



UNIVERSITY OF  
**CALGARY**

**Start  
something.**

# Ahead of **Tomorrow**

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY'S 2023-2030 STRATEGIC PLAN



*The University of Calgary, located in the heart of Southern Alberta, both acknowledges and pays tribute to the traditional territories of the peoples of Treaty 7, which include the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprised of the Siksika, the Piikani and the Kainai First Nations), the Tsuut'ina First Nation, and the Stoney Nakoda (including Chiniki, Bearspaw and Goodstoney First Nations). The City of Calgary is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta Region 3.*

*The University of Calgary is situated on land northwest of where the Bow River meets the Elbow River, a site traditionally known as Moh'kins'tsis to the Blackfoot, Wîchîspa to the Stoney Nakoda and Guts'ists'i to the Tsuut'ina. On this land and in this place we strive to learn together, walk together, and grow together "in a good way."*







## **Welcome to the University of Calgary, where ideas become innovations, and aspirations turn into accomplishments.**

The University of Calgary's remarkable trajectory reflects audacious growth and entrepreneurial spirit. Our students, postdocs, faculty, staff and community have built a bold university in less than 60 years.

What is next? How do we look beyond tomorrow?

We face universal challenges. But we are confident we can achieve global impact while remaining true to our Calgary community and values.

This Strategic Plan shapes our journey toward 2030, considered through long-term, foundational commitments to: Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility; Indigenous Engagement; Mental Health; Global Engagement; and Sustainability.

Based on our unique approach to teaching and learning, research excellence, community partnership, and campus operations, this Strategic Plan and our foundational commitments together lay a mosaic for the future.



## A message from UCalgary's President

After the largest consultation in the University of Calgary's history, in June 2023, our university adopted *Ahead of Tomorrow* as our strategic plan to take us through 2030.

This plan captures the passions, talents and potential of a university and a broader community that see the future not as something that happens to us, but as something we have the power to shape.

It's a plan that reflects our remarkable trajectory — a story of which all Calgarians can be proud. From a small collection of buildings in an open field to one of Canada's top research universities — in under 60 years.

But we have no intention of stopping here.

**Through our teaching and learning strategy**, we'll provide more people than ever before with access to a future-focused education that equips them to change the world.

**Through our research and innovation strategy**, we'll push the boundaries of research — and bring that research out to the community, focusing it on society's biggest challenges.

**Through our community strategy**, we'll deepen our connections and nourish partnerships.

**And through our operations strategy**, we'll do it all in a way that makes it easier for our students, postdocs, faculty and staff to set ideas in motion than at any other university.

*Ahead of Tomorrow* does this in a way that captures the unique spirit of our city. It pushes us to be bold, to be ambitious, and to power positive change.

It supports a great city and it propels us into global conversations. We hope you'll join us on this journey, and we are excited to share this plan with you.

**Ed McCauley, PhD, FRSC**

*President and Vice-Chancellor  
University of Calgary*



# Ahead of Tomorrow

**We inhabit a turbulent time, but we do so purposefully, ready to think and act ahead of tomorrow.**

**We equip students, postdocs, faculty and staff with the ingenuity to improve the world.**

**We enable ambition and excellence, and we see challenges as opportunities that spark our singular mission — to dare to imagine ahead of tomorrow.**

## Our Mission

The University of Calgary powers positive change.

We strive for inimitable excellence through innovative teaching and learning, cutting-edge exploration, and community linkage.

We seek to surpass today's limitations in our quest toward a prosperous, compassionate, sustainable and equitable world.

We lead change by combining academic excellence with a spirit of innovation.

Knowledge creation and mobilization pilot our research, impelled by action and agility.

Our current and former students, postdocs, faculty and staff serve today while anticipating a tomorrow that we have the power to reframe.

## Our Values

The University of Calgary values authenticity, inclusivity, diversity and critical thinking.

We celebrate curiosity-driven investigation, fostering collaboration so that all can achieve their potential.

We strive for community-focused excellence and accessibility and a sense of belonging where all can thrive.

We aim to spark global change, to solve what seems unsolvable.

We commit to recognition and reconciliation, to walking a parallel path together with Indigenous partners.

## Our Strategies

Our strategies will position the University of Calgary to leap ahead of tomorrow.

They address both what we do and how we do it. These strategies will be realized through cross-cutting initiatives and through the decisions we make throughout the university.

**1 Increase access to impactful and future-focused education**

**2 Harness the power of research and innovation to tackle society's biggest challenges**

**3 Locate community at the centre of all we do**

**4 Make our processes clearer, simpler and better than any other university**



## Improving access for first-generation students

### Breaking barriers to higher education through comprehensive tuition support program

Driven by the belief that education is a powerful tool for transformation, the University of Calgary is committed to breaking down barriers and increasing access to education for all. That includes launching the First-Generation Scholars Program with financial support, mentorship, advising and networking opportunities for students who will be the first in their families to attend university.



*Michael Barraza,  
UCalgary student,  
is the first in his family  
to attend university.  
Scan for the full story*



It is the most comprehensive program of its kind for first-generation students at Canadian universities, with plans for a robust suite of support services that focus on creating a positive student experience.

Second-year natural sciences student Michael Barraza was born in Canada and grew up in Red Deer, Alta. His parents are refugees from El Salvador who never had the opportunity to pursue education beyond high school.

Barraza is excited about the opportunities that will be provided to future first-generation students like himself. “Education is so important. Being able to learn to thrive is something that is incredibly beneficial. It’s undeniable how impactful and how incredible it is for someone to be able to achieve that,” he says.



# Strategy 1

## INCREASE ACCESS TO IMPACTFUL AND FUTURE-FOCUSED EDUCATION

### TEACHING AND LEARNING AHEAD OF TOMORROW

By 2030, demand for post-secondary education is anticipated to rise dramatically.

Rapid change has whetted global appetite for transfiguring knowledge, for anticipatory design and content. Lifelong learning will fuel needed capability and resilience.

To support prospective students, we will provide a variety of formats and modalities, learning that equips students to question, navigate change and distil information. Evolving curricula will cut across unforeseen obstacles through critical analysis, creative engagement and ethical entrepreneurialism.

The University of Calgary will be equitable and inclusive to all with talent and ambition, providing students with the tools to grapple with the unanticipated and to meet challenges that do not yet exist.

**Entrepreneurial thinking** requires taking initiative, exchanging knowledge across disciplines, learning from experience, and resourcefully engaging with creative and cultural literacy. The University of Calgary is committed to ethical innovation that enriches lives and enhances society in every aspect.

#### Cross-cutting initiatives

**Increase average financial support for thesis-based graduate students to highest level in the U15 research universities.**

Become a magnet for graduate students, attracting local, national and international superstars, growing our economy and our reputation.

*(Objectives A, B)*

**Provide one semester of financial support for first-in-family students.**

Students from families with no university history face unique uncertainties about investment in higher education. Support can open the door to expanded educational participation across communities.

*(Objectives A, B)*

**Develop innovative programming that anticipates tomorrow's demands.**

As student population diversifies and evolves, so must current practice. Meaningful experiential learning, rich in community engagement, will prepare students for future challenges.

*(Objectives A, C)*



### **Our goal**

To educate transformative leaders.

### **Our objectives for 2030**

- A Become #1 university, U15, in student engagement.
- B Increase total enrolment by 10,000 and graduate enrolment by 7,000.
- C Ensure all students are provided an opportunity for meaningful entrepreneurial thinking within research and creative scholarship.

### **How we approach our work**

We embrace new technologies and new discoveries to support innovation in teaching and learning.

#### **Expand understanding of the university's foundational commitments.**

Facilitate access for all seeking additional education in: Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility; Indigenous Engagement; Mental Health; Global Engagement; and Sustainability.

*(Objective A; directly supports Strategy 3)*

#### **Expand required programming focused on entrepreneurial thinking, research and creative scholarship.**

Tomorrow's challenges will demand disciplinary expertise coupled with critical thinking and adaptable execution. Core programming will expose students to transdisciplinary windows and crossover latitude.

*(Objectives A, C)*



# Breaking new ground in transformative partnerships for child health

## One Child Every Child initiative set to rewrite Canada's narrative in child-health outcomes

Despite Canada being one of the wealthiest nations, UNICEF ranked it 30th out of 38 wealthy nations in child-health and wellness outcomes in 2020. This alarming statistic sparked a response from the University of Calgary, leading to the creation of the One Child Every Child (OCEC) initiative.

OCEC is set to rewrite Canada's narrative in child-health outcomes. It is an initiative that thrives on collaboration, inclusivity and resourcefulness. It unites researchers, health-care providers, educators and organizations from Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and equity-deserving communities, forming a holistic, transdisciplinary network dedicated to advancing child health and well-being.



*Dr. Susa Benseler,  
MD, PhD, announces  
the creation of the  
One Child Every Child  
research initiative.  
Scan for the full story*



“One Child Every Child is not about showing that one group is better than the other, but that, together, we are so much better than individual buckets of excellence,” says research lead Dr. Susa Benseler, MD, PhD, director of the Alberta Children's Hospital Research Institute (ACHRI) at UCalgary. “It's not surprising that it comes out of the University of Calgary, because that's who we are. That's what we do; we think outside the box.”

As UCalgary steps forward with the OCEC initiative, it's clear that this is about more than research — it's about committing to a future where every child has the chance to thrive. By focusing on the youngest members of our society, UCalgary is not only changing the face of research but also shaping a healthier, brighter future for all.









## Strategy 2

**HARNESS THE POWER OF  
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION  
TO TACKLE SOCIETY'S  
BIGGEST CHALLENGES**





## RESEARCH AHEAD OF TOMORROW

Knowledge generation and its benefits grow commensurate with global complexity.

Research universities exert impact by involving members of the community.

Student research opportunities provide hands-on experience, portable skills and a chance to work with faculty on world-changing projects.

Transdisciplinary research opportunities for scholars lead to new connections and unforeseen discoveries, and a chance to tackle wicked challenges too big for one scholar or one discipline to solve on their own.

Research opportunities for community partners lead to new collaborations and solutions.

Embedding research in all we do enhances our ability to change the world.

### Our goal

Maximize research impact.

### Our objectives for 2030

- A Become #1 university, U15, in research revenue per scholar.
- B Grow external research revenue to \$750M a year.
- C Grow our position as Canada's #1 creator of startups into the top 50 startup creators in the world.

### How we approach our work

We will embed research opportunities in all student learning. We will seek to collaborate with community partners, colleagues from other disciplines and students.

### Cross-cutting initiatives

#### Create research opportunities for undergraduate students.

Involve students as partners; provide opportunity for paid summer research between first and second year to expand their practical knowledge of research and innovation.

*(Objectives A, B, C)*

#### Expand transdisciplinary scholarship; partner with community on grand challenges.

Improve connections between faculties and departments to enable cross-appointments, shared analysis and collaboration. Bolster campus-wide surges of activity to address society's biggest quandaries.

*(Objectives A, B)*

#### Develop our research and innovation ecosystem.

Invest in world-class facilities, equipment and technology to grow our research and innovation ecosystem. Expand our capacity to support more student, postdoc, faculty, alumni and community endeavours.

*(Objectives A, B, C)*

# Exploring parallel paths through living libraries

## Elder's Teaching Series provides opportunity to learn from Indigenous Knowledge Keepers

One of the University of Calgary's main goals for 2030 involves enhancing our community relevance, which includes continuing to work with Indigenous peoples to deepen our community connections and our commitment to the university's Indigenous Strategy, *ii' taa'poh'to'p*.

Hosted by the Office of Indigenous Engagement, the Elder's Teaching Series is more than a webinar series; it is an invitation to embark on a transformative journey. It is a space where our university community and the broader public can listen, learn and engage with Indigenous Elders who are the embodiment of lifelong learning and resilience. These Knowledge Keepers generously share their traditional knowledges, world views, languages and approaches to healing, opening a dialogue on diverse topics from cultural well-being to Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, connecting and being.

"As I'm teaching students, or my children, as I call them, I'm teaching them how to think, or how to put something together," says Elder Rod Scout of the Siksika Nation. "When they start working with other communities, then they start developing that community and then maybe they go to another community that needs it.



Elder Rod Scout of the Siksika Nation speaks at UCalgary's Elder's Teaching Series.

Scan for the full story



"That's what we call in Blackfoot, *Aowatsotsi'isspomotsii'opa*, meaning they're all helping each other. And that is one of the most sacred laws among all Native people. How we all help each other. We all work together."

This dialogue doesn't stop within the university campus. The wisdom imparted by the Elders resonates beyond our boundaries, fostering an increase in intercultural capacity across our broader communities. Our goal is not just to venture into Indigenous communities, but to bring that profound knowledge back to our shared communities, creating a symbiotic relationship of growth and understanding.









## Strategy 3

LOCATE COMMUNITY AT THE  
CENTRE OF ALL WE DO





## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AHEAD OF TOMORROW

Surpassing tomorrow demands a deep connection to place, the multiple communities of Treaty 7, the city of Calgary, the country of Canada and the world beyond tomorrow.

Community partnership means strengthening our connections to these interwoven spheres, to their many shared concerns, challenges and opportunities. We must be poised to perform on the global stage.

### Our goal

Enhance community relevance.

### Our objectives for 2030

- A Become #1 university, U15, in community engagement.
- B 25,000 students, faculty and staff annually contribute to community challenges.
- C Engage 100,000 alumni, donors and community members on an annual basis.

### How we approach our work

Community is included by design throughout the process.

### Cross-cutting initiatives

#### Incentivize community engagement; expand credits, scholarships and professional inducements for community-focused work.

Engagement with local and global communities enriches learning, strengthens connection and promotes horizon collaboration. Community connection reciprocates interconnectivity, social acumen and practical experience.

*(Objectives A, B, C; supports Strategy 1)*

#### Enhance engagement capacity through position of Associate Dean (Community).

Fostering community-first focus is currently everyone's job, but no one's responsibility. New Faculty Associate Dean positions would track, co-ordinate and enable faculty-wide and faculty-specific approaches to knowledge mobilization, partnerships, alumni engagement and community service.

*(Objectives A, B, C)*

#### Seed and nourish local and global partnerships with community and industry.

Seek out partnerships with transformational potential, deepening community connection and elevating Calgary and Alberta on the world stage.

*(Objectives A, C)*



## Prioritizing simple and more-efficient processes

### Envisioning services, supports and internal systems that are easier to access and navigate

The University of Calgary sees a huge opportunity in being a place where it's easier for everybody in our community to set ideas in motion, says Dr. Ellen Perrault, dean of the Faculty of Social Work, whose areas of expertise include teaching and learning, and human service organizations and systems.

"This is an opportunity for UCalgary to transform its culture so that we can be more accessible and engaging to our entire community," says Perrault, PhD. "Whether it's skilled and talented newcomers, first-generation students, racialized students, LGBTQ2S+ students, or outstanding students with disabilities, it's about making sure they have the same opportunities as more privileged students. We can examine and then reduce any unnecessary barriers."



*Dr. Ellen Perrault, dean of the Faculty of Social Work, speaks about removing barriers.*

**Scan for the full story**



Perrault envisions the creation of policies and procedures that facilitate more inclusivity, as well as awareness of who we serve.

"Perhaps the greatest key to transforming UCalgary culture will be our willingness to listen," she says. "We need to look at our systems in an open-hearted and humble way. Examine how we can serve with respectful, reciprocal collaboration. How can we reduce the transactional nature of our policies and procedures? This plan can help us transform and operate with excellence as more of a collective."





## Strategy 4

**MAKE OUR PROCESSES CLEARER,  
SIMPLER AND BETTER THAN  
ANY OTHER UNIVERSITY**





## OPERATE AHEAD OF TOMORROW

To unlock the potential of our students, postdocs, faculty and staff, we must match our entrepreneurial outlook with commensurately flexible processes and services.

### Our goal

Ensure it is simpler and faster to set ideas in motion here than at any other university.

### Our objectives for 2030

- A Become #1 university, U15, in ease and speed of services and supports.
- B Become #1 university, U15, in investment in professional development for postdocs, faculty and staff.
- C 90% of students, postdocs, faculty and staff agree they have the tools and services necessary to manage their education or accomplish tasks.

### How we approach our work

Choose nimble, lightweight processes. Services and supports will find ways to address needs — quickly. Clear processes, information and explanations for decisions.

### Cross-cutting initiatives

**Increase flexibility to change majors and register in other program's courses, creating a more seamless student experience.**

To foster transdisciplinary and encourage diverse passions, faculties will make more out-of-program seats available to students.

*(Objectives A, C; also supports Strategy 1)*

**Annual reorientation to increase awareness of services available to students, postdocs, faculty and staff.**

Create recurring opportunities across portfolios to build culture, develop skills, and become aware of supports and services available in teaching, research, community partnerships and operations.

*(Objectives A, B, C)*

**Invest in process improvement and professional development.**

Optimize student, postdoc, faculty and staff experience. Identify and address areas where improvement would have the biggest impact, and invest in training to shape university operations.

*(Objectives A, B, C)*

## What's next?

Any strategy is only as good as our follow-through. Through the fall, the University of Calgary will be engaging with the community on operational plans and how we best take our strategies and turn them into results.

We hope you'll stay engaged! You can follow our progress and find ways to participate at

**[AheadOfTomorrow.ca](https://AheadOfTomorrow.ca)**







## Special thanks

### Strategic Planning Oversight Committee

The Strategic Planning Oversight Committee was charged with overseeing how the strategic planning process was run, ensuring its integrity and a rigorous approach.

Ed McCauley  
President and  
Vice-Chancellor (Chair)

Penny Werthner  
Interim Provost and  
Vice-President (Academic)  
(Vice-Chair)

Thomas O'Neill  
Professor of Industrial and  
Organizational Psychology,  
Faculty of Arts (GFC  
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Nickie Nikoloau  
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John Brown  
Dean, School of Architecture,  
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Renate Weller  
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Nicole Schmidt  
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Faculty of Arts (SU Rep)

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David Stewart  
TUCFA President & Professor  
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of Arts (TUCFA Rep)

Justin Huseby  
Chair of AUPE Local 052  
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Facilities Project  
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Program Manager, Psychiatry  
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Michael Hart  
AVP Research & Vice-Provost  
(Indigenous Engagement)  
(SLT Rep)

Alyson Kenward  
AVP Advancement Services  
(SLT Rep)

Armin Jahangiri  
UCAA Board Member  
(Alumni Association Rep)

Michael Bosdet  
UCalgary Senator  
(Senate Rep)

Mark Herman  
UCalgary Board Chair  
(BoG Rep)

### Strategic Planning Working Group

The Strategic Planning  
Working Group was  
responsible for the  
production of draft  
materials and the day-to-  
day operations of strategic  
planning activities.

Ed McCauley  
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Penny Werthner  
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