



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

energizing 
EYES HIGH
Strategy 2017-22

ENRICH THE QUALITY AND BREADTH OF LEARNING
a focus group guide

October 6, 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.

Enrich the Quality and Breadth of Learning

WHERE WE STARTED

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.

OUR PATH TO SUCCESS FOCUSED ON FIVE KEY AREAS

1. Leadership, Governance and Evaluation

To ensure that teaching and learning would be fully supported and recognized as a valued activity, it would be critical to assign leadership responsibilities in teaching and learning. Governance of systemic initiatives would need to be structured with a system-wide and fully integrated model through which teaching and learning initiatives could be effectively implemented, measured and sustained. High-quality teaching and learning would also need to be evaluated fairly and responsibly to ensure that teaching development was well supported and teaching excellence was rewarded. The following activities and initiatives were undertaken to enhance leadership, governance and the evaluation of teaching and learning between 2011 and 2016. We:

- created the position Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning) (2012);
- created a GFC Teaching and Learning Committee (2012);
- opened the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning (2016);
- appointed a university Chair in Teaching and Learning (2015);
- created associate dean positions with responsibilities for teaching and learning;
- initiated “A Comprehensive Framework” for demonstrating teaching effectiveness;
- launched a new professional development program for graduate supervisors through the Faculty of Graduate Studies; and
- launched the Supervisory Review Process through the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

2. Quality of Instruction

We planned to cultivate teaching excellence by integrating research evidence and inquiry into how we teach and how students learn. We also planned to promote the professional development of professors, instructors, graduate students, and teaching assistants to create a culture that enables teaching and learning success. The following activities and initiatives were undertaken to enhance the quality of instruction between 2011 and 2016. We:

- initiated three-year program for Teaching Scholars (2016) (\$396,400 has been allocated to 14 Teaching Scholars from across nine faculties to implement interdisciplinary teaching and learning initiatives);
- created 12.5 new positions in the Taylor Institute to support building and sharing teaching and learning experiences;
- allocated \$1.5 million in one-time funds to support evidence-based teaching and learning initiatives;
- doubled the number of teaching and curriculum development workshops since 2013;
- created the On-line Teaching Community (2014), an on-line repository to share teaching and learning resources;
- allocated \$1.0 million for a Teaching and Learning Grants program annually since 2014 (doubled the value of successful grant applications since 2014);
- designated \$12.0 million in renovation of learning spaces (since 2011);
- organized the Annual Conference on Post-Secondary Learning and Teaching (doubling participation numbers since 2013);
- launched the University of Calgary Teaching Excellence Awards in 2014;
- unveiled the Wall of Honour in the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning to recognize award recipients (2016);
- created the Teaching Academy (University of Calgary Teaching Award recipients dedicated to sharing their teaching and learning expertise);
- launched the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning program (2015);
- launched the annual TA Orientation (over 100 graduate students participated in TA orientation events in 2015-16); and
- launched the Graduate Student Teaching Development workshop series (230 participants attended at least one graduate student teaching development workshop in 2015-16).

3. Programs with Identifiable Outcomes

To enhance the quality of student outcomes, we committed to identify and enhance the learning outcomes for specific programs and review programs of study to ensure they led to appropriate outcomes. The following activities and initiatives were undertaken to increase the number of programs with identifiable outcomes between 2011 and 2016. We:

- initiated a university-wide curriculum review in 2014 (45 programs scheduled to complete reviews by 2016);
- dedicated two full-time academic staff members to consult on curriculum review and quality assurance processes;
- developed a certificate and diploma framework to guide and support the development of future programs;
- conducted an examination of pre-requisite requirements for registering in specific courses;

- reviewed the open studies program, resulting in recommendations to diversify learner pathways into degree programs;
- created the opportunity to earn certificates in undergraduate programs;
- initiated flexible pathways for the entry of college technology diploma graduates into undergraduate programs (i.e. Energy Engineering Program); and
- launched the certificate in Sustainability (2016).

4. Engaging Students in Research and Experiential Learning

Because learning takes place in a research environment at the University of Calgary, we planned for students 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 activities and initiatives were undertaken to engage student in research and experiential learning between 2011 and 2016. We:

- increased funding to the PURE undergraduate research program by 28.0 per cent;
- launched the College of Discovery, Creativity and Innovation;
- hosted the Alberta Innovates Health Services student research program (2016);
- initiated the Global Challenges Inquiry-based courses (2015);
- completed an inventory of experiential learning opportunities in each faculty (2016);
- funded two dedicated positions for integrating experiential learning in academic courses (2016);
- allocated \$425,000 to support international exchange programs, and doubled support for travel study grants for students (2016);
- initiated an Aboriginal Relations Leadership program; and
- launched the Scholars Academy and the Emerging Leaders Program.

5. Flexibility

We understood that there would be a need to accommodate a range of learning needs. This would involve 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 activities and initiatives were undertaken to increase flexibility between 2011 and 2016. We:

- reviewed the open studies program, resulting in recommendations to diversify learner pathways into degree programs;
- embedded the opportunity to earn certificates in undergraduate programs;
- initiated flexible pathways for the entry of college technology diploma graduates into the new Energy Engineering Program; and
- launched the community-based Bachelor of Education degree (2015).