

7 steps to a successful international strategy implementation

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**UNIVERSITY OF
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Introduction



Last decades of unprecedented economic and technological progress have enabled people to study internationally, and driven universities to develop international strategies to manage increased international enrollments and academic partnerships.

The University of Calgary carefully developed a vision, plans and finally a strategy to formalize our efforts toward internationalization and the creation of a global intellectual hub to benefit our scholars, our city, region and the world. We launched the [International Strategy](#) in 2013 and started developing and implementing programs and projects that benefit the university and our wider community.

Since launching the strategy, numerous students, faculty and staff have worked on international projects in many different countries. We have increased the number of international graduate students to 26.7 %, surpassing our 25% target, and the number of international undergraduate students to 9.2%, very close to our 10% target. The number of our undergraduate students going abroad is now 55 per cent higher than the Canadian average.

The number of joint research publications with international partners has gone up from 1,893 in 2013 to 2,353 in 2018. Students, faculty and staff benefit in various ways from the 400+ agreements with 238 universities in 55 countries.

We have won four prestigious awards for our internationalization including the Institutional Award for Global Learning, Research, and Engagement from the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities (APLU), and the Board of Directors' Award for Comprehensive Internationalization from the Canadian Bureau of International Education.

Here's how we did it:

1. Make Internationalization a priority



The university decided it was important to create a global intellectual hub that engages students, faculty and staff, and which radiates new discoveries, ideas, applications with global impact. A hub that attracts scholars from around the world and promotes diversity of thought, culture and respect for alternatives.

2. Build a clear and focused strategy with strategies, goals, tactics and metrics

We needed a clear institutional strategy to guide decision-making about what international opportunities and investments to pursue. The university struck a 24-member International Task Force led by the Provost to figure out the specific goals, strategies and tactics needed to harness, focus and intensify our efforts toward internationalization. The task force also guided how to allocate resources for potential global initiatives. It had four stages:

- Orientation and data gathering
- Establish trends, principles, and goals
- Consultations with internal and external stakeholders
- Approval of the international strategy





The strategy set four high-level goals and three targets to increase diversity on campus, improve our global and cross-cultural competencies, enhance opportunities for international collaborations and partnerships in research and education and leverage our areas of expertise to engage in international development.

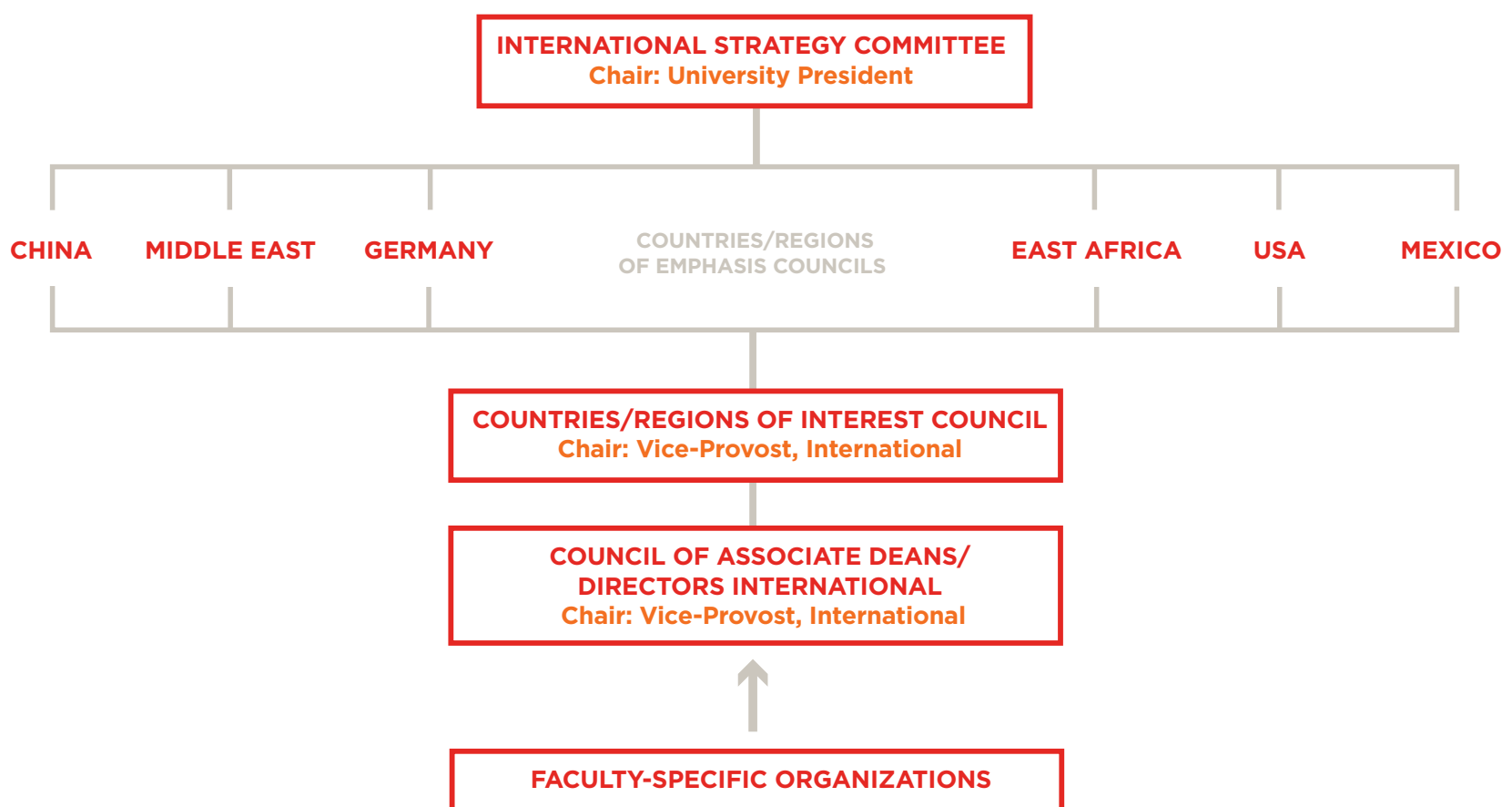
Because international projects and relationships take significant investment of time and resources, we assessed our strengths and opportunities and came up with six countries/regions of emphasis. They are:

- China
- Germany
- Mexico
- Middle East
- East Africa
- United States

We also identified 13 other countries/regions of interest to explore and expand our efforts in internationalization. We focused on institutions within these areas, allocated funds and assigned resources (including scholars with ties to the country, industry partners and Calgary community leaders).

3. Dynamic and passionate leadership and governance structure

We set up a governance structure to steer our internationalization efforts, led by dynamic and passionate leadership. It looked like this:



- The International Strategy Council (ISC) was responsible for the overarching implementation of the International Strategy including making decisions on country/regional designation.
- Each International Regional Advisory Council (IRAC) developed a strategic plan for its specific region.
- Associate Dean/Directors Council International (ADCI) works with faculties to develop and maintain collaborations and reduce bureaucratic and academic issues that had stalled projects.

4. Faculty-owned international programs and projects

Our scholars build connections and relationships with colleagues around the world. The strategy recognizes the entrepreneurial efforts of these individuals in forging relationships abroad. These partnerships are essential tools for internationalization and should be approached strategically — with clearly defined objectives, sustainable goals and with esteemed institutions. The strategy recognizes this and guides that process. This approach has helped the university establish new and creative academic programs such as articulation, dual degrees, as well as international development projects in low and middle income countries.



5. Integrating internationalization with teaching, research and service

After holding extensive consultation across campus to ensure our scholars integrated their teaching, research or service to support internationalization, we developed a number of strategic initiatives to further this process, including:

- The Global Research Initiative (GRI) for Unconventional Oil and Gas has established four world-leading research and education sites in partnership with governments, industry and educational institutions in key global energy locations.
- In collaboration with consulates in Calgary, we organized China Days, Mexico Days and Germany Days to increase intercultural awareness and celebrate milestones we achieved with these countries.
- We developed specialized educational programs such as a program for students from Mexico to study pipeline engineering for a semester, and articulation programs for students from China to obtain dual degrees.



6. Contemporary organizational structure

In 2013, University of Calgary International (UCI) had 11 staff. Over the next five years, the office grew to 43 staff and the budget has increased almost six times to support the international strategy. UCI is organized into five units and works with faculties and other departments.

1. International Relations
2. Programs and International Development
3. International Learning Programs
4. Finance and Administrative Services
5. Marketing and Communications

(UCI is not responsible for recruitment of international students and providing student services for international students).



7. Innovative and sustainable funding models to support students, faculty and staff

The university allocated additional financial resources for internationalization to grow UCI and other units such as the international recruitment office.

We implemented a new funding model to support international learning for our students, faculty and staff, and substantially increased the funding to approximately one million dollars. Such initiative has paid off. In 2016 for example, the number of international learning student awards increased by 68%, and that of distributed student awards by 61%.

[Read more about how we became a global intellectual hub.](#)



Resources

Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE):

[2018 CBIE International Student Survey](#)

Universities Canada: [Global Connections](#)

Government of Canada:

[Economic Impact of International Education in Canada](#)

[Canada's International Education Strategy](#)

[International education promotion](#)

NAFSA Association of International Educators:

[Trends and Insights](#)

[University of Calgary International Strategy](#)

[Explore UCalgary resources and webinars on internationalization](#)