

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CONSULTATION PLAN



The University of Alberta respectfully acknowledges that we are situated on Treaty 6 territory, traditional lands of First Nations and Métis people.





## INTRODUCTION

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Community engagement is about relationships, reaching out and building authentic and mutually beneficial connections. The University of Alberta's century-long history of community engagement is deeply rooted in the connections with the communities we serve and takes many forms. It is the community consultation protocols that we implement for land use and development, ensuring that we remain a good neighbour to the physical communities around our campuses. It is community-engaged research, in which our researchers work with communities to solve problems and share knowledge. It is community service-learning, work-integrated learning and experiential learning, where our students not only gain real-world knowledge outside the classroom, but also build their capacity to do community engaged work. It is the delivery of outreach initiatives as an outflow of academic work. It also encompasses service – University of Alberta students, alumni, faculty and staff serving their towns, cities and neighbourhoods and supporting their communities.

In order to best engage with our communities, we set out on a journey to understand their needs. The first step in that process was an extensive community engagement consultation to gather

feedback, experiences and ideas from internal and external stakeholders. These stakeholders included the university's faculty, staff and students, as well as community-based organizations such as neighbourhood groups, school boards, language, cultural, equity seeking groups, arts, communities of practice and service groups, locally and across the province. The goal was to have meaningful conversations with communities about engagement – what is going well and what needs improvement. In the end, the consultation yielded information from more than 1,500 participants and engaged more than 250 community organizations.

This Community Engagement Consultation Plan contains the results of the consultation, along with initiatives and measures that we plan to undertake in order to put that feedback directly into practice. This plan will support community engagement work over the coming years and aims to strengthen community engagement in its many forms across campus.

*The University of Alberta would like to thank everyone who shared their ideas, issues and opportunities throughout this process. We greatly value the feedback we heard and look forward to continuing the conversation.*



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Engagement is core to the mission of the University of Alberta. Since the implementation of the *For the Public Good* strategic plan, the University of Alberta has deepened connections and partnerships with local, provincial, national and international communities, agencies, industries, businesses and organizations. Through multiple collaborative partnerships, the University of Alberta is playing a key role in tackling shared local and global challenges through discovery and innovation.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the community engagement consultation. We consulted widely and inclusively, and learned more about the needs of our communities. We heard how valuable mutually beneficial engagement with all of our communities is and why it is so important that we do more to connect with you. We know we can do better. Your concerns and ideas have shaped the development of this inaugural community engagement plan. Our goal is to deepen our internal and external community relationships and expand on the wide range of work already being done, from the Humanities 101 community outreach program to Community-University Partnership engaged research programs.

As an important part of Alberta's economic and social fabric, the University of Alberta is committed to engaging, supporting, collaborating and co-creating more effectively with the many communities of which we are a part. With this strategy as our starting point, the University of Alberta will continue to be here for Albertans, serving the public good. We will be your partner in identifying and solving problems, enriching the cultural life of our province and building long-term economic and social well-being for all.

Bill Flanagan  
President and Vice-Chancellor



## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Community engagement can take many forms at the University of Alberta, but it is always grounded in our teaching research and learning mandate. It remains rooted in our vision to inspire the human spirit through outstanding achievements in learning, discovery and citizenship in a creative community. For us, community engagement means creating mutually beneficial learning experiences, research projects, partnerships and collaborations with communities across our campuses and extending out to our province, nation and the world.

The community engagement consultation aimed to be inclusive, accessible and welcoming. Our goal was to connect with community members about university-community engagement, and to use that feedback to create an adaptable strategy, identifying institutional community engagement goals and responding to community needs, even as those needs evolve.

It was a privilege to serve as chair of the Community Engagement Consultation Advisory Committee. Thank you to our committee members, who provided input and guidance on the structure of the consultation process and the development of this plan. This is an important step in the University of Alberta's continued work to strengthen connections, relationships and partnerships with the communities we serve.

Alexis Ksiazkiewicz  
Associate Vice-President, Government and Community Relations

## FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD

The main goal of the community engagement consultation was framed largely by the University of Alberta's institutional strategic plan, *For the Public Good*. In the strategic plan, we embrace and affirm our vision to inspire the human spirit through outstanding achievements in learning, discovery and citizenship in a creative community, building one of the world's great universities for the public good. Inspired by the university's institutional strategic plan to build, experience, excel, sustain and engage, this plan will focus on ENGAGE.

### WE STRIVE TO:

- **ENGAGE communities across our campuses, city and region, province nation and the world to create reciprocal, mutually beneficial learning experiences, research projects, partnerships and collaborations.**

- To serve the public well, the University of Alberta will excel at listening, connecting and collaborating with key partners across all sectors of society. We will strive to be relevant as well as excellent and actively disseminate what we learn and discover for the benefit of the public good. We will engage across disciplines, campuses, faculties and units to create interdisciplinary learning experiences for our students that prepare them to face the complex nature of today's challenges and workplaces. We will continue to build and deepen mutually beneficial and reciprocal partnerships with local, provincial, national, and international communities, agencies, industries, businesses and organizations. In doing so, we will expand and sustain the University of Alberta's leadership in major national and international initiatives and networks that increase our reach and influence as one of Canada's leading research universities.

The University of Alberta brings community engagement to life through distinct areas of our work. We enjoy strategic partnerships locally and abroad to fulfill ongoing community

connections and aim to be inclusive in how we define communities. They may be neighbours, vulnerable or at-risk communities, children and families, social service organizations, volunteer and charitable organizations, municipalities, industry, special interest groups and communities of practice, arts and cultural entities and more.

Community engagement is multi-faceted. The University of Alberta is among the few research-intensive universities with a dedicated community-university neighbourhood committee that consults effectively when land development and substantial development of infrastructure are considered. We maintain adherence to a legislative process for consultations and carry out the protocols with the neighbouring communities. We prioritize community engaged research and experiential learning. Both of these areas provide the community opportunities to be a partner in co-creating, implementing and mutually benefiting from the outcomes of research projects and experiential learning. In turn, the university reciprocally receives great benefit from the lived experiences and needs of the community partners that inform the projects' realities, scope and direction. Lastly, community engagement at the university is also about service. This includes the volunteerism of our students, staff, faculty and alumni. Service may also be an outflow of research and learning opportunities that benefit communities through outreach, events and activities that welcome citizens of all ages to connect with the University of Alberta.





## WHY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MATTERS

Community engagement can mean many different things to different people. During the community discussions, the team used the definition in *For the Public Good* which defines community engagement as working with communities across our campuses, city and region, province, nation and the world to create reciprocal, mutually beneficial learning experiences, research projects, partnerships and collaborations. This is a broad definition that comes to life across the University of Alberta in a wide range of learning experiences, research, partnerships and collaborations. Depending on the area of programming, community engagement can look very different in practice, whether it is a student gaining work experience with a community initiative or non-profit organization, a graduate participating in the Indigenous Canada Massive Open Online Course or a researcher sharing their knowledge

and expertise through a public forum such as the Speakers Bureau. Community engagement is also evident in university research where community and university partners build collaborations rooted in the principles of reciprocity, where partners share information, contribute expertise and develop research aimed at building mutually beneficial outcomes.

Community engagement—whether it be through research and scholarship, outreach and service, legislated consultations or experiential learning—is of critical importance to the University of Alberta. It creates positive outcomes and lasting change. To illustrate this, this plan includes some examples of the important work in community engagement being done at the University of Alberta through its faculty, staff, students and alumni.

## FUN FACTS ON HOW WE ENGAGE

### DID YOU know

#### THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA OFFERS DIGITAL PROGRAMS TO THE PUBLIC.

Our Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are available to anyone, free of charge and cover topics from Arctic research to software product management to palaeontology. One of the most popular MOOCs is Indigenous Canada. It explores experiences and key issues facing Indigenous peoples today from a historical and critical perspective, highlighting national and local Indigenous-settler relations. So far the course has seen over 200,000 registered learners from communities around the world. Thanks to a partnership with the Canadian Federation of Library Associations, Indigenous Canada was promoted and made available throughout the country's library systems as a learning foundation from which local communities could supplement learning in collaboration with their post-secondary institutions and regional Indigenous relationships.

### DID YOU know

#### ARTS WORK EXPERIENCE (AWE) OFFERS CAREER RELATED,

#### PAID WORK EXPERIENCE FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE FACULTY OF ARTS.

The program is flexible, with many program options allowing students to complete four, eight, twelve or sixteen-months of work experience. To date, AWE has worked with over 200 employer partners from the private, public and not-for-profit sectors. AWE is one of the many types of work-integrated learning opportunities on campus and an example of the reciprocity of community engagement in action. Students gain new skills and real-world experience, while private, public and not-for-profit partners are able to tap into new talent and build for the future.

### DID YOU know

#### THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA HAS A SPEAKERS BUREAU.

This initiative connects academic resources with community members who are interested in learning about research and universities initiatives and their impacts. The program provides communities with access to our experts on topical subjects to facilitate a high-level conversation and provide one avenue on the road to lifelong learning and discovery. Speakers cover a wide range of topics based on the expertise and disciplines of study at the university – from Indigenous rights to elder care, regenerative and rehabilitation technologies to innovative therapies and social and political issues, fine arts, history and more. Events take place in collaboration with libraries, schools, seniors centres, community centres and anywhere the community gathers. With the COVID-19 pandemic, the Speakers Bureau moved online for continuous engagement.





# UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA IN THE COMMUNITY

## COME AS YOU ARE: HUMANITIES 101



As the driving force behind Humanities 101, Lisa Prins is adamant that the University of Alberta's community outreach program showcases the university at its best. Offering free, non-credit courses, Humanities 101 is open to anyone who wants to learn, regardless of previous education or background. There is no application process – you just come as you are. "It recognizes there are a lot of people who don't have access to university education, for many possible reasons – whether poverty, insecure citizenship, literacy or language barriers," says Prins.

**"There are many Edmontonians who have a passion for learning but who do not have access to intentional spaces of learning. At Humanities 101, it doesn't matter where you've been or what you're doing."**

Humanities 101 recognizes many different knowledges and ways of knowing, not just the kind that comes from a book or is learned in a classroom." Over the past decade, curriculum has explored such topics as the politics of fear, feminist activism, Indigenous studies, women's knowledge and the land. Among the unique classes Humanities 101 provides each term, all responsive to community, there are now more than a hundred graduates per year.



## HOUSING FOR HEALTH

More than 4,000 Albertans will have their lives changed for the better thanks to a new University of Alberta project focusing on building healthier communities for Alberta's aging population. The Housing for Health project, led by University of Alberta researcher Dr. Karen Lee, aims to increase physical activity, healthy eating and social connections among residents of two upcoming housing developments and surrounding neighbourhoods. Lee works with partners in the private sector—developers, architects, landscape designers and planning firms—as well as municipalities such as the City of Edmonton and Town of Whitecourt. The project also brings together academics from multiple University of Alberta faculties, Alberta Health Services, several

provincial ministries and other health-care providers like physicians and dietitians. Community organizations and residents also share their ideas in the planning and design of the developments as well as identify community improvement initiatives they would like to see in their own neighbourhoods. Over five years, Lee and her team will work with more than 100 partners to identify and implement healthy living supports into the two Edmonton and Whitecourt developments and neighbourhoods, as well as other interested communities, to help support residents to improve their physical activity through active transportation, active recreation and healthier buildings, and to improve access to healthy foods and beverages.





## THE KIDS OF U SCHOOL

The University of Alberta's Senate aims to build bridges by connecting University of Alberta programs and people with initiatives and peers in the community. The senate leads a program called U School that introduces and connects students in grades 4 through 9 from socially vulnerable, Indigenous (First Nation, Métis and Inuit) and rural communities to the University of Alberta. Students, with their classroom teachers, attend a week-long immersion experience on campus. Their schedule is built around the teacher's application, Alberta curriculum and the many opportunities available at the university. Since the program's inception, U School and the campus community have welcomed thousands of students, some of whom have since returned to study as University of Alberta students. Starting in March 2020, U School adapted its programming to offer sessions and facilitate engagement remotely. There are now more than two dozen recorded sessions available for future U School classes and virtual classroom visits are scheduled for the upcoming year.

### A BIT ABOUT

**THE SENATE** The senate, led by the chancellor, is an independent body of diverse community leaders and university representatives. It is valued for the role it plays in successfully examining, fostering and celebrating the achievements and excellence of the University of Alberta, resulting in an enhanced relationship with the community. Its role is to:

**INQUIRE** – Identify and explore issues, ask questions, seek community input and offer recommendations based on experiences and initiatives both within and beyond the focus of post-secondary education.

**PROMOTE** – Advance the reputation of the University of Alberta through informal advocacy and celebration within circles of personal, professional and community influence.

**CONNECT** – Build bridges, connecting University of Alberta programs and people with initiatives and peers in the community while also engaging community leaders in university opportunities.





## LISTENING TO OUR COMMUNITY

It was important for the community's voices and opinions to inform the development of our plan, so we decided to undertake an extensive consultation as a first step. The consultation format and questions were developed to be as open-ended as possible in order to foster conversation.

We heard from the community that they were encouraged by the consultation process and opportunity to engage with the University of Alberta.

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Honestly, I had no idea why you were coming today so I really had no idea you were trying to engage the region but I am really glad you are.

**Happy to see this process occurring.**

Through this process community engagement is taking place.

**You're here so that's a great start.**

Thank you for listening.

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The consultation process was comprised of three key steps: development, implementation and analysis.

### Development

It was important to develop a public consultation process that would engage both internal and external stakeholders, seeking input on the topic of community engagement. An advisory committee representing various communities and voices was formed to assist the Office of Government and Community Relations with this work. The advisory committee's members represented their respective stakeholder groups and helped to ensure the consultation remained focused on the university's goals. Four questions were developed for the consultation:

1. As outlined in *For the Public Good*, we think community engagement is working with communities across our campuses, city and region, province, nation and the world to create reciprocal, mutually beneficial learning experiences, research projects, partnerships and collaborations. How do you see the University of Alberta fulfilling this goal regarding community engagement?
2. Getting back to *For the Public Good*...are we doing a good job of engaging? If yes, what are we doing well? If no, what is missing?
3. How can the University of Alberta improve existing programs, initiatives and activities?
4. Please offer suggestions or new opportunities as to how the University of Alberta can move forward on fulfilling "Engage" as outlined in *For the Public Good*.

These questions were discussed by participants at "table top" engagement events across the province from community halls, Rotary Club meetings, board rooms in local businesses and across the university's campuses. The questions were developed purposefully to allow for conversation and for participants to hear from each other, draw from their experiences and share their ideas.

### Implementation

The questionnaire was delivered in person to stakeholders in 83 facilitated sessions and every participant was given a copy of the questionnaire to write down their experiences, comments and ideas. Four official, university-hosted table top sessions were held – two for the internal community (including faculty, staff and students) and two for the external community. Over 250 organizations were invited to participate in the external table tops. The rest of the facilitated sessions were composed of "travelling table top" sessions, wherein facilitators travelled out into the community to meet with various external groups in Edmonton. As well, facilitators travelled to locations such as Calgary, Camrose, Slave Lake, Mayerthorpe and a number of other municipalities near Edmonton. In partnership with the senate, we hosted four chancellor's breakfast events with community leaders from the private, public and not-for-profit sectors. Online input was also solicited via email, the University of Alberta's internal communications email, the dedicated consultation webpage, alumni magazine and advertisements.

The University of Alberta serves the province, connecting with communities throughout Alberta. Each of its campuses are unique and engage communities in different settings and with different initiatives. Recognizing the importance of unique communities, including francophone and rural Alberta, special care and attention was made to hear from these diverse stakeholder groups during the consultations.

The University of Alberta's **North Campus** is nestled on the edge of the North Saskatchewan River in Edmonton. The hub of the university's teaching, research and engagement activities, North Campus is a bustling community in and of itself. Here, you can find countless examples of community engagement in its various forms—everything from community-engaged research to service to community partnerships to work-integrated learning.

**Campus Saint-Jean** is a one-of-a kind gem in Western Canada, offering the only immersive French-language post-secondary experience west of Manitoba. With strong connections to the Francophone community, students and scholars collaborate on community-based research, work placements and community service-learning with the French community. Participants at the French session included members of the Campus Saint-Jean faculty and staff, its students and community-based organizations serving the Francophone community.

**Augustana** is a historic campus in a vibrant rural community with an intimate residential learning environment. Located in Camrose, Augustana students can earn a world-class degree from the University of Alberta while studying or conducting research in a welcoming, close-knit campus community. Interest from the campus garnered multiple consultation sessions that included students, faculty, staff and community research partners from the central Alberta region. Augustana has a long-standing record of

community-engaged teaching, community-service learning and internships. For example, the Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities assists rural communities in meeting challenges through interdisciplinary and collaborative research, student experiences and community capacity building.

The University of Alberta's **South Campus** is home to facilities such as the Agri-Food Discovery Place and the Medical Isotope and Cyclotron Facility, along with two world-class athletic facilities—Foote Field and the Saville Community Sports Centre. South Campus fosters the energetic exchange of ideas and creates a unique sense of place that provides strong connections with communities with initiatives such as the Green and Gold Community Garden. The garden supports the university, providing volunteer and learning opportunities for those on campus. It supports the local community, as community members can learn about and purchase locally grown food. The garden also raises funds to support the international community through the Tubahumurize Association, a non-profit organization that supports marginalized women in Rwanda.

**Enterprise Square** is a vibrant hub in downtown Edmonton that fosters learning while providing collaborative opportunities for community partnership and economic development. This campus strengthens the university's ties with the downtown business, arts and cultural community while contributing to downtown revitalization and protecting the historic nature of the former Hudson's Bay Company Building.



**83**  
facilitated  
sessions

**250**  
organizations  
invited to  
participate

**1,500**  
respondents

**11,000**  
data lines

**40%**  
internal  
university

**60%**  
external community  
participation

## CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT ALBERTA



### Analysis

Every response solicited during the consultation was collected, transcribed and organized in a database. The 83 consultations yielded more than 11,000 lines of unique data across the four questions. Through analysis, we identified the most commonly heard pieces of information and tracked recurring themes from the responses. The top five themes heard from respondents form the foundation of this community engagement report and plan.

### WHAT WE HEARD

- 1. Make the university more accessible – both within the physical campus but also by facilitating connections between the University of Alberta and the community.**
- 2. Continue to support and strengthen key outreach efforts.**
- 3. Identify and respond to community issues and define what community-university engagement entails.**
- 4. Market and communicate University of Alberta community-university engagement.**
- 5. Celebrate existing “wins” and work in community-university engagement and the university more broadly.**



## THEME #1: IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY

Make the University of Alberta more accessible – both within the physical campus and also by facilitating connections between the university and the community. This was the top concern we heard from the community.

Participants noted that the University of Alberta feels inaccessible. This feedback was captured across a number of areas. Participants requested a clear process for asking questions and seeking the university's expertise. Community participants indicated that they did not know who to approach with questions concerning events, programming, partnerships or research. In particular, they would welcome having a person or office to pose these

questions. Participants raised concerns about the campus being physically open, but not inviting. In particular, participants noted that wayfinding and parking are challenges. In some cases, they noted campus is difficult to navigate with mobility limitations. Moreover, that it appears that campus is not utilized effectively to bring the community in. Many noted not feeling welcome on campus.

WHAT WE

**heard**

Navigator role is important - how to make your way through the system.

**The university is a complex place but does not have to be complicated.**

Be a more inviting physical campus for the public.

Red tape and university processes - difficult to know where to go for all information and requests.

Process needs to be established (i.e. central hub) for multi-disciplinary connections.



## THEME #2: SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN OUTREACH

Continue to support and strengthen key outreach efforts was the second most common piece of feedback and commentary we heard from the community.

The University of Alberta's many diverse engagement efforts should continue to receive resources as they serve the community well. Participants demonstrated a strong awareness of, and appreciation for, university outreach – everything from camps to community-engaged learning to community-based research projects was referenced in the data collected. In particular, summer camps for kids were noted for outreach. It

should be noted that Community Service-Learning, other work integrated learning initiatives such as placements, co-ops and internships and the Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families were repeatedly mentioned under “what we do well” for community impacts and in reference to the university's presence in the community.

WHAT WE

heard

“

**Excellent, in particular youth (K-12) engagement through camps.**

I've seen information about DiscoverE camps. It is another great way to engage young people about the importance of STEM in the lives of people that it is valued.

CSL program is great for organizations and students alike.

**I have participated in a variety of events since graduating from the U of A in 2015. I appreciate having the opportunity to continue learning through the free events offered.**

**Community - engaged scholarship - findings affect practice - both community + university scholars benefit (important that engagement is reciprocal + meaningful).**

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# Examples of the University of Alberta in the Community

## COMMUNITY SERVICE-LEARNING

Community Service-Learning (CSL) offers students the opportunity to work and make a difference with a local community group while reflecting and putting their experiences in context within a university course. Over 1,500 CSL students from 60 academic courses across campus are matched with approximately 180 different community organizations to help with projects such as media and outreach, direct service delivery, research on social issues or outcomes, exhibits and events and educational workshops. CSL also runs



a not-for-profit board internship program, a summer internship program and the Humanities 101 program.

The goals of all CSL partnerships serve two main purposes: to build capacity of community-based organizations to meet their needs, as they define them, and then to provide opportunities for students to deepen their academic engagement with their disciplines in the act of working on those projects with community partners. Students become more capable as engaged citizens, become better equipped for professional careers in the non-profit, public and private sectors, and often continue to serve as board members, volunteers and donors after graduation.

## 1,500 CSL STUDENTS

**60** ACADEMIC COURSES

**180** DIFFERENT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

## ALUMNI RELATIONS AND COVID-19

Did you know that the University of Alberta Alumni Association can connect alumni to volunteer and mentorship opportunities? From coaching new grad start-ups through the Venture Mentoring Service to supporting the mental health of our current students through the Alumni Student Support and Engagement Team (ASSET) program, University of Alberta alumni can support our students and young alumni in creative ways unlike ever before.

Through the COVID-19 pandemic, the Alumni Association has also continued engaging alumni through free webinars and podcasts. Topics range from job-hunting during the pandemic to COVID-19 research, advances in artificial intelligence to the basics of wills and estates. Check out some of the free content and learn from U of A experts at [ualberta.ca/alumni/on-demand](http://ualberta.ca/alumni/on-demand).

## ISMSS

The Institute for Sexual Minority Studies & Services (iSMSS) is a non-profit organization and research institute housed in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta. iSMSS provides educational programs and services to support the 2SLGBTQ+ community and its allies. Through partnerships with various local Edmonton organizations such as the Pride Centre, LGBTQ+ Wellness Centre and Altview, iSMSS provides direct services to the community, ranging from mental health support to 2SLGBTQ+ education to the community. iSMSS programs focus on community outreach and educational advancement specifically for the 2SLGBTQ+ community through educational programs, research and scholarship opportunities. One example of this programming is Where the Rivers Meet (WTRM), a project that grew out of the need to address systemic discrimination and create specialized programming catering to the lived realities of 2SLGBTQ+ Indigenous youth. It focuses



on developing and providing leadership workshops designed to combat homophobia and transphobia in K-12 schools. iSMSS just received funding to expand this program to Calgary. Since November 2019, 38 WTRM presentations have been conducted with approximately 550 total participants.

## LIBRARIES AND MUSEUMS

Did you know that the university's library and museums plays a significant role in community engaged partnerships?

The U of A Library is a member of The Alberta Library (TAL), a consortium of 48 Alberta libraries and library systems. A key impact of TAL is that through collective action and licensing, a large and diverse array of electronic resources are available to all users of its member libraries. This means that resources that are frequently only available to universities are also available to colleges and public library users, creating more equitable access to scholarly information and lowering the digital divide.

University of Alberta Museums has 29 registered museum collections across the institution, led by curators and staff with expertise in the field. These collections include over 10 million objects and specimens used in teaching, exhibits, research and community engagement. The topical range spans human ecology, biological sciences, mineralogy and petroleum sciences, palaeontology and more. Community members may book tours and experience the exhibits firsthand\*. Online exhibits are also available for the curious learners. (\*This engagement activity is temporarily suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic.)



*Dr. Michael Houghton, Nobel Prize winner in Physiology or Medicine 2020*

## THEME #3: RESPOND TO COMMUNITY NEEDS

Identify and respond to community issues and define what community-university engagement entails. This was the third most common piece of feedback and input.

Participants provided broad perspectives and ideas on the nature of engagement in the university context. Those polled felt that there is a need to respond to the queries, issues and needs of community entities, especially those seeking

partnerships and expertise for problem-solving. Most particularly, communities wanted to see engagement as a reciprocal opportunity to co-design and direct initiatives that serves both the community and the university alike.

WHAT WE

“**heard**

More nimble and relevant processes needed to make university support align with community priorities. The university needs to keep up with societal change. Community in the broadest sense - local, provincial, national and international.

Intentional community engagement, clearly aligned with *For the Public Good*, is important; strengthening a clear, transparent process for community engagement to maximize broad access for community - so it is not ad hoc and/or relationship-based; and identifying priorities for research with reciprocal benefits in areas that will result in the most impact.

**Reciprocity is the key to true community engagement partnerships.**”



## COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP (CUP)

Over the past 20 years, the Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth and Families (CUP) has been a unique collaboration among the university, community, funding agencies and policy-makers focused on the well-being of children, youth and families across Alberta. CUP uses a community-based research approach that empowers partners to share their voices in developing research collaborations. CUP responds to community research requests, engages students in community partnerships, brokers access to academic expertise and develops unique learning opportunities. The evidence generated through these collaborative research partnerships is mobilized to inform policy and program decision making. Through this work, CUP is a great example of University of Alberta researchers pursuing partnerships and collaborations that utilize institutional expertise for the public good.

The CUP is guided by a 30-member steering committee that ensures its activities and efforts address the issues that impact and influence the broader community. CUP builds community voice into all aspects of the organization from strategic planning, research priorities and capacity building opportunities.

### STUDENT LEGAL SERVICES OF EDMONTON

Since 1969, University of Alberta Faculty of Law students have run Student Legal Services of Edmonton. The free legal clinic is a student-managed, non-profit society that offers legal information to the city's low-income community and provides assistance in provincial court, while allowing law students to gain experience and apply their legal knowledge in a real-world setting.

### UNITED WAY CAMPAIGN

The University of Alberta is very active in its annual United Way Campaign, as it engages the internal community in fundraising to serve and produce programs for local community needs. Many of the organizations served through these funds include University of Alberta research partners or have programs that are informed by evidence-based research. The United Way provides funding to two university community research programs: Community University Partnership (CUP) and the Institute of Sexual Minority Studies and Services (iSMSS). The charity's giving options allows university donors to direct their contributions to any program or entity with a charitable number. As such, annual efforts are made to reiterate options to give to departments, faculties and research that are especially meaningful to each donor.

## SHINE

The SHINE Clinic (Student Health Initiative for the Needs of Edmonton) is part of the Boyle McCauley Health Centre Dental Clinic, located in downtown Edmonton. SHINE's vision is to be a student-directed oral health clinic that provides basic dental services to the underserved youth population of Edmonton's inner city by meeting their needs in a compassionate, non-judgmental and safe environment. Many patients are referred to the SHINE Clinic from the health centre, as well as through word of mouth and community resources or networks.

The Boyle McCauley Health Centre (BMHC) expanded its clinic operations in 2018. To enable expansion from the previous four chair facility into an eight chair facility, the dental clinic had to move out of its current space in the BMHC and into the Renaissance Tower, an innovative housing project operated by Métis Capital Housing Corporation. Not only does the expanded clinic provide easy access to dental care for vulnerable populations, it also offers students hands-on experience in performing procedures and running a dental practice, while exposing them to a patient base they might not otherwise serve.



## THEME #4: IMPROVE COMMUNICATION

There is limited awareness (internal and external) of community engagement initiatives, research and partnerships currently being undertaken at the University of Alberta. Participants indicated that these efforts are not effectively shared with the public. They requested that good news stories that highlight community engagement be showcased more often. Moreover, participants wanted to see

individual units and faculties coordinate their storytelling so that community impact is known as being from the University of Alberta as a whole. Participants indicated they wanted to see increased volume and greater coordination be applied to the way the university communicates its academic and research accomplishments and programming, as well as its outreach and event promotion.

WHAT WE

“**heard**

The university is very involved with communities around the world through the contributions of its researchers, staff and students. We need to tell this story and celebrate it more.

**There is no way for good news to boil up; it exists in pockets and silos across campus—we need a mechanism to pull it together.**

Great work is being done by all faculties, but not all have their work publicized or their stories told. Often the publicized work has to do with direct technological/industrial impact, but the more intangible work often goes overlooked despite its positive impact on people's lives in the community. For example, the philosophy department sends students into schools to work with kids, which enriches the school experience, but these sorts of good news stories are more difficult to quantify.

## THEME #5: CELEBRATE SUCCESSES

### Celebrate existing “wins” and work in community-university engagement more broadly.

Participants indicated the university does not celebrate “wins” enough. They indicated stories and initiatives were often not branded with the University of Alberta banner to maximize on

community presence and impact. Additionally, participants suggested that community engagement could be better coordinated on campus.

### WHAT WE heard

Awareness, anecdotally, at least, seems limited. Important to help ensure we figure out ways to share more widely/reach more people. And silence the voices saying ‘the U of A isn’t out in the community’ or doesn’t tell its story.

**More U of A branded programs vs. faculty or department specific for outreach to communities.**

**Get better at promoting and celebrating our own successes to the greater community + through appropriate channels.**

### COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS AWARDS CELEBRATE COMMUNITY IMPACT

Our ability to contribute to society flows in large measure from our ability to connect with our communities. That’s why the University of Alberta’s Community Connections Awards honour those individuals and groups who have embodied the U of A’s promise to “uplift the whole people” by sharing their expertise, time and energy for the benefit of the public good.

Three awards are presented annually to those who support, study and work at the University of Alberta. In 2020, the Community Scholar Award was given to Shalene Jobin, an Indigenous scholar, who has devoted her career to Indigenous community engagement through her research,

public education, consultations and the expertise and support she brings into the communities she works with. The Community Leader Award was awarded to WISEST (Women in Scholarship, Engineering, Science, and Technology). For almost 40 years, WISEST has inspired and empowered thousands of women, girls and underrepresented groups to excel in science, engineering, technology and scholarship. Finally, the UAlberta Advocate Award was awarded to Grocery Run & Fresh Routes Community Partnership, which endeavours to help all Edmontonians access affordable, nutritious food and make informed decisions about healthy lifestyles.



## Aligned Priorities

### Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity:

The University of Alberta's first Strategic Plan for Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) was launched in 2019. The plan recognizes equity and diversity as fundamental to achieving inclusive excellence in learning, teaching, research, service and community engagement efforts. Through this plan, the university strives to create an equitable, inclusive environment and culture for all members of its community. In May 2019, the university also became one of the first universities in the country to endorse The Dimensions Charter, which commits institutions to embed equity, diversity and inclusiveness in the institution. The Dimensions Charter includes eight principles to welcome and engage diverse perspectives and experiences, including Indigenous peoples, Black people and people of colour, people with disabilities and the LGBTQ2S+ community.

The University of Alberta is committed to cultivating an institutional culture that values, supports and promotes equity, human rights, respect and accountability among faculty, staff and students. In our inclusive community, we encourage and support individual and collaborative efforts to identify and address inequities, and we welcome and enable contributions of all voices as we engage with diverse ideas, knowledges and perspectives in the pursuit of inclusive excellence for the public good.

### Indigenous Initiatives

The University of Alberta has been working towards implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action in thoughtful, meaningful and sustainable ways. The goal is to ensure that the University of Alberta is a welcoming and safe environment for Indigenous students, staff, faculty and community members and that programs and strategies reflect the institutional commitment to respectfully engage with Indigenous communities, peoples and perspectives. With that goal in mind, the Vice-Provost Indigenous Programming and Research Portfolio was established to facilitate institutional collaboration and communication to support the development and implementation of programs, services and initiatives related to Indigenous engagement and transformative practices that respect and honour Indigenous knowledges across the University of Alberta.

The Indigenous Programming and Research Portfolio is leading the pan-institutional Indigenous initiatives and the development of an institutional Indigenous Strategic Plan. This community engagement consultation plan aims to respect and support that work. This plan is intended to function as a living document, and action items in the plan may change and evolve, or new items may be added in, depending on the work of the Vice-Provost Indigenous Programming and Research.

## HOW THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA WILL RESPOND

The recommendations supported the development of a three-year community engagement plan, with specific goals and deliverables identified for each year.

The goals listed below are staged over three years, reflecting work that is already underway and recognizing that other work will take time to develop thoughtfully—indeed, many of the goals are interdependent and activities undertaken in the first year of the plan are needed to inform and set the stage for some of the goals slated for years two and three.

This plan is also a living document. The goals and activities listed may evolve and change as the University of Alberta receives more input and continues to engage with our community. As we advance, we will also seek guidance and advice from the offices of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and the Vice-Provost Indigenous Programming and Research to ensure inclusion, thoughtfulness and resonance with all communities that the university serves.

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
<b>THEME #1:</b> Improve Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campus Wayfinding Improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Stakeholder-in-Residence</li> <li>• Community Access Hotline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Super Saturday Event</li> <li>• Community Hub</li> <li>• Welcome Centre</li> </ul>
<b>THEME #2:</b> Support and Strengthen Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University of Alberta Community Engagement Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Community Engagement Network</li> </ul>		
<b>THEME #3:</b> Respond to Community Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Roundtables</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Community Engagement Theme</li> <li>• University in the Community Initiative</li> </ul>	
<b>THEME #4:</b> Improve Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report to the Community</li> <li>• Redesign of the Community Relations Website</li> <li>• Story Portal</li> </ul>		
<b>THEME #5:</b> Celebrate Successes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff Day of Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Super Saturday Event</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future Community Engagement Tracking</li> <li>• Projects as Recommended by Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Future Consultation Process for Next Plan</li> </ul>		

# Year 1

## **Campus Wayfinding Improvements**

In response to the community's concerns about campus accessibility, the University of Alberta plans to implement wayfinding improvements. These improvements include planning for new signage throughout campus.

## **University of Alberta Community Engagement Advisory Committee**

Striking a community engagement advisory committee, composed of external community members, will strengthen ongoing engagement efforts. The advisory committee will provide community centric advice on how to best implement key aspects of this report throughout its lifespan. The committee will provide perspectives and ideas on how to best foster, communicate and celebrate community engagement moving forward.

## **Community Engagement Network**

Similar to other professional networks at the university, a campus-wide community engagement network will allow internal university colleagues to share best practices and undertake peer learning and support. Not only will this bolster ongoing community engagement efforts, but it will enhance awareness of community engagement across campus and foster potential new collaborations for the benefit of the community.

## **Community Roundtables**

Community roundtables are a series of events that will convene community leaders, experts, policy-makers and practitioners with U of A leadership to

talk about Alberta's most complex issues. These events will be designed to generate new ideas and open pathways for community-university collaboration, fostering connections between community leaders, university leaders, researchers and practitioners. The group will be comprised of a cross-section of leaders focused on one topic.

## **Report to the Community**

The University of Alberta will reintroduce the Report to the Community document, which will be released annually and share stories and developments relating to community engagement. This document will allow us to better communicate and celebrate community-university engagement.

## **Redesign of the Community Relations Website**

The Office of Government and Community Relations will redesign its website, creating a centralized website for community engagement links, stories and updates. This will improve communication with the community.

## **Story Portal**

As we heard from the community, better marketing and communications coordination with respect to community-university engagement is needed. A story portal, consisting of community engagement stories from Folio and the faculties, will help address this concern by providing a centralized repository of community engaged research, experiential learning and outreach stories.





# Year 2

## **Community Stakeholder-in-Residence**

One way to make the university more accessible to the community is to create a Community Stakeholder-in-Residence (CSR), which will welcome a new community organization to campus annually to take up residence. The CSR will act as a living link between the University of Alberta and the community, sharing their expertise through guest lectures, workshops, mentorship. The CSR will be an advisory voice that provides insight about the realities of community issues and how community leaders solve these issues in real time. Students, staff and academics can collaborate on research and can learn from a community expert with lived experience. The CSR will help connect the University of Alberta with relevant groups and organizations to identify community research needs and deliver community outreach and programming.

## **Community Access Hotline**

This initiative will see the set-up of a 211-style hotline for the community through a designated phone number for community inquiries, increasing the University of Alberta's accessibility to the community.

## **Annual Community Engagement Theme**

Every year, a community engagement theme will be chosen with input from the University of Alberta Community Engagement Advisory Committee, and monthly events focusing on the theme will be held. The theme will promote and celebrate community-university engagement on campus and address feedback and ideas we heard from the community.

## **University in the Community Initiative**

The goal is to enhance and grow the presence of university representation on community boards and committees. Through this initiative, university leaders and community organizations will be able to exchange information, expertise and ideas, thereby allowing the university to more effectively identify and respond to community issues.

## **Staff Day of Service**

On the Staff Day of Service, university staff members will be encouraged to go out and serve the community, volunteering with a community organization of their choice. The Day of Service will be a great way to celebrate our staff's ongoing commitment to the community.



# Year 3

## **Super Saturday Event**

The university will bring back the Super Saturday event. Every year, the university will open its doors to the community for a wide range of events, lectures and seminars for the community. This coordinated event will increase accessibility for the community and celebrate existing community-university engagement.

## **Community Hub**

The Community Hub will be a physical space on campus where members of the university and community organizations can come together to share ideas. The hub will also host the Community Stakeholder-in-Residence program. The hub will increase accessibility, while also providing a physical space to celebrate community-university engagement.

## **Welcome Centre**

Like the Community Hub, the Welcome Centre will be a physical space on campus that serves as a welcoming space for members of the community. It will serve as a first point for new guests to campus, increasing accessibility for the community.

## **Initiatives that span across the three-year cycle**

### **Future Community Engagement Tracking and Consultations**

As with any plan, it is important to keep tabs on progress. We will start to develop evaluative measurements that will further inform development of metrics and mechanisms to capture community-university engagement. An example of a tracking mechanism could be an ongoing inventory of scholarship and initiatives across campus.

### **Other Projects as Recommended by Advisory Committee**

In addition to the above listed measures, projects and initiatives recommended by the University of Alberta Community Engagement Advisory Committee would be explored for implementation.

### **Future Consultation Process for the Next Plan**

The university will develop and undertake a new process to consult for the next community engagement plan. As needs of the community evolve, the university will endeavour to continue the ongoing dialogue with communities and respond through engagement that is rooted in its research and academic mandate.



## CONCLUSION

We truly appreciated the opportunity to hear from the community about their ideas, issues and opportunities. This plan was crafted in response to that dialogue and aims to be nimble and adaptable to community needs. Over the next three years, the community engagement space at the University of Alberta will move in an exciting direction.

Once again, thank you to everyone who participated in the consultation and for continuing to engage with the University of Alberta. We are eager to build community engagement at the University of Alberta further, in partnership with the community.



## Annex A: Members of the Advisory Committee 2019-2020

Thank you to the members of the advisory committee for their support and guidance throughout this process.

MEMBER	ROLE	RELATIONSHIP
Alexis Ksiazkiewicz	University of Alberta – Advisory Committee Chair	Associate Vice President, Government and Community Relations
Elizabeth Adolf	Association Member	Non-Academic Staff Association Representative (2020)
Joel Agarwal	Association Member	President, Students' Union (2020)
Emily Ball	University of Alberta Member	Director, Community Relations
Mary Pat Barry	Community Member	Chair of Board Reputation and Public Affairs Committee, Board of Governors Representative (2019)
Angela Bayduza	University of Alberta Member	Associate Dean, Undergraduate, Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport and Recreation
Mary Beckie	University of Alberta Member	Associate Dean, Academic, Faculty of Extension
Ayaz Bhanji	Community Member	Alumni Council President (2017-19)
Akanksha Bhatnagar	Association Member	President, Students' Union (2019)
Katy Campbell	University of Alberta Member	Professor in Community Engagement, Faculty of Extension
Christy Ciezki	Community Member	University of Alberta Senate Representative (2020)
Laura Cunningham-Shpeley	Community Member	Executive Director, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues
Shana Dion	University of Alberta Member	Assistant Dean, First Nations, Métis and Inuit Students
Karen Edwards	University of Alberta Member	Director, Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth and Families
Dinuka Gunaratne	Association Member	Non-Academic Staff Association Representative (2019)
Louise Hayes	Community Member	Former Manager, Aboriginal Initiatives, Indigenous Relations, Government of Alberta
Charlotte Heyer	Association Member	President, Post Doctorate Fellows Association
Tammy Hopper	University of Alberta Member	Professor and Vice-Provost, Programs
Anastasia Lim	University of Alberta Member	Executive Director, Community Relations
Deb Manz	Community Member	University of Alberta Senate Representative
Dale McNeely	University of Alberta Member	Director, Business Career Services and Cooperative Education Program, School of Business
Pierre-Yves Mocquais	University of Alberta Member	Dean, Campus Saint-Jean
David Peacock	University of Alberta Member	Director, Community Service Learning
Heather Raymond	Community Member	Alumni Council President (2019 - present)
Sean Price	University of Alberta Member	Associate Vice President, Alumni Relations
Nella Sajlovic	University of Alberta Member	Senior Government Relations Associate (2019)
Leigh Stauffer	University of Alberta Member	Community Relations Associate (2020)
Tina Thomas	Community Member	Executive Director, Strategy and Innovation, Edmonton Public Library
Mark Waddingham	Association Member	Vice President, External (2019) and President (2020), Graduate Students' Association
Sandra Woitas	Community Member	Consultant, Edmonton Public Schools

## Annex B: Frequently Asked Questions Received from Participants

A number of questions were submitted from participants as part of the consultative process. Three main themes were identified as most prevalent in the questions.

### Theme #1

Participants asked how will we know if we are doing a good job of engaging? Should we compare our engagement work to other Canadian/U.S. universities to see how we are doing? How are we going to measure success and what does success look like?

**Answer:** The comments received from participants of the community engagement consultation process will be the foundation of a community engagement report and action plan for the University of Alberta. The plan includes development of evaluative measurements, tools and metrics that will be used to understand and answer the question “are we doing a good job of engaging” and will help us to understand if we have met our objectives of the goal of “Engage” as outlined in *For the Public Good*.

### Theme #2

How can we use alumni and members of the senate to fulfill our goal of “Engage,” as outlined in *For the Public Good*? Is there a way for members of the Alumni Association and the senate to become community engagement mentors for faculty/staff/students? Can members of the community that lead in community engagement be a resource for University of Alberta leadership/decision makers as planning for community initiatives go forward?

**Answer:** The community engagement consultation report and action plan will look to all members of the University of Alberta community, which includes the Alumni Association and the senate, to play a role in the planning and implementation of community engagement projects. The whole University of Alberta community has a role to play in working towards achieving the goals of “Engage” as outlined in *For the Public Good* and we look forward to finding ways to ensuring their talents and skills are used for mutually beneficial outcomes. In year one, an external advisory committee as well as an internal community engagement network will be developed and these committees will play important roles in the plan’s progress and success.

### Theme #3

How can we access community engagement opportunities and services from the University of Alberta? Is there a way to find community events/programs that are taking place that is easy to access and easy to participate in? How can community get “connected” in a way that meets community needs?

**Answer:** Finding the most effective and efficient way for community to access information at the University of Alberta is one of the first priorities that will be undertaken. The need to create a “one-stop shop” of events, activities, community opportunities and community events is outlined as a priority. Along with developing a tool for accessing information about the University of Alberta for community, we will also be working closely with an external advisory committee and internal community engagement network to ensure the tools being developed are useful and meet the needs of our community members.