alumni Engagement

- Develop activities that encourage two-way interaction between alumni and the university; and
- Develop activities/initiatives for students to ensure a long-term attachment to the university.

### **Student Experience**

#### Academic Support

- Improve the following components of academic support over the next five (5) years: IT services, TA quality, consistency across departments, and communications about available support resources;
- Review ways to improve support for special groups, including, for example, international students, struggling students, smaller faculties and programs such as the School of Creative and Performing Arts (SCPA); and
- Increase the number of academic advisors and have them follow students through their programs.

#### Accessibility of Resources

- Increase awareness about the programs and services that students can access; and
- Establish a central information portal that includes digital and face-to-face contact.

#### Physical and Social Spaces

- Increase the availability of quality social and study spaces on campus;
- Increase maintenance of existing spaces; and
- Increase access to electrical outlets and improve digital connectivity across the campus.

#### Co-curricular Opportunities

- Increase the number of communication channels on available co-curricular activities;
- Allow students to sign up for co-curricular activities after they know their academic schedules;
- Develop certificates for students to highlight additional activities in which they participated; and
- Increase number of international experiences to align with other campus globalization activities.

#### Health and Wellness

- Allocate more resources to ease access and reduce wait-times, especially for mental health;
- Make people more informed about the available resources; and
- Encourage students to use the resources.

### **Campus Culture**

#### Communication

- Create a greater sense of unity and belonging on campus so that the university is less segregated;
- Build more two-way versus one-way communication approaches;
- Identify ways to reduce communication overload; and
- Find ways to improve communication at the middle level of management.

#### Leadership and Innovation

- Emphasize need for respect and acceptance of diversity;
- Develop incentives / recognition to encourage participation in professional development;

- Separate leadership and innovation as two distinct factors, as they are two different constructs; and
- Direct more resources toward developing an innovative culture.

#### Healthy and Balanced Lifestyle

- Review workloads and find ways to increase flexibility in schedules and work locations;
- Focus on mental health (i.e., increase existing resources to expand access);
- Maintain focus on mental health as it is an important issue;
- Find ways to reduce compensation gap between AUPE and MAPS employees; and
- Develop steps to improve safety practices and working conditions across the campus.

#### Sustainable Campus

- Continue with the current sustainability initiatives; and
- Encourage research on sustainability issues.

## 2. Background and Objectives

### 2.1 BACKGROUND

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In 2011, the University of Calgary embarked on a journey to define its future direction. It had experienced significant momentum and growth in a community known for its energy, opportunity and expectation of excellence. There was a shared sense that the ‘time was right’ to raise the bar on the impact of the University of Calgary locally, nationally and internationally. A broad consultative process was launched in January, 2011, as part of Project Next. The key deliverables were to:

- provide opportunities for the campus community to listen, learn and share;
- build consensus and alignment for the future;
- articulate an inspirational strategic statement and institutional values;
- increase pride through clarity of purpose; and
- establish a framework for decision-making and resource allocation.

Over 4,000 students, faculty members, staff, alumni and community leaders participated in the process through a broad range of engagement tools, including workshops, social media and one-on-one conversations. Based on this consultation process, the *Eyes High* strategic planning document was approved in June, 2011. The *Eyes High* strategy articulates an inspirational strategy statement and is supported by three foundational commitments: (1) sharpen focus on research and scholarship, (2) enrich the quality and breadth of learning, and (3) fully integrate the university with the community. The *Eyes High* strategy served as a guide to planning, development activities, priority identification, and resource allocation, as well as measuring and reporting progress over the past five years. It also served as a beacon for change, elevating excellence and building a strong community around a shared future state.

Given that 2016 is the University of Calgary’s 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, it was both timely and opportunistic to “energize” the *Eyes High* strategy so it could continue to provide the platform from which the University of Calgary leverages its momentum and aspirations. The process to energize the *Eyes High* strategy was similar to that of Project Next. It provided opportunities for the university and its primary stakeholders to review progress to date. Additionally, members of the community were invited to share in the development of a new future for the University of Calgary. Five background documents were developed to inform the Energizing *Eyes High* consultation process. They describe where we started in 2011 and the path we would take to achieve success by 2016.

### 2.2 OBJECTIVES

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The results of the focus groups will be used to help the Energizing *Eyes High* team better understand the impact that the *Eyes High* strategy has had from the perspective of students, faculty, staff, alumni and other members of the University of Calgary community. The results will also be used to develop recommendations for change.

# 3. Methodology

This section outlines the focus group administration and provides descriptions of participants, the instruments used, how the data were collected, and how analyses were conducted. The focus groups were an important part of the *Energizing Eyes High* consultation and provided an opportunity for anyone who was interested to engage and provide feedback.

University Relations promoted the focus groups in various mass communications and social media. The focus groups were conducted on campus. The focus groups were advertised through the *Energizing Eyes High* website. Participants were promised confidentiality and anonymity, and could withdraw their participation at any time. At the end of the focus group, participants had the opportunity to enter a contest to win an iPad Pro tablet computer (10 computers were given away). Eligibility rules were provided on the contest site. For the purpose of analysis, community data were extracted on November 30, 2016.

## 3.1 PARTICIPANT PROFILE

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### Participants

A total of 893 people participated in 39 focus group sessions. Of the total 39 focus group sessions, 18 were available to all members of the community through an open registration website, 17 were special sessions available for faculties and departments, and 4 were external sessions for alumni, donors, and community leaders. Shown in Figures 1-3 are participants by focus group session type.

Figure 1 – Focus Group Participants in Open Registration Sessions (n=325)

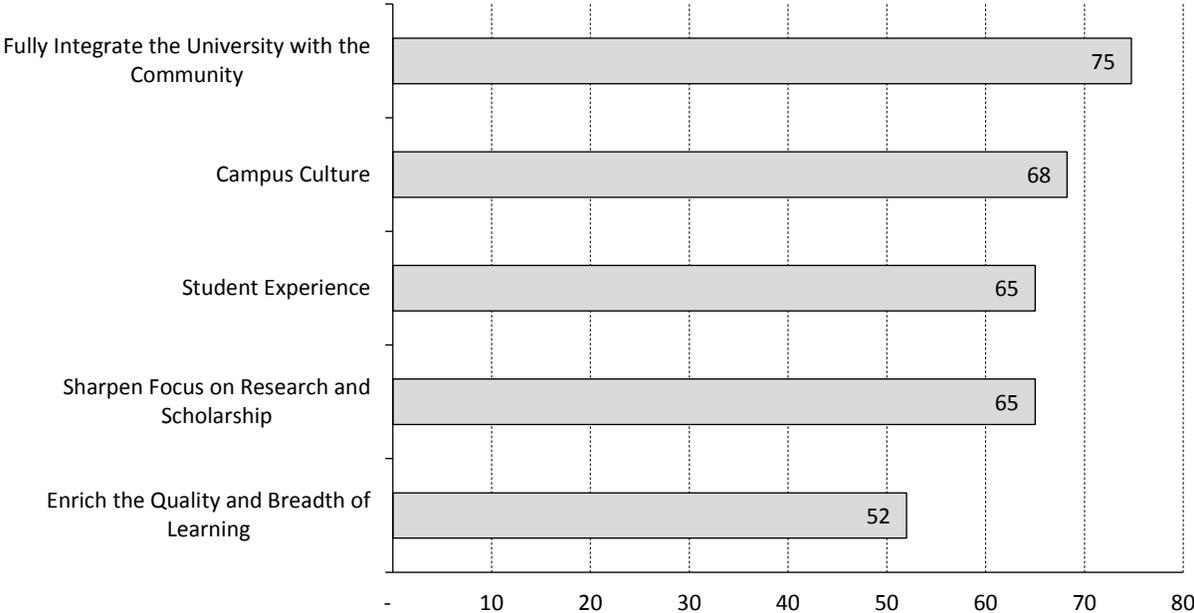


Figure 2 – Focus Group Participants in Special Sessions (n=495)

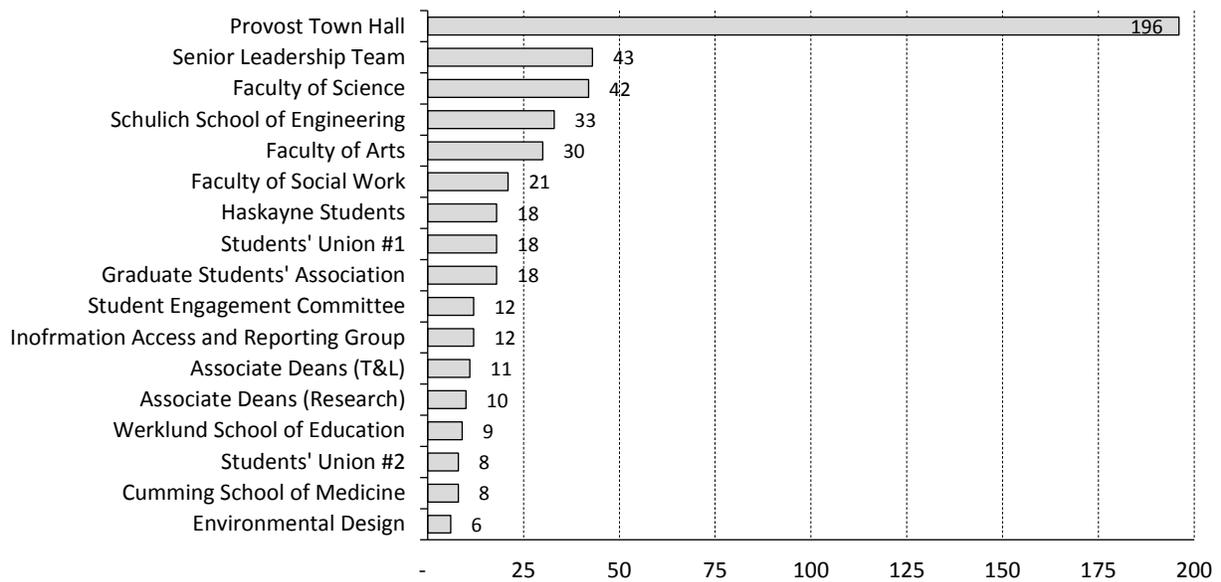
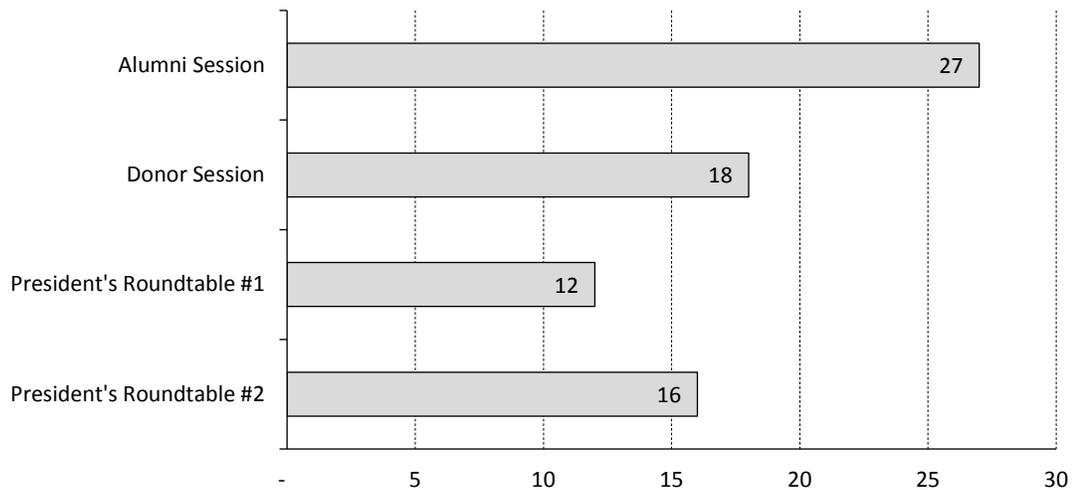


Figure 3 – Focus Group Participants in External Sessions (n=73)



### 3.2 DATA COLLECTION

The Office of Institutional Analysis (OIA) was responsible for managing the focus groups. This involved liaising with the Energizing Eyes High Secretariat, and preparing background materials and tools. The OIA was also responsible for compiling data from the focus groups, reviewing completed grids and transcribing notes and comments. The focus groups began on October 3, 2016 and ended on November 30, 2016. A pilot focus group with the Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning) and Associate Deans (Research) was held on August 27, 2016.

### 3.3 FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS

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The focus group sessions were structured to gather feedback on progress made since 2011, and to seek advice concerning necessary changes that will advance the university toward the achievement of its vision by 2022. The three commitment areas of the *Eyes High* strategy were investigated as well as two additional areas – campus culture and student experience. These five (5) categories are as follows:

1. Sharpen Focus on Research and Scholarship;
2. Enrich the Quality and Breadth of Learning;
3. Fully Integrate the University with the Community;
4. Campus Culture; and
5. Student Experience.

The *Eyes High* strategy lists four to five factors under each of the five commitment areas. These factors describe how the university will achieve its vision. For example, within the commitment area “Enrich the Quality and Breadth of Learning”, the five factors are leadership, governance and evaluation; quality of instruction; programs with identifiable outcomes; engaging students in research and experiential learning; and flexibility.

On a 5-point scale (from low to high), each group was asked to evaluate the factors according to two questions, “Where are we now?” and “Where should we be?”, and then make recommendations for changes. Participants were also invited to suggest new factors that the university should consider. These two questions with a low-to-high response rating were also used in Project Next in 2011. This approach is based on Kim and Mauborgne’s ERRC (Eliminate, Reduce, Raise, and Create) concept as an abridged analytic tool to develop organizational strategy.<sup>2</sup>

Focus group and survey guides were developed that contained background information about each of the five (5) commitment areas. The guides also listed initiatives undertaken over the past five (5) years to achieve the *Eyes High* vision. Participants could refer to these guides for information when completing the focus group activity and the survey questions.

### 3.4 ANALYSIS

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The analysis involved comparing response values for the two questions. A difference score was calculated by subtracting the score of “Where are we now?” from the score of “Where should we be?” The difference score was then used to determine the course of action recommended by the respondent. The resulting courses of action would be to

- Eliminate the initiative/strategy (E);
- Raise focus on the initiative/strategy (R);
- Reduce focus on the initiative/strategy (R);
- Create a new initiative/strategy (C); or
- Maintain our focus on the initiative/strategy (M).

Results were then summarized across the factors to create one aggregate ERRC grid for each of the commitment areas (i.e., the three university commitments, student experience and campus culture). A final ERRC grid highlighted which factors the group felt the university could eliminate because they were no longer relevant, or reduce because they provide little competitive advantage.

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<sup>2</sup> See Blue Ocean Strategy Tools, [www.blueoceanstrategy.com/tools/errc-grid/](http://www.blueoceanstrategy.com/tools/errc-grid/).

For example, a low score of 1 for “Where should we be?” as compared to a higher score of 2 for “Where are we now?” means that we can reduce our investment in the factor or perhaps eliminate it completely. A high score of 5 for “Where should we be?” as compared to a lower score of 4 for “Where are we now?” means that investment in the factor should be increased (in the opinion of the group).

**Comments Theming.** Each group discussion was summarized through three recommendations. Participants also contributed a considerable number of comments for each factor. Qualitative data analysis of the recommendations and comments was conducted. The analysis involved two levels of coding. The first level was an initial review of the comments to identify major themes. The second level was to label comments according to one or two of the identified themes. To ensure validity, the themes that emerged through human review (i.e., direct coding) were compared to those that emerged through the application of coding processes embedded in the NVivo program. The content analysis was conducted by a small research team led by Dr. Loren Falkenberg, Chair of the Energizing *Eyes High* Working Group, and analysts in OIA.

# 4. Results

Discussion of the results is organized according to the five (5) commitments areas. In the focus groups, participants were provided with a few paragraphs describing the background for each commitment area, and a brief description of each factor. This information is provided, along with the results, in each section.

## 4.1 SHARPEN FOCUS ON RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

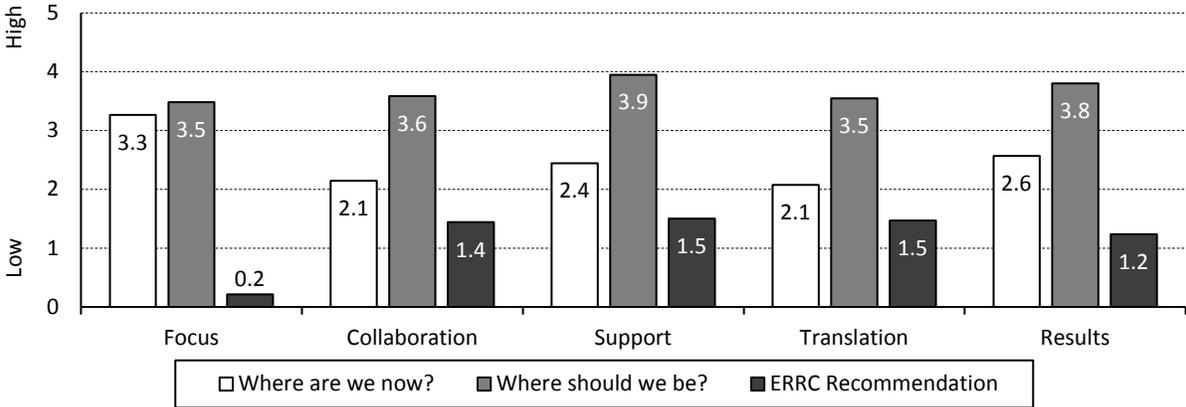
We provided the following narrative to focus group participants about where we started on our path to sharpen our focus on research and scholarship on the basis of five (5) key factors:

*In 2011, when the Eyes High strategy was released, the University of Calgary was ranked the ninth most research-intensive university in Canada, based on direct research funding. The strategy declared that we would strengthen our commitment to research impact by supporting more faculty members to achieve higher levels of success. We would use our human resources effectively to enable excellence in research by any international standard. We would support basic research that builds the foundation for advancing knowledge in core disciplines.*

*To secure additional research funding we agreed to look for innovative, creative, focused and relevant research opportunities. Remaining relevant to our communities would demand increased research collaboration across disciplines, units and time zones. We would hold each other accountable to higher standards, in all stages of research, from conception to execution, results and communication. And because excellence in research also demands excellence in facilities and infrastructure, we committed to developing a proactive and systematic approach to maintaining and enhancing research support needs on campus, at extended facilities, and in the field.*

As shown in Figure 1, with mean scores (“Where are we now?”) in the range of 2.1 to 3.3, participants are generally supportive of the existing activities/processes supporting each factor in this commitment area. The overwhelming response is for the University of Calgary to “raise” or put additional effort and resources into each of the five factors. The factor showing the largest difference between “Where are we now?” and “Where we should be?” is "Support".

Figure 4 – ERRC Grid for Sharpen Focus on Research and Scholarship (Mean Ratings from Focus Groups)



## 1. Focus

We asked participants to evaluate the progress we have made over the last five years (and need to make over the next five years) to increase our research impact in thematic areas where we had strength and interest, making an unwavering commitment to internationally esteemed scholarship in those areas. Recommendations centered on the disciplines included within the six thematic areas. The dominant themes in the recommendations are listed below:

- Eliminate “the six thematic areas” or broaden them. Some of the justifications are as follows:
  - A research university needs to cover broad areas and disciplines;
  - More research themes are needed (the current areas of focus are not inclusive of other areas, such as Aboriginal, international and multicultural relations that need to be important for research in the future). One thematic area, “human dynamics”, is much broader than the other ones; and
  - Find ways to reduce the perception of arts, humanities, and social sciences being sidelined.
- Shift the focus from volume to the impact of publications and research; and
- Encourage exploration and serendipitous discoveries (an atmosphere of excitement seems to be lacking).

One interesting series of comments related to how a focus on strategic areas can lead to an unbalanced presence of expertise, leading to problems in providing relevant curriculum for instructional programs.

## 2. Collaboration

We asked focus groups participants to evaluate the progress we have made over the last five years (and need to make over the next five years) to capitalize on the multiple perspectives, data, methodologies and concepts of collaborators across disciplines – on campus, within Calgary, across the country and through strong international partnerships. The following themes emerged from the analysis of the recommendations:

- Provide resources/incentives for increasing interdisciplinary collaboration, across campus and with external partners;
- Build a culture of collaboration, via enhanced communication across campus, that integrates faculty and graduate students; and
- Build collaborations with community stakeholders and international partners.

## 3. Support

We asked participants to evaluate the progress we have made over the last five years (and need to make over the next five years) to hire and retain talented individuals to provide the support that is critical for researchers to be leaders in their fields. The following recommendations were repeated throughout the focus groups:

- Increase support to manage the administrative side of research projects (e.g., hiring, grant renewal, ethics, etc.);
- Increase support for purchasing and maintaining equipment, and provide support for dedicated professional staff to maintain labs;
- Improve the support (i.e., working conditions) for post-doctoral scholars;
- Ensure graduate student stipends satisfy minimum employment standards; and
- Allow graduate students to keep their stipends after winning external awards.

#### **4. Translation**

We asked participants to evaluate the progress we have made over the last five years (and need to make over the next five years) to apply solutions to the real world through effective knowledge translation. We had committed to supporting faculty and staff members as they made research findings available. The following themes emerged from the analysis of recommendations:

- Provide more support for entrepreneurship and commercialization (e.g., through recognition and offering courses that help students); however, do not limit the definition of translation to commercialization;
- Review the measurement of research impact;
- Share research with the community via tools such as infographics and webinars;
- Find ways to integrate research into course materials; and
- Broaden measures/objectives in collaboration and translation to capture and encourage quality and activity in professional schools, arts, social sciences and hard sciences.

#### **5. Results**

We asked participants to evaluate the progress we have made (and need to make over the next five years) to seek strategic partnerships with industry, governments, agencies and other universities that could be partners in our mission of discovery and realization. The following themes emerged from the analysis of recommendations:

- There was confusion with the label of this factor, with some participants suggesting that it needs to be re-labelled (e.g., a number of participants thought “results” referred to publishing).
- Also, a number of groups interpreted the label to mean building partnerships with corporations, which was sometimes viewed as a biased form of funding.
- Thus, it was difficult to identify relevant recommendations for moving forward, other than to integrate these activities/processes with a factor such as “Integration”.

## 4.2 ENRICH THE QUALITY AND BREADTH OF LEARNING

We provided the following narrative to focus groups participants about where we started on our path to enrich the quality and breadth of learning on the basis of five (5) key factors:

*In 2011, when the Eyes High strategy was introduced, the University of Calgary consciously embraced its advantage in Calgary as a research-intensive learning environment – one that leverages the expertise of academic staff to provide a high-quality educational experience for students. This would involve increasing research and knowledge to create an exemplary teaching and learning environment in a research university.*

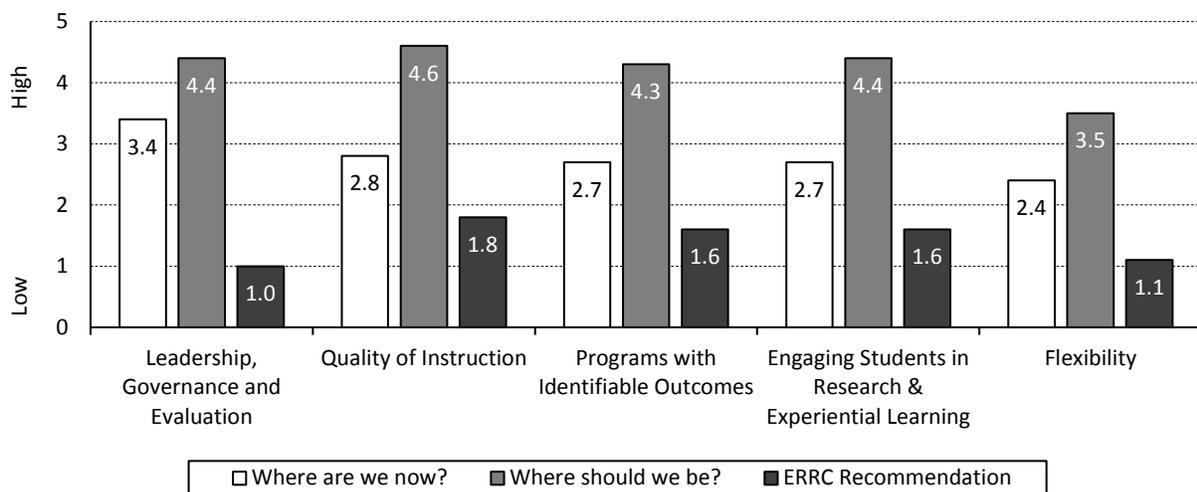
*We committed to creating a learning environment enriched by research, where we apply evidence to improve teaching and shape programs so that they prepare graduates for success, and where we engage students in the research experience through a collaborative and community-based culture.*

*We planned to review our undergraduate and graduate programs to ensure that students attain clearly identified outcomes that maximize their success after graduation – including a commitment to providing educational programs that build leadership skills in our graduates. In addition, we planned to review the needs of our communities to identify where we could increase graduate, professional and post-degree educational and research-based programs.*

*We committed to providing expert instruction, supporting the ongoing development of our passionate educators so that they could engage and challenge students through effective and innovative teaching. We also committed to engaging students fully and far beyond the classroom, focusing on co-curricular initiatives that expand our ability to prepare undergraduate and graduate students to become community leaders.*

As shown in Figure 2, with mean scores (“Where we are now?”) in the range of 2.4 to 3.4, participants are generally supportive of the existing university strategies related to teaching and learning. The overwhelming response is for the University of Calgary to “raise” or put additional effort and resources into each of the five factors. The factors showing notable differences between “Where are we now?” and “Where should we be?” were “Leadership, Governance and Evaluation” and “Quality of Instruction”.

Figure 5 – ERRC Grid for Enrich the Quality and Breadth of Learning (Mean Ratings from Focus Groups)



### **1. Leadership, Governance and Evaluation**

We asked participants to evaluate the progress we have made (and need to make over the next five years) to ensure that teaching and learning would be fully supported and recognized as a valued activity; to assign leadership responsibilities to teaching and learning; and to ensure that teaching and learning were evaluated fairly and responsibly, such that teaching development was well supported and teaching excellence was rewarded. The following themes emerged from the analysis of the recommendations:

- Continue (i.e., maintain) the resources and support given to the governance of teaching and learning;
- Increase resources and attention towards finding appropriate methods of assessing the quality of teaching. Move away from dependence on USRI results; and
- Ensure that the commitment to teaching cascades throughout the academy.

### **2. Quality of Instruction**

We asked participants to evaluate the progress we have made (and need to make over the next five years) to cultivate teaching excellence by integrating research evidence and inquiry into how we teach and how students learn; and to promote the professional development of professors, instructors, graduate students, and teaching assistants, thereby creating a culture that enables teaching and learning success. The following themes emerged from the analysis of the recommendations:

- Increase incentives for teaching faculty to participate in professional development programs that focus on improving classroom experiences at the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning; and
- Provide training for teaching assistants and doctoral students to improve their quality of instruction.

### **3. Programs with Identifiable Outcomes**

We asked participants to evaluate the progress we have made (and need to make over the next five years) to enhance the quality of student outcomes, to identify and enhance the learning outcomes for specific programs, and to review programs of study to ensure they led to appropriate outcomes. The following themes emerged from the analysis of recommendations:

- Prioritize the need to engage in curriculum review throughout the university;
- Develop the appropriate tools for mapping student outcomes to course andragogy;
- Ensure students are able to translate their academic skills into job-related requirements; and
- Improve the content of course outlines by linking identifiable outcomes to course activities.

### **4. Engaging Students in Research and Experiential Learning**

We asked participants to evaluate the progress we have made (and need to make over the next five years) to learn research skills through authentic learning experiences in their courses, assignments, fieldwork and as members of research teams. This would prepare students to critically examine the world around them, generate new knowledge, and be part of solving societal problems. The following themes emerged from the analysis of recommendations:

- Increase the experiential content of courses with activities such as (increased) time in laboratories, access to applied technologies, access to mentors and advisors, increasing relevant guest speakers, and more emphasis on problem-centered course work; and
- Increase research opportunities for undergraduate students considering graduate studies.

## 5. Flexibility

We asked participants to evaluate the progress we have made (and need to make over the next five years) to include more flexible program options, ranging from shorter programs focusing on knowledge and skills development to longer-term programs for students interested in undergraduate and graduate degree programs. The following conclusion emerged from the analysis of the recommendations:

- Participants appeared to have difficulty understanding the definition of flexibility. Despite this difficulty, they perceived that the university was moving in the right direction (e.g., more online options, self-directed learning, and allowing time for unforeseen circumstances, such as the death of a family member); and
- A second theme emerged concerning the flexibility of testing methods.

### 4.3 FULLY INTEGRATE THE UNIVERSITY WITH THE COMMUNITY

We provided the following narrative to focus groups participants about where we started on our path to enrich the quality and breadth of learning within four key factors:

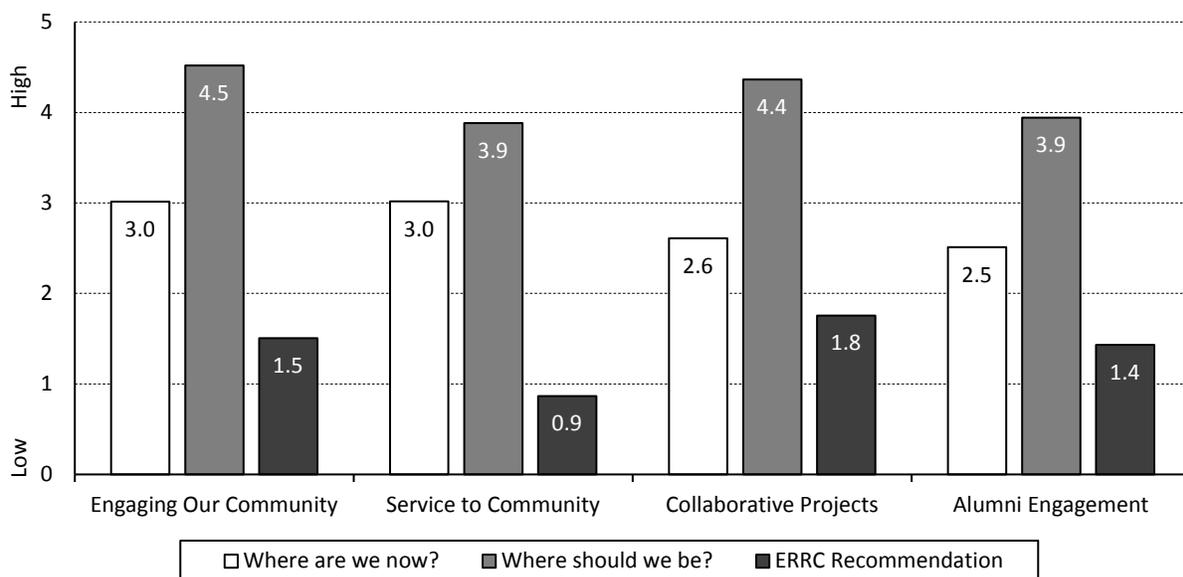
*In 2011, when the Eyes High strategy was introduced, we recognized that the University of Calgary has always been an integral part of the community. The University of Calgary was created to serve the burgeoning intellectual, educational and research needs of Calgary and the surrounding region. As the city enjoyed increased national and global prominence, expectations of the university increased as well. Early on, we committed to building our global impact, becoming – like our host city – a destination for people with ambitious dreams.*

*We planned to enhance Calgary’s profile through broad, two-way, mutually beneficial engagement with the community. This effort would encompass teaching and learning, scholarship and research, community leadership and ideas, and the everyday wellbeing and fulfillment provided by sport, culture, youth programs, adult learning and the outdoors. Our students, faculty and staff were integral to this community of engagement, creating the vibrant culture of a well-run organization and sharing in the expression of our collective community identity through our services and offerings.*

*The University of Calgary would create a portal to the best minds in the world, and at the same time elevate Alberta voices and ideas to the world stage. Locally, provincially, nationally and globally, we committed to acting as a nexus for ideas. The university would manifest as an institution of which all Albertans could be proud.*

As shown in Figure 3, with mean scores (“Where are we now”) in the range of 2.5 to 3.0, participants are generally supportive of the existing university strategies related to integrating the university with the community. Participants recommend that the university “raise” or put additional effort and resources into all the factors. The factor that received the largest support for additional effort and resources was “Alumni Engagement”; participants feel the university should be doing considerably more in this area.

Figure 6 – ERRC Grid for Fully Integrate the University with the Community (Mean Ratings from Focus Groups)



## **1. Engaging Our Community**

We asked participants to evaluate the progress we have made (and need to make over the next five years) to become a global intellectual hub, purposefully engaging with the community by applying our academic and research strengths to address the challenges and opportunities facing our society. This meant that we would develop next-generation leaders, share new knowledge and discoveries broadly, enhance access to art and cultural events, and increase opportunities for our local and extended communities to engage in sports and recreational activities. We wanted to be recognized as a campus that provided a two-way connection to the international landscape of ideas, art, science and culture for all life-long learners. The following themes emerged from the analysis of recommendations:

- The recommendations covered a broad range of topics, and often reflected a tension between doing more for international versus local communities;
- Recommendations focused on engaging with the local community, particularly projects that align with the needs of Northeast Calgary, local schools, under-represented communities, and indigenous populations; and
- There were also recommendations to increase communication on the university's role in community-based projects.

## **2. Service to Community**

We asked participants to evaluate the progress we have made (and need to make over the next five years) to enhance our role in the community through the provision of expertise and infrastructure. This meant that many of our faculty, staff and students would play an active role in civic projects and initiatives, and that community members would make use of campus facilities. The following themes emerged from the analysis of recommendations:

- Continue to work with the community on approaches to diversifying the economy;
- Increase community access to the university facilities by reducing participation costs and parking rates; and
- Identify metrics and reporting channels for communicating the university's contributions to the community.

## **3. Collaborative projects**

We asked participants to evaluate the progress we have made (and need to make over the next five years) on collaborative projects, with our belief that we all benefit when the University of Calgary collaborates with the surrounding community on solving pressing challenges and realizing new opportunities. That belief would require our students, faculty and staff to provide expertise to help the community address pressing societal challenges. The following themes emerged from the analysis of recommendations:

- Increase the number of collaborative projects by working with a broader range of community organizations; and
- Find ways to increase interdisciplinary collaborations, including ones with professional faculties, on addressing community issues.

## **4. Alumni Engagement**

We asked participants to evaluate the progress we have made (and need to make over the next five years) to leverage our unique advantages with our alumni who work and live in Calgary. Over the years, these alumni have moved into positions of leadership and made contributions on a global scale.

We knew that the connection to our alumni needed to be strengthened to achieve our *Eyes High* vision. The following theme emerged from the analysis of recommendations:

- Develop activities that encourage two-way interaction between alumni and the university (where there is mutual benefit for both alumni and the university); and
- Develop activities/initiatives for undergraduates (i.e., first- and second-year students) that will help develop a long-term attachment to the university.

#### 4.4 STUDENT EXPERIENCE

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We provided the following narrative to focus groups participants about where we started on our path to enhance the student experience based on five (5) key factors:

*In 2011, when the Eyes High strategy was released, we understood that every facet of campus life should be geared toward student success. As one of Canada's leading research universities, we were home to faculty members, postdoctoral fellows, research technicians, support staff and legions of smart, ambitious students who were passionate about knowledge. We were also home to world-class facilities that include innovative technology, state-of-the-art libraries, laboratories, and exceptional teaching resources.*

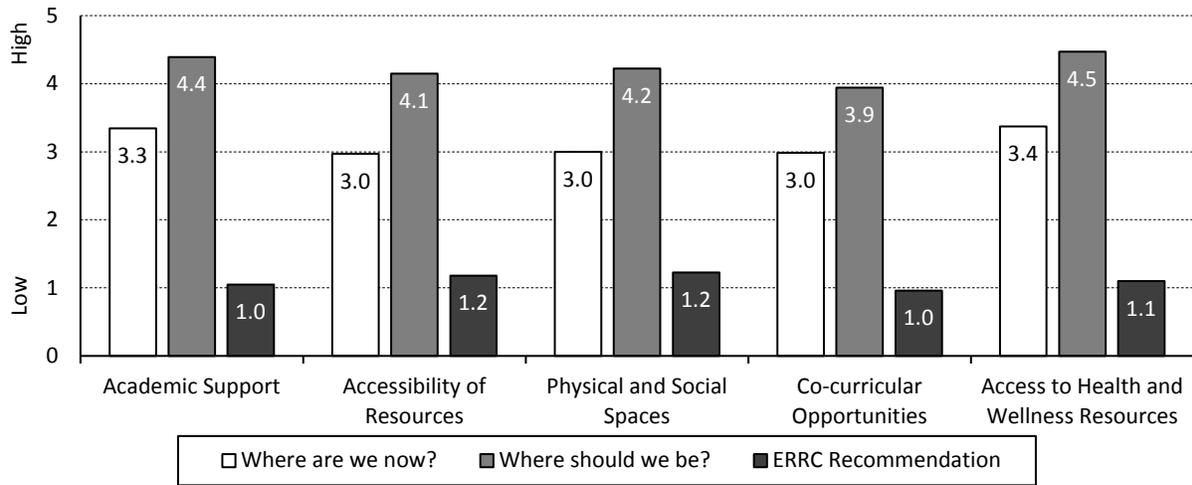
*Our goal was to offer programs and services to help students fully engage with the university to make the most of their experience. Whether it was through advising students as they chose their major, helping them with personalized academic planning, programming to get them through the first six weeks of university, accessing scholarships and bursaries, or even writing support, our student support staff right across the university cared about student success.*

*Our residence program was intended to transition with students as they progressed through their university experience. From shared dorm-style rooms in first year, to full apartments in upper years or grad school, to family housing for families, there would be options available for all students. Whether students lived on campus or commuted from across the city they would have access to our world-class active living recreational facilities, which includes our aquatic centre, fitness centre, gymnastics centre, Olympic oval and racquet centre. From fitness classes and intramural leagues, to sports clubs and fully-equipped gyms, there would be multiple ways to stay active on campus. Students could also join one of over 300 clubs that brought together people who share similar passions.*

*We also recognized that academic success was only possible if students took care of themselves first. Our wellness centre focused on creating a healthy campus community and empowering students to maintain their own health and wellbeing. With health services, counselling, student support and outreach, and numerous events and programs throughout the year, we would ensure that students could easily access programs and services to keep them healthy and well.*

As shown in Figure 4, with mean scores ("Where are we now?") in the range of 3.0 to 3.4, participants are generally supportive of the existing strategies, and the university rates above a moderate level on the ERRC grid. Overall, participants recommend that the university should "raise" or put additional effort and resources into each of the five factors. The factor showing the most significant difference between "Where are we now?" and "Where should we be?" is "Academic Support".

Figure 7 – ERRC Grid for Student Experience (Mean Ratings from Focus Groups)



### 1. Academic Support

We asked participants to evaluate the progress we have made (and need to make over the next five years) to provide high-quality educational experiences where student learning would be facilitated by highly qualified academic staff, and to complement the classroom experience with academic supports available to all students. The following themes emerged from the analysis of recommendations:

- Focus on improving the following components of academic support over the next five years:
  - IT services;
  - TA quality;
  - Consistency across departments; and
  - Communications on the available support resources.
- Review ways to improve the support for special groups, including, for example, international students, struggling students, smaller faculties and programs such as the School of Creative and Performing Arts (SCPA); and
- Increase the number of academic advisors, possibly providing students with an advisor that follows them through their program.

### 2. Accessibility of Resources

We asked participants to evaluate the progress we have made (and need to make over the next five years) to expand opportunities for students to experience a depth and quality of learning that extended far beyond a test, textbook, classroom, laboratory or country. Whether students were making face-to-face, telephone, or online enquiries, our goal was to ensure they had prompt access to knowledgeable, friendly staff and other resources. We would ensure that they perceived a high level of professionalism in interactions with staff and faculty and that our policies and practices were supportive and understandable. The following themes emerged from the analysis of recommendations:

- Increase awareness, through a variety of communication channels, about the programs and services that students can access. Participants believe that information about programs and services is buried in unknown places and only a few people are aware of the resources available; and
- Establish a central information portal that involves face-to-face contact to guide students towards solutions or answers.

### **3. Physical and Social Spaces**

We asked participants to evaluate the progress we have made (and need to make over the next five years) to evaluate the physical and social spaces that students occupied on campus, which shaped their overall experience. Everything from the classroom to on-campus housing, from Wi-Fi connectivity to safe spaces for social groups, would contribute to students feeling comfortable, safe, and supported on campus. The following themes emerged from the analysis of general comments:

- Increase the availability of quality social and study spaces on campus;
- Increase maintenance of existing spaces; and
- Increase access to electrical outlets and improve digital connectivity across the campus.

### **4. Co-curricular Opportunities**

We asked participants to evaluate the progress we have made (and need to make over the next five years) to enrich campus life outside the classroom, to encourage personal growth and engagement, professional development, and community connections. The following themes emerged from the analysis of recommendations:

- Increase the number of communication channels on available co-curricular activities;
- Allow students to sign up for co-curricular activities after they know their academic schedules;
- Develop certificates for students to highlight additional activities in which they participated; and
- Increase number of international experiences offered, to align with other campus globalization activities.

### **5. Health and Wellness**

We asked participants to evaluate the progress we have made (and need to make over the next five years) to provide students with the health and wellness supports necessary to encourage them to achieve their maximum potential. Participants recognized student loneliness as a major concern, and the following three themes emerged from the analysis of recommendations:

- Allocate more resources to ease access and reduce wait-times, especially for mental health issues;
- Make people more informed about the available resources; and
- Encourage students to use the resources.

## 4.5 CAMPUS CULTURE

We provided the following narrative to focus groups participants about where we started on our path to enhance campus culture based on four (4) key factors:

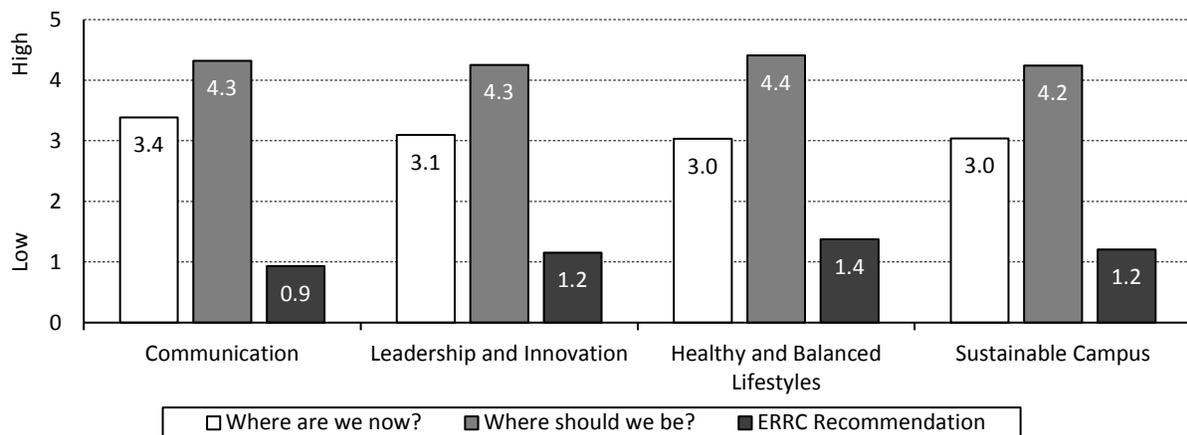
*In 2011, when the Eyes High strategy was introduced, we understood that the University of Calgary’s culture was not something that one could touch or see but it was very real. It was based on internal assumptions, values, and beliefs that guided our outward behaviour. Students, faculty members, staff, alumni and community members shared in the creation and expression of our collective campus culture.*

*Viewed through the lens of our collective behaviour, an observer would have seen a campus culture stimulated by the unknown and unexpected. They would have seen a community offering high- quality programs and services and a community working to maximize the research, learning and work environment with social, cultural, sports and recreational spaces, and programs and services to promote a healthy and safe community. This community would be thinking and acting with a global mind-set, acknowledging the pervasiveness of worldwide connectivity, aware of global developments, and acting on opportunities to benefit the world.*

*To achieve our Eyes High vision, we committed to valuing people who interact with others in an inclusive and respectful manner. Our relationships would be defined by a culture of collaboration and a shared commitment to achieving common goals. We would build bridges through proactive communications between individuals, between teams, between departments and faculties, and with other organizations in the community, with integrity and transparency. We would promote a vibrant campus culture that expected the best of everyone who worked and learned at the University of Calgary. What’s more, we would recognize the achievements of all community members and help each other achieve our highest ambitions. We would also be known as a community committed to leadership in sustainable ways of living, working and learning*

As shown in Figure 5, with mean scores in the range of 3.0 to 3.4, participants are generally supportive of the existing factors and feel that the university rates above a moderate level on the ERRC grid. Participants recommend that the university “raise” or put additional effort and resources into each of the four factors. “Communication” represents the largest difference between “Where are we now?” and “Where should we be?”

Figure 8 – ERRC Grid for Campus Culture (Mean Ratings from Focus Groups)



## **1. Communication**

We asked participants to evaluate the progress we have made (and need to make over the next five years) in understanding that the University of Calgary was a large, complex organization comprised of many smaller units, each with their own mission, identity, and learned culture. The ability to collaborate and work across units to achieve our *Eyes High* vision would require a strong, collective commitment to communication that is two-way, frequent and meaningful. That communication would need to be open, honest and transparent, particularly with respect to our goals, priorities, and progress planning. The following themes emerged from the analysis of recommendations:

- Create a greater sense of unity and belonging on campus over the next five years so that the university is less segregated;
- Build more two-way versus one-way communication approaches;
- Identify ways to reduce communication overload, i.e., find the noise and reduce it so that important messages are heard; and
- Find ways to improve communication at the middle level of management.

## **2. Leadership and Innovation**

We asked participants to evaluate the progress we have made (and need to make over the next five years) to overcome structural, social and cultural barriers to the achievement of our *Eyes High* vision by creating a safe, inclusive and respectful environment – one that valued the dignity of every person. This environment would embolden students, faculty members and staff to disagree, seek common ground, listen to each other, and encourage others to do the same. In this environment, all people would work and learn to their full capacity, develop new skills, build their careers, create innovative programs, and be recognized for their accomplishments. The following themes emerged from the analysis of recommendations:

- Continue to emphasize the need for respect and acceptance of diversity, as pockets of disrespect and lack of acceptance still exist;
- Develop incentives or recognition to encourage individuals to participate in the development programs offered by the university; and
- Separate the factors of innovation and leadership; they are two different constructs. More resources need to be directed at developing an innovative culture.

## **3. Healthy and Balanced Lifestyle**

We asked participants to evaluate the progress we have made (and need to make over the next five years) to understand that our success would rely on community members building healthy lifestyles by balancing the demands of the work environment with those of their personal lives. This would require flexible scheduling where possible, responsiveness to family issues, and access to health and recreational programs to build resiliency and develop a quality lifestyle. The following themes emerged from the analysis of recommendations:

- Review workloads / find ways to increase flexibility in schedules and work locations;
- Continue the focus on mental health and build the existing resources to increase access;
- Maintain a focus on the important issue of mental health;
- Find ways to reduce compensation gaps between AUPE and MAPS employees; and
- Develop steps to improve safety practices and working conditions across the campus.

#### **4. Sustainable Campus**

We asked participants to evaluate the progress we have made (and need to make over the next five years) to evaluate our commitment to leadership in sustainable ways of living, working and learning. This meant that we would meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This would require us to take steps toward becoming a more sustainable campus – by reducing our carbon footprint, by improving our health and safety practices, by becoming more efficient with scarce resources, by supporting research focused on sustainability initiatives, and by building sustainability into the academic curriculum. The following themes emerged from the analysis of recommendations:

- Continue with the current sustainability initiatives; and
- Encourage research on sustainability issues.