



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

energizing 
EYES HIGH
Strategy 2017-22

CAMPUS CULTURE
a focus group guide

September 29, 2016

Overview

Participation

Thank you for agreeing to participate in an Energizing *Eyes High* focus group session. We have received research ethics approval for the focus group sessions. Based on this approval we are including the following information. Your involvement in this session is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time. Your choice to not participate or withdraw will not affect any rights that you might have at the University of Calgary now or in the future.

Confidentiality

All of your comments and responses to questions will be kept completely confidential. Your name and anything else that can identify you will be removed from all written records. Any of the materials that come out of our discussion will only be evaluated by staff working on this project and will be kept secure and protected. Information from focus group sessions will be aggregated. Quotes may be used in summary reports and other forms of public communication but they will not be attributed to individual participants. Personal contact information collected for prize draws will be deleted once winners receive their prizes.

Results

The results of the session will 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 of this session will also help to develop recommendations for change.

Information

If you have questions that are not answered in this session, you may contact:

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Background Information

In 2011, the University of Calgary embarked on a journey to define its future direction. The university 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:

1. provide opportunities for the campus community to listen, learn and share
2. build consensus and alignment for the future
3. articulate an inspirational strategic statement and institutional values
4. increase pride through clarity of purpose
5. 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 as follows:

The University of Calgary will be a global intellectual hub located in Canada’s most enterprising city. In this spirited, high-quality learning environment, students will thrive in programs made rich by research and hands on experiences. By our 50th anniversary in 2016, we will be one of Canada’s top five research universities, fully engaging the communities we both serve and lead.

The *Eyes High* strategy is supported by three foundational commitments:

1. Sharpen focus on research and scholarship
2. Enrich the quality and breadth of learning
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 50th Anniversary, it is both timely and opportunistic to “energize” the *Eyes High* strategy so it can continue to provide the platform from which the University of Calgary leverages its momentum and aspirations. The process to energize the *Eyes High* strategy will be similar to that of Project Next. It will provide opportunities for the university and its primary stakeholders to review progress to date. Additionally, members of the community will be invited to share in the development of a new future for the University of Calgary.

This is one of five background documents that have been developed to inform the Energizing *Eyes High* consultation process. It describes where we started in 2011 and the path we would take to achieve success by 2016. I would encourage you to read this and the four other background documents as a starting point for the energizing *Eyes High* discussion. Thank you for taking the time to participate.

Campus Culture

WHERE WE STARTED

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.

OUR PATH TO SUCCESS FOCUSED ON FOUR KEY COMMITMENTS:

1. Communication

We understood 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 – two-way, frequent and meaningful. That communication would need to be open, honest and transparent, particularly with respect to our goals, priorities, and plan progress. The following activities and initiatives were undertaken to enhance communication between 2011 and 2016. We:

- established a regular process for reporting progress towards our *Eyes High* goals through an annual Community Report;
- launched the MyUofC portal to provide easier, direct access to online applications and information for students, faculty, staff and researchers;
- enhanced a range of communications tools across the institution, faculties and departments and units including UToday, UThisWeek, and more than 150 social media accounts;
- launched the UC Emergency app to keep the campus community informed in an emergency;
- formalized a process for holding regular campus town halls. These town halls would engage the community in discussions about key campus issues, changes in the environment, our academic and research priorities, and strategic decisions concerning the allocation of resources; and

- invited the campus community to participate in biennial employee engagement surveys as an important way to gather feedback about changes in our campus culture.

2. Leadership and Innovation

We believed that it would be possible to overcome any 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, everyone 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 activities and initiatives were undertaken to enhance leadership and innovation between 2011 and 2016. We:

- established a Respect in the Workplace program that offered 150 facilitated workshops;
- established the Office of Diversity, Equity and Protected Disclosure to serve as a centralized resources to all members of the university community and to provide training and awareness-raising initiatives regarding issues of equity and diversity. The office also functions as a central point of contact for dealing with protected disclosures, including those concerned with alleged breaches of research integrity.
- formed a Sub-Committee on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence, specifically related to students, which provided recommendations to ensure that practices and policies to address and prevent sexual harassment and sexual violence of students on campus meet the needs of the university community as a whole;
- implemented a comprehensive Emergency Plan and Management Program for the institution including business continuity plans;
- began development of an Indigenous strategy;
- launched the Academic Leadership Academy for new and experienced academic leaders to advance their leadership expertise;
- developed the “U” suite of programs (i.e., UBegin, UAdvance, UFundamentals, UAdvance, UManage, ULead, and ULearn) to enhance employee leadership skills;
- implemented a policy and new procedures to ensure consistent and high-quality supervision critical to graduate student success; and
- established a grant for staff to develop international and cross-cultural competencies.

3. Healthy and Balanced Lifestyles

We understood 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 activities and initiatives were undertaken to promote healthy and balanced lifestyles between 2011 and 2016. We:

- introduced a Campus Mental Health Strategy aimed at supporting the mental health and well-being of all students, faculty and staff with the goal of building a community of caring;
- launched a suite of informal and formal flexible work arrangement programs to promote a balance between work and personal commitments;

- offered a range of active living programs and services that promote healthy, active lifestyles, ranging from gymnastics and skating to weight loss and lifestyle change;
- introduced UCalgaryStrong to foster development of young people across all aspects of their well-being from orientation to convocation;
- launched the new WellBeing and WorkLife portfolio to promote and enhance a culture of well-being through the provision of mental health and wellness resources for all faculty and staff;
- were the recipient of two highly regarded workplace recognition awards: the WorldatWork Alliance for Work-Life Progress Seal of Distinction, and Alberta Top Employers. These awards recognize the university's efforts to help employees balance the diverse responsibilities associated with work, academic and personal life through policies and practices that support and encourage dependent care, health and wellness, workplace flexibility, paid and unpaid time off, community involvement, and efforts to transform organizational culture;
- were the first university to earn a Certificate of Recognition (COR) award by the Government of Alberta for our efforts to develop health and safety programs; and
- approved a strategy and supporting program to promote and enhance a strong culture of recognition.

4. Sustainable Campus

Our commitment to leadership in sustainable ways of living, working and learning would mean 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 focussed on sustainability initiatives, and by building sustainability into the academic curriculum. The following activities and initiatives were undertaken to create a sustainable campus between 2011 and 2016. We:

- launched an Institutional Sustainability Strategy uniting the three frameworks of education, research and community engagement, and administrative and operational excellence;
- earned a STARS Gold Rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) in recognition of its sustainability achievements and is currently the top-scoring institution in Canada;
- ranked one of the top 10 organizations in Canada by Corporate Knights for the third year in a row for having the best sustainability and disclosure practices;
- developed an embedded certificate in sustainability studies that will be the first program of its kind offered at the university, and among the first embedded certificate models for education in sustainability in Canada;
- developed a sustainable budget model that ensures all human, financial and capital resource allocation decisions align with the *Eyes High* strategy; and
- moved to a sustainable enrolment growth model – one that increases our accountability to the government and staff and students by maintaining enrolment at current levels unless new resources become available through government-funded expansion initiatives.