



UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY

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

**SHARPEN FOCUS ON RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP**  
a focus group guide

September 16, 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:

Loren Falkenberg  
Chair  
Energizing *Eyes High* Strategic Oversight Committee Secretariat  
[loren.falkenberg@haskayne.ucalgary.ca](mailto:loren.falkenberg@haskayne.ucalgary.ca)

# 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 50<sup>th</sup> 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 50<sup>th</sup> 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.

# Sharpen Focus on Research and Scholarship

## WHERE WE STARTED

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.

## OUR PATH TO SUCCESS FOCUSED ON FIVE KEY AREAS

### 1. Focus

We committed to increasing research impact in thematic areas where we had strength and interest, making an unwavering commitment to internationally esteemed scholarship in those areas. The following activities and initiatives were undertaken to sharpen the university's focus between 2011 and 2016. We:

- developed a strategic research plan that identified six strategic research themes based on our strengths and capacity:
  1. brain and mental health
  2. human dynamics in a changing world: smart and secure cities, societies, and cultures
  3. new Earth-space technologies
  4. engineering solutions for health: biomedical engineering
  5. infections, inflammation and chronic diseases in the changing environment
  6. energy innovations for today and tomorrow
  
- identified seven strategic research platforms which cut across the strategic themes to support our researchers:
  1. synthesis and visualization
  2. analytics and simulation
  3. research stations
  4. research enablers
  5. commercialization
  6. knowledge translation
  7. policy creation

- built a confederation of scholars for each research theme to identify grand challenges and delivered a research strategy; and
- created interdisciplinary committees around research platforms to provide recommendations on priorities and actions.

## **2. Collaboration**

We committed to research initiatives in areas that 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 activities and initiatives were undertaken to enhance collaboration between 2011 and 2016. We:

- created the Global Research Initiative in Unconventional Hydrocarbon Resources (GRI) with international partners (China, Mexico, Israel);
- developed new research partnerships and Memoranda of Understanding with institutions in countries such as Norway, Germany and UK; and
- established a strategic partnership with SAIT Polytechnic to accelerate innovations from lab to field applications.

## **3. Support**

We recognized people as our most valuable asset, committing to hire and retain talented individuals to provide the support critical for researchers to be leaders in their fields. The following activities and initiatives were undertaken to increase support for research on the campus between 2011 and 2016. We:

- created a network between Research Services and Research Facilitators within faculties;
- coordinated stimulus hire academic positions between the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and Vice-President (Research) (VPR);
- made major investments in the post-doctoral program leading to an increased number of post-doctoral positions and new professional development program for postdoctoral scholars;
- invested in each research theme through the VPR matching funds competition leading to funding for training opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students;
- recruited our first Canada Excellence Research Chair; and
- improved the intake process for our Canada Excellence Research Chairs.

## **4. Translation**

Because solving problems and then applying those solutions in the real world requires effective knowledge translation, we committed to support faculty and staff members as they made research findings available. The following activities and initiatives were undertaken to increase support for translation of research activities on the campus between 2011 and 2016. We:

- signed a Master Agreement with Innovate Calgary to act as our technology transfer and business incubation centre, providing services to our researchers with licensing, company creation, IP, etc.; and
- established the Peak Scholars Awards to encourage academic work in knowledge engagement, entrepreneurship, tech transfer, innovation and collaborative research.

## 5. Results

We committed to seek strategic partnerships with industry, governments, agencies and other universities that could be partners in our mission of discovery and realization. The following activities and initiatives were undertaken to increase the number of partnerships with non-academic institutions between 2011 and 2016. We:

- invested in the Urban Alliance, which is a strategic partnership with the City of Calgary to fund joint projects and engage in new collaborative initiatives such as the City of Calgary Expert Management Panel on River Flood Mitigation; a review of the social/community implications of economic downturn scenarios; a project on innovative approaches to prevent gang involvement by high-risk youth;
- launched ACWA (Advancing Canadian Wastewater Assets) as part of the Urban Alliance, which is a partnership with the City of Calgary to develop wastewater treatment technologies that will remove existing and emerging contaminants to improve ecosystem and human health;
- created the Containment and Monitoring Institute (CaMI) in collaboration with CMC Research Institutes Inc.; and
- were awarded \$75M in the Canada First Research Excellence Fund national competition to implement, with our partners, the Global Research Initiative in Unconventional Resources.