

# University of Alberta

## International Strategic Plan

April 18, 2019

The University of Alberta's vision, as articulated in our Institutional Strategic Plan, *For the Public Good*, is 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. Indeed, we are leaders in international engagement, with a strong track record of accomplishments at home and abroad. To build upon these strengths, and to guide us as we look to the future, we have developed this International Strategic Plan.

This document is aligned with and organized along the five strategic goals in *For the Public Good*: **Build, Experience, Excel, Engage** and **Sustain**. Each section reiterates the overarching goal and provides a number of supporting international objectives, including some specific strategies to achieve them. An implementation plan with appropriate metrics is being developed to allow measurement of progress towards our objectives over the next five years.

# I. BUILD

## *Build a diverse, inclusive community of exceptional students, faculty, and staff from Alberta, Canada, and the world.*

### **International Objective 1: Build a diverse community of exceptional undergraduate and graduate students from all parts of the world.**

UAlberta's internationally diverse student population contributes to the institution's overall quest to attract students of outstanding talent and ambition. International students enrich the academic and cultural diversity of UAlberta and contribute to building more meaningful and relevant learning experiences for *all* students. UAlberta has seen, in recent years, a rapid growth in the numbers of international students, and the university has reached its overall recruitment targets of 20% of international students and fulfilled sub-targets of 15% of international students at the undergraduate level and 35% of international students at the graduate level. While these targets may evolve, in the interim international student recruitment efforts will primarily aim at enhancing diversity and ensuring consistently high academic quality in the international student population. The increasing intensity of national and global competition for international undergraduate and graduate students will compel us to not only maintain our recruitment efforts but to refine them, expand their reach, manage their cost and improve their efficiency. UAlberta remains committed to equity and fairness in our international recruitment.

**Strategy 1.1** Develop and implement international recruitment plans for undergraduate and graduate students such that all faculties enroll highly performing international students from around the world, optimizing diversity and balance in the composition of the international student population. Regularly revisit our international targets and how they are framed to ensure they reflect the dynamic tension between international opportunity and domestic accountability

**Strategy 1.2** More fully develop synergies between undergraduate and graduate recruitment plans and between these plans and other strategic areas in UAlberta's internationalization (e.g. international alumni strategies, post-doctoral fellow recruitment plans). Ensure that recruitment plans satisfy the highest professional and ethical standards whilst ensuring best possible return on investment and cost efficiency

- Strategy 1.3** Collaborate with external stakeholders such as the City of Edmonton, Government of Alberta, Government of Canada, and other peer institutions on strategies to support their efforts to expand international student recruitment and build/improve talent acquisition strategies that fit the needs of both the province and the country
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- Strategy 1.4** Grow the Sponsored Student Program by expanding professional and efficient interaction with sponsoring partners, their students and supervising professors
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- Strategy 1.5** Enhance the availability of scholarship and bursary funding for international students and ensure that such use is regularly evaluated for its impact and appropriateness

**International Objective 2:  
Build a community of exceptional faculty members and scholars at the university with backgrounds in many parts of the world.**

UAlberta is home to scholars from a wide range of countries. Almost 50% of professors at UAlberta have obtained an academic degree at a university outside of Canada. Scholars with an international background enrich teaching and research at our university. Scholars with backgrounds in countries outside of Canada are natural champions of internationalization and can act as ambassadors of their home country at our university and of our university in their home country. We want to encourage and supports all scholars at UAlberta, whether they are from Canada or from any other part of the world, to build their international network, globally connect with leading colleagues and leverage the most advanced resources available anywhere in the world.

- Strategy 2.1** Ensure that the special contributions of scholars with international backgrounds and scholars with active international relationships and engagement are recognized, celebrated, and supported
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- Strategy 2.2** Encourage and support associations and informal groups that bring together scholars from or with a special interest in a given country or region to advance the university's goals and reputation there
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- Strategy 2.3** Develop a plan to recruit international post-doctoral fellows from targeted institutions
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- Strategy 2.4** Facilitate international contacts and engagement in international collaboration notably for early career scholars

**International Objective 3: Build and support an integrated, cross-institutional strategy to demonstrate and enhance the University of Alberta’s local, national and international story, so that it is shared, understood and valued by the full University of Alberta community and our many stakeholders.**

The University of Alberta is an international university with global impact. An international perspective is critical to telling the UAlberta story. This is true whether we are sharing our research discoveries with an international audience, articulating the contributions and benefits our international activity brings to our campus and local communities, or celebrating the many ways we are bringing a global perspective to our teaching and learning. Building our reputation globally and locally as a university with a strong global perspective is of major importance as we seek to share our story with community, governments, funding bodies, and international partners. As the university develops its comprehensive brand platform, international storytelling and reputation-building are key.

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| <b>Strategy 3.1</b> | Develop a comprehensive communications strategy that profiles the university’s strengths and achievements in international learning, discovery, and citizenship initiatives |
| <b>Strategy 3.2</b> | Communicate to internal and external audiences the benefits of internationalization   |
| <b>Strategy 3.3</b> | Develop and enhance the use of mechanisms for communicating international opportunities in research, teaching, learning and service to the internal campus community        |

## II. EXPERIENCE

*Experience diverse and rewarding learning opportunities that inspire us, nurture our talents, expand our knowledge and skills, and enable our success.*

**International Objective 4: Ensure inclusion of international students into the campus community; support them in their pursuit of their academic, personal, and professional goals; facilitate lasting relationships for international students with their Canadian peers, the university, the City of Edmonton, the Province of Alberta, and Canada.**

International students join the University of Alberta to pursue their academic interests, expand their knowledge of the world, develop skills and competencies, gain independence and personal development, advance their career prospects, and build lifelong friendships and networks. Upon graduation, students' goals include pursuing further studies or careers in Canada, in their home country or in a new destination.

We are committed to offering our international students the best possible support throughout their academic career at the University of Alberta and to helping them achieve their goals, including those inspired by their experience of living and studying at the University of Alberta. In engaging with their Canadian peers, inside and outside of the classrooms and research spaces, international students contribute to the global perspective that elevates learning, research, and community service outcomes of the University of Alberta.

**Strategy 4.1** Enhance services and programs that ensure academic success for international students

**Strategy 4.2** Ensure international students have opportunity to learn about the history of Indigenous peoples of Canada and about Canada's commitment to actions that promote reconciliation

<b>Strategy 4.3</b>	Coordinate and align the efforts of all relevant internal as well as external stakeholders to ensure the broadest range of support and integration of our international student community
<b>Strategy 4.4</b>	Increase intercultural learning opportunities for the campus community (faculty, staff, and students) and ensure active participation of international students in such learning
<b>Strategy 4.5</b>	Expand opportunities for international students to engage in career development through work-integrated learning activities and other programs designed to increase understanding of and transition to the Canadian workplace

**International Objective 5: Introduce international dimensions in the learning experiences of all students to enrich their academic achievements, broaden their understanding of the world, educate them as global citizens, and facilitate their career success in a globalized economy.**

We are committed to providing domestic and international students with ways to better understand the world and to develop the interest and ability to interact respectfully and effectively with people from diverse cultural, linguistic, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. We will foster a sense of global citizenship and responsibility in our students. Our undergraduate and graduate students in all faculties will acquire the necessary skills and competencies to pursue varied career opportunities in an increasingly global labour market.

<b>Strategy 5.1</b>	Increase participation of undergraduate students in education and work abroad programs while maintaining or enhancing the learning outcomes of these experiences
<b>Strategy 5.2</b>	Expand international experiences for graduate students including participation in joint or dual degree programs, research collaborations, summer schools or internships abroad
<b>Strategy 5.3</b>	Enhance availability of financial support for all forms of international learning
<b>Strategy 5.4</b>	Enhance the range and number of for-credit international learning experiences and improve the transfer credit outcomes for learning undertaken abroad
<b>Strategy 5.5</b>	Increase participation in certificates that recognize students' achievements in global learning such as the Certificates in International Learning (CIL), Sustainability and Global Citizenship

## III. EXCEL

*Excel as individuals, and together, sustain a culture that fosters and champions distinction and distinctiveness in teaching, learning, research, and service.*

### **International Objective 6: Strengthen, expand, and effectively support the international dimension of research and innovation.**

International collaboration in research and innovation enhances research excellence and improves the visibility of the UAlberta research enterprise and its reputation. International research collaboration yields an improved ability to tackle larger scale projects and to pool resources, notably also with regard to research infrastructure and expertise. With enhanced international visibility comes an enhanced institutional attractiveness for global talent. Joining forces with research partners abroad can facilitate access to wider funding opportunities.

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| <b>Strategy 6.1</b> | Establish an inventory of existing major international collaborations for research and innovation at UAlberta to give evidence of existing depth and breadth of international engagement and guide future strategy development at faculty and at central levels. Develop mechanisms to appropriately evaluate existing partnerships and measure potential of any new opportunities. |
| <b>Strategy 6.2</b> | Use the signature areas and other areas of research excellence as the key strategic drivers in determining selection of institutional research partners; develop mutually beneficial and complementary programs of joint research, training and researcher mobility   |
| <b>Strategy 6.3</b> | Match interests and expertise between international research initiatives in the university with strategic plans and priorities of all levels of government to contribute to shared goals, and leverage government support in promoting our research capabilities internationally  |
| <b>Strategy 6.4</b> | Streamline communication and coordination between faculties, VP Research, VP Advancement, Alumni Relations, Government Relations, and University of Alberta International (UAI) to identify larger scale international funding opportunities that can foster major research initiatives, especially in the context of the signature areas   |
| <b>Strategy 6.5</b> | Support researchers in identifying funding opportunities in an international context and facilitate grant writing in that context   |

**International Objective 7: Establish, grow, and consolidate priority partnerships with a select number of institutions in countries of particular relevance to our university.**

Through decades of active international engagement, manifold relationships and collaborative linkages have developed, many of which started at the individual level. Among the more successful and sustainable partnerships are those that evolved from the collaboration of individuals to broader engagement of departments, faculties or the university and which have expanded beyond the original scope of activity.

Partnerships that integrate efforts between faculties and other units across campus allow us to build and maintain some truly high-level interactions. We are committed to developing comprehensive priority partnerships that include a range of international activities, from major research collaboration to student mobility, and include opportunities to attract or leverage new funding, build profile and create innovative academic programming.

Priority partnerships will typically develop in countries and regions with which UAlberta has an existing network of relations including: China, Germany, India, USA, and Mexico / Brazil / Pacific Alliance countries. Other places may be of particular relevance to individual faculties and be of priority for one specific dimension of the international agenda, such as recruitment or education abroad. In our priority partnerships, however, we will aim at a broader range of disciplines and types of interaction.

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| <b>Strategy 7.1</b> | Establish a framework for identifying and supporting institutional priority partners. Develop a process for ongoing review of institutional partnerships to evaluate progress, cost-benefit and strategic alignment  |
| <b>Strategy 7.2</b> | Develop a work plan for each priority partner which identifies key internal stakeholders, outlines priority activities and targets, creates opportunities to diversify the partnership and establishes communication strategies for internal and external audiences                      |
| <b>Strategy 7.3</b> | Engage external stakeholders in various levels of government, the corporate sector, other Campus Alberta institutions, and community organizations in partnership activities, and communicate the benefits of such partnerships to a broad range of domestic and international audiences |
| <b>Strategy 7.4</b> | Identify possibilities for bridge building and cluster development between priority partners to further expand reach and strengthen visibility   |



## IV. ENGAGE

*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.*

**International Objective 8: Strengthen active participation in international networks, membership associations, and consortia to learn from partners abroad and to profile our university as an institution that is focused on collaboration.**

Institutions of higher education and research operate in an environment of increasing complexity and accelerating change. As we grow more and more closely together in a world of powerful communication technology and relatively convenient travel, we better recognize our partners near and far as great sources of learning and inspiration. We see the various opportunities to join forces with partners to pool resources, broaden the reach of our capabilities, and open new doors of understanding. We discover the potential for strengthening the voice of higher education and research nationally and internationally through partnerships within our global community.

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| <b>Strategy 8.1</b> | Maintain and enhance engagement with some key national and global membership organizations that enrich the scholarly agenda and profile UAlberta as a globally minded institution. |
| <b>Strategy 8.2</b> | Encourage university members at all levels to engage in international organizations, both for academic purposes and for purposes relating to governing and managing the university |
| <b>Strategy 8.3</b> | Create more opportunities for our alumni who are living at home or abroad (international and Canadian) to contribute to UAlberta's international agenda                            |

**International  
Objective 9:  
Encourage UAlberta’s  
involvement with  
initiatives to benefit  
communities around the  
world that strive to  
better the lives of their  
citizens, to build peace,  
and to secure a  
sustainable future.**

The University of Alberta has a long tradition of engagement in projects and initiatives that have contributed to improving the human condition in economically underprivileged parts of the world, in zones of conflict, and in areas affected by natural disaster or major public health challenges. Such activities have been successful because of contributions of many different faculties, student groups, and dedicated individual members of our university. This spirit of global responsibility and commitment to “uplifting of the whole people” is as alive as ever in our community.

As members of the world community, we face a range of challenges of unprecedented size and complexity. Solving these global challenges will require the contributions of institutions and organizations from around the world. Universities will have a paramount role in developing ground breaking new ideas. UAlberta will honour our commitment to act “For the Public Good” and will do so guided by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and in close cooperation with national and international partners. UAlberta will feature itself as a university with a strategic focus on the SDGs and commitment to using them as lead principles for many sectors of our international agenda.

<b>Strategy 9.1</b>	Support and celebrate faculty and student projects and initiatives that advance UN SDGs
<b>Strategy 9.2</b>	Develop and cultivate relationships with international development organizations at the national and international level
<b>Strategy 9.3</b>	Develop strategic geographical and topical areas of focus to concentrate the university’s efforts; connecting and contributing to the UN SDG’s at both the local and global level
<b>Strategy 9.4</b>	Improve mechanisms to better connect UAlberta expertise to international initiatives on global challenges with major policy and funding organizations
<b>Strategy 9.5</b>	Highlight opportunities for engagement and funding sources for international development work

## V. SUSTAIN

*Sustain our people, our work, and the environment by attracting and stewarding the resources we need to deliver excellence to the benefit of all.*

**International Objective 10: Ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders in designing and implementing University of Alberta’s international agenda and facilitate institutional collaboration and alignment.**

The University of Alberta pursues internationalization with an integrated and coordinated approach. As internationalization is pervasive across many dimensions of the university, stakeholders from all parts of the campus are encouraged to collaborate. The various dimensions of scholarly pursuits at the university – teaching, research, and service – all play a role in building relationships around the world and creating international impact. An international strategy relies first and foremost on the faculties and their vision, capabilities and needs, balanced with institutional aspirations and parameters. UAI aims at supporting faculty initiatives and, where possible and productive, connecting faculty-based initiatives with other university-wide activities. Other Central level units also shape and facilitate overall institutional brand development and the cultivation of high-level relations for priority projects/programs.

**Strategy 10.1** Ensure university-wide communication relating to: international projects and initiatives; news on relevant government trends and developments; information on higher education and research in other parts of the world; good practice information from within UAlberta, the Province of Alberta, Canada, and abroad; in addition to timely information on funding opportunities

**Strategy 10.2** Develop and maintain governance structures for the various dimensions of our international agenda and ensure these structures are effectively coordinated so that they form a dynamic, creative, and efficient international ecosystem

**International  
Objective 11:  
Ensure effective,  
efficient, as well as  
sustainable delivery of  
international projects  
and programs.**

International plans and strategies are being turned into institutional value-add by way of programs and projects that are efficiently, flexibly, and imaginatively designed and managed. We build and cultivate the necessary skills and competencies, we establish and preserve appropriate organizational infrastructure and resources, and we are committed to a culture of accountability and ongoing evaluation in our international activities at all levels of the university.

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- Strategy 11.1**     Develop and enhance structured tools and processes for the delivery of international projects, programs, and initiatives at all levels of the university
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- Strategy 11.2**     Develop and ensure financial resources to support international activities in the Faculties, UAI and other units.
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- Strategy 11.3**     Create and disseminate information on opportunities for professional development relating to the international dimension of teaching, research, and university services, including for improved intercultural communication skills, for professors, staff, and students

# OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The implementation of UAlberta’s International Strategy unfolds in the environment of a large and complex institution that is aiming to fulfill multiple objectives and operates with numerous stakeholders internally and externally. In such an environment, it is key to keep international activities closely connected to core institutional targets and to ensure ongoing involvement of all relevant stakeholders. UAlberta has thus established an “international ecosystem” that serves as the backbone for all the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the international strategic plan. Annual reports for the comprehensive international strategy and its implementation will be submitted to the relevant stakeholders indicated in the graphic below, as well as to external communities as appropriate.

