



UNIVERSITY
OF ALBERTA



Service Excellence Transformation

**FINAL
REPORT**

OCTOBER
2022

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PART 1

Executive summary

Launched in June 2020, the University of Alberta for Tomorrow (UAT) initiative is a bold plan for transformation over the course of five years.

In February 2020, the University of Alberta learned that its Campus Alberta grant would be cut by 34 per cent over three years. While increases in tuition mitigated the impact, the university, through the life of the project, was required to reduce administrative costs by \$118 million¹, which at the time, was projected to result in the loss of approximately 1,000 staff.

In response to this unprecedented financial challenge, the university launched the University of Alberta for Tomorrow (UAT) initiative in June 2020. Shaped by the university's commitment to ensuring continued national and international leadership in research, teaching and community engagement, the first two years of the UAT initiative has seen the largest restructuring effort in the university's history aimed at transforming both the institution's academic and administrative structures.

A KEY ASPECT OF UAT WAS THE SERVICE EXCELLENCE TRANSFORMATION (SET) PROGRAM.

Through the SET program, administrative structures, systems and operations were redesigned to focus the maximum amount of the university's resources and energies on its core mission, while continuing to provide high-quality services with fewer staff members. The overall goal was two-fold:

- Enable the university to meet the challenge of the operating budget reduction, and balance the budget, mainly through reductions in administrative costs.
- Reduce the university's administrative costs and activity in-line with UniForum peers.

The SET program consisted of three primary projects² aimed at reducing administrative costs and enhancing efficiencies. These included the following:

- Restructuring administrative support functions and redesigning services (the initial focus was on six functional workstreams: human resources, information technology, finance, external engagement, student services and research administration; a seventh stream for Shared Services was added with the introduction of the new operating model).
- Reducing non-labour costs associated with procurement and general discretionary spending.
- Reviewing the use and distribution of space and facilities to realize savings.

¹ The target reduction has changed through the project as the Government of Alberta confirmed reductions for each fiscal year and tuition increases were realized. This total was originally \$127 million, but was later adjusted to \$135 million as a result of an increase in government targets; tuition funding mitigated this total as a result of enrolment increases, which reduced the net amount to \$118 million.

² *In March 2021, a fourth project was added, which involved creating an enterprise University Technology Strategy.



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A NEW ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATING MODEL WAS DEVELOPED THROUGH THE SET PROGRAM.

With support and governance from the Service Excellence Steering Committee, staff in the SET Program Office worked toward the development of a new administrative operating model through a process of extensive consultation with university leadership, which included the executive team, faculty deans and other academic and administrative leaders.

On October 16, 2020, the proposed administrative operating model was approved by the U of A Board of Governors; this model consisted of a hybrid of centralized and decentralized services and functions to promote consistency, avoid duplication and support a university-wide service culture. Following this approval, the emphasis of the SET program focused on the implementation of new organizational structures, services and systems needed to enact the operating model and coordinate the cost reductions to meet the budget requirements through fiscal years 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Initially, the development of a new operating model was approached from two angles simultaneously – reviewing the academic structures that deliver the university’s core mission while also analyzing administrative functions that support this mission. On this basis, the new administrative model was created (led by the SET program) and three colleges were established (led by the Academic Restructuring Working Group).

IN JUNE 2021, THE UNIVERSITY’S NEW OPERATING MODEL WAS RELEASED.

Through the winter of 2020 and spring of 2021, university leadership and the SET team worked to bring academic and administrative branches of UAT together. The university’s new operating model represents the complete integration of the administrative and academic branches of restructuring into a single vision for the U of A moving forward.

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The following attributes are key to the university’s operating model:

- A more centralized administrative and academic structure to focus the maximum resources on driving research and teaching performance, including advancing interdisciplinary teaching and research, centred around three colleges.
- Faculties that are responsible for delivering academic programs, hiring and supervising faculty members and instructors, and supporting alumni relations and fundraising; they also are responsible for delivering a high-quality student experience while relying on the delivery of central student services that are not program-specific.
- The bulk of administrative services are delivered centrally through shared service centres – one for faculty and staff and another for students – with a common university-wide operating model for all units.
- Administrative services are delivered centrally and within faculties and units by embedded service partners who report to central university service functions.
- The development of Centres of Expertise which provides broad institutional leadership both in terms of strategy and policy development, managing service standards and ensuring service satisfaction.
- The ability to combine functional expertise with specialized faculty knowledge, keeping services in close proximity to their points of delivery, while also promoting alignment with university core business.

As a result of these changes, the university benefits from:

- A smaller number of large academic units (i.e., colleges), leading to a more streamlined and efficient leadership structure and more effective and focused efforts to drive faculty performance.
- Faculties and their deans who are freed to focus energies and talents where it matters most: advancing the faculty’s core mission, including academic programs, hiring and mentoring faculty, and supporting alumni relations and fundraising.
- Colleges will also have a special responsibility to take the lead in fostering interdisciplinary teaching and research initiatives within the college and between the colleges, as well as working collaboratively with the three stand-alone faculties.
- Centralized services that are more specialized, more advanced in their use of technology, and provide a higher quality of service resulting in more efficient and less costly centralized services, creating more resources to focus on the university’s core mission of teaching and research.
- Greater central resources for strategic initiatives and rewards for better performance, significantly enhancing the university’s ability to adapt and evolve in a rapidly changing post-secondary environment, seize opportunities for growth and research funding, and advance the university’s core mission of research and teaching.



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A KEY ELEMENT OF THE SET PROGRAM WAS CONSISTENT CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION WITH LEADERSHIP, FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENTS.

This consultation was critical to undertaking the detailed analysis and planning to determine how and where services and processes were best delivered within the model. Functional reviews were initiated for each of the six functional workstreams as well as Shared Services, which helped inform how processes and other functional elements would change or shift within the new operating model.

Administrative restructuring also presented an opportunity to realign the organizational structure of the portfolios and other university units with widely-accepted post-secondary best practices – in particular, spans of control (how many staff report to each manager) and the number of reporting layers within the institution. Over the past 18 months, most of the central VP portfolios have been (or are in the process of) being restructured to create greater efficiencies and compliance with the operating model.

Throughout administrative restructuring, a combination of communications and engagement activities were executed, including virtual town hall events for key stakeholders (staff and faculty members, students and alumni), weekly updates to the faculty and staff newsletter, a robust and dedicated website, leadership toolkits to ensure consistent messaging, and the establishment of staff advisory groups.

THE SET PROGRAM HAD SIGNIFICANT STAFFING IMPACTS TO ACHIEVE THE OVERALL COST REDUCTIONS REQUIRED.

From fiscal year 2020 (when the institution began addressing budgetary reductions) to the end of the 2022 fiscal year, the total net reduction in staff headcount was approximately 860. Though this is less than the anticipated 1,000 roles when the cuts were first publicly announced in March 2020, it constitutes a major loss of people, skills and talent for the U of A.

In the course of the SET program, approximately 650 positions were redesigned or created as a result of administrative restructuring. As of March 31, 2022, 450 of these positions were successfully recruited, 84 per cent of which were staffed with internal candidates. The remaining positions created through administrative restructuring were intentionally deferred and will be introduced in the coming months.

THE SCALE OF THE SAVINGS ACHIEVED BY THE UNIVERSITY IN ONLY TWO YEARS IS UNPRECEDENTED AND CRITICAL TO THE ONGOING SUCCESS OF THE U OF A.

The following financial savings were realized as of March 31, 2022:

- \$66.9 million in administrative restructuring (due to labour reductions),
- \$29.5 million in non-labour costs associated with procurement and general discretionary spending,
- \$5.5 million in space and facilities (due to operational efficiencies such as reduced lease space, lower operating spend, etc.).

Through this work, the university balanced its budget in 2020-21 and 2021-22 and has a planned balanced budget for fiscal year 2022-23 and beyond.

Using 2021 data from UniForum (a global post-secondary benchmarking program), the U of A saw a significant decrease in the cost of administration, moving from

138 to 114 points in one year, which is the largest reduction of the 50+ universities participating in the UniForum program.

The total amount spent on the SET program between June 2020 and March 2022 was \$13.3 million. This was a one-time cost in order to facilitate continued, annual savings of \$102 million for the U of A. Staff expenses for the SET program totaled \$6.9 million, the majority of which were internal costs though secondments. The remaining \$6.4 million was primarily spent on external support including reviews of procurement and space, service culture training, the development of the university technology strategy, and dedicated implementation support throughout the SET program.

THE UNIVERSITY CAN LEARN IMPORTANT LESSONS FROM UNDERTAKING A PROGRAM OF THIS SIZE AND COMPLEXITY.

In the delivery of the SET program, a number of lessons were learned, which can be applied going forward in the development and implementation of change initiatives. To continue to improve and learn from the experience of administrative restructuring, the SET program engaged with key stakeholders to document what worked well, what could have been done better, and what lessons would be valuable for future change projects.



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What worked well?

- The SET program adopted principles to guide the development of the operating model and service design and held firmly to these principles throughout the program.
- Leadership support was active and visible to provide credibility to the SET program.
- The SET program’s measurement framework established targets and measured continuous progress throughout restructuring, including benefits tracking.
- University leaders were honest and clear on the staffing impacts from the beginning, and committed to engaging with representative groups in a constructive manner.
- The SET team was well-structured and empowered to act quickly and responsively.
- Change management was critical to ensure community consultation, engagement and support.
- External resources provided support and expertise.

What lessons were learned?

- Maintain an integrated approach to administrative and academic change.
- Set reasonable deadlines to deliver all critical pieces of work while still moving at pace.
- Plan and articulate the future state in detail.
- Ensure change management and communications resources are in place as soon as possible.

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- Take the time necessary for comprehensive process improvements while still working at pace.
- Recognize, identify and communicate additional budget impacts.
- Clearly communicate targets in a language that leadership and the community understand.
- Position the transformation as ongoing work.

GOING FORWARD, THE UNIVERSITY WILL CONTINUE TO WORK TOWARDS THE GOALS OF UAT AND SUSTAIN SERVICE EXCELLENCE.

With the conclusion of the SET program on March 31, 2022, operational units across portfolios and academic units are embedding the changes and changing the way the university operates.

To continue to thrive in the future and achieve the vision outlined in UAT, the university will require ongoing capability to support and sustain the transformation, including: service delivery governance and accountability, policy reformulation, process improvement, technology enablement, standardized, non-duplicated roles and responsibilities, and performance monitoring and reporting. Core to this will be the ongoing enhancement of the university's commitment to service excellence evidenced through a unified service-oriented culture with continuous improvement and innovation.

The establishment of the University Initiatives Office in April 2022 will continue this work to embed and refine the operating model through planning and alignment, enabling execution of projects, and building the university's capability to adapt to ongoing, large-scale change.

Restructuring the University of Alberta has involved massive change at an unprecedented pace that didn't come without its challenges. Despite these challenges and the additional changes and uncertainty associated with the global pandemic, the SET program led the development and implementation of a new operating model involving the restructuring of almost every unit.

At the same time, the SET program achieved over \$100 million in sustainable savings. The SET program has also laid the foundation for a long-term continuous improvement plan, which will ensure that the greatest possible percentage of resources are focused on advancing the core mission of teaching, research, and community engagement.

Working together as one university, the University of Alberta is stronger than it was, more resilient, and better equipped to deliver the core administrative services that underpin its mission.





PART 2

Introduction and background

For over a hundred years, the University of Alberta has continued to evolve, prepare for future growth, and drive economic and social change in Alberta and beyond.

This evolution continued in the years leading up to 2020, with the university preparing for change and building foundational tools that included multi-year budget planning and accountability processes, a new budget model, an institutional asset management strategy and end-to-end administrative bench-marking through the UniForum program, a global efficiency benchmarking program for post-secondary institutions. Through UniForum, the university began gathering and analyzing data in a way that allowed comparisons of our results with those of other participating universities from Australia, New Zealand, the UK and Canada. For the first time, an understanding of the totality of resources used to deliver administrative services was available.

The first collection highlighted the U of A as one of the most cost inefficient institutions in the collection, though with above benchmark service satisfaction levels. Results from 2020 demonstrated the U of A was well above the average for an institution of its size and research intensity: a gap in the order of \$138 million above the normalized benchmark. The university's initial response was to develop a series of pilot programs to use the data to improve service efficiency and prove the value of the collection. The longer term goal was to move towards more efficient services with Uniforum revealing key opportunities to achieve major efficiencies and savings through administrative restructuring.

However, a catalyst came in the spring of 2020 that made restructuring an immediate necessity. In addition to the changes and uncertainty associated with the global pandemic, the U of A also faced serious financial challenges, with a 34 per cent reduction of its provincial base grant over three years. While increases in tuition mitigated the impact, the university still needed to reduce administrative costs by \$118 million¹, which at the time, was projected to result in the loss of approximately 1,000 staff. The net changes in funding are shown in Figure 1 on the next page. The scale of the challenge and the speed at which the university had to achieve savings was unprecedented among Canadian universities.



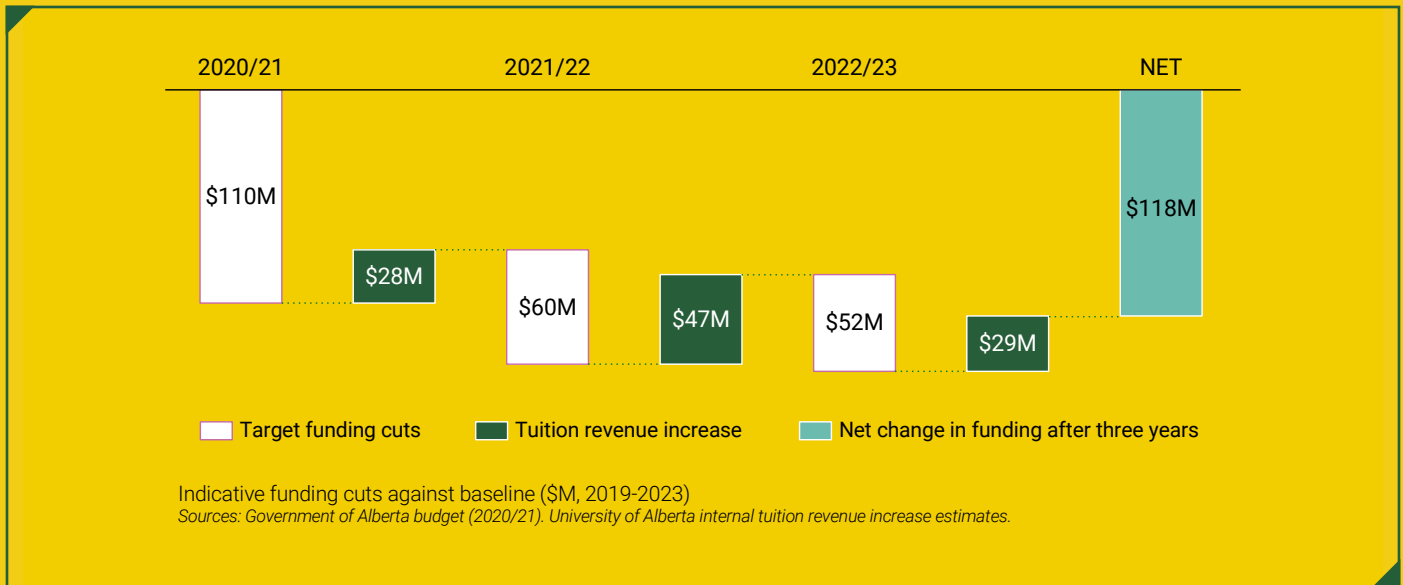
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¹ This total was originally \$127 million, but was later adjusted to \$135 million as a result of an increase in government targets; tuition funding mitigated this total as a result of enrolment increases, which reduced the net amount to \$118 million.

Figure 1: Net Funding Change from 2020 to 2023



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Traditionally, the U of A would have applied an across-the-board cut to achieve savings, but because of the magnitude of funding reductions, it was not possible without causing irreparable harm to the core mission of the institution. There were also a number of other constraints involved. While the government viewed the cuts as an overall four-year reduction, the U of A was required to achieve operational savings within 24 months and could not use operating reserves (also known as “carry-forward funds” or “flex”). The Government of Alberta also made it clear that the university was not permitted to submit a deficit budget.

There were two other complicating factors: first, the simultaneous emergence of COVID-19, and second, the concurrent transition between presidents during the spring of 2020. At the same time as managing an institution-wide move to remote teaching, research and working, the idea for transformation took shape. In an unusual move, prior to his official start date, incoming president Bill Flanagan powerfully made the case for transformational change in response to the unprecedented financial challenges.

In June 2020, the plan for change was announced with the launch of the University of Alberta for Tomorrow (UAT) initiative, the largest restructuring effort in the university’s history, which aimed to transform both the institution’s academic and administrative structures. Bolder and broader in scope than any restructuring initiative ever undertaken by a Canadian university, the reforms were modelled on successful work completed in other countries, including Australia and the United Kingdom. The UAT initiative positioned the U of A to be better equipped to deliver on its vision and mission for the province, make even greater contributions to the public good, and sustain its position as a top university within the country and the world.

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UAT set an ambitious goal for the university to reduce administrative costs by \$95 million while at the same time maintaining a consistent level of high-quality services for faculty, staff and students. To achieve this, the Service Excellence Transformation (SET) program was created, with the goal of redesigning administrative structures, systems, and operations to focus the maximum amount of the university’s resources and energies on its core mission of excellence in teaching, research, and community engagement, while continuing to provide high-quality service with fewer staff members. The overall goal was two-fold:

- 1. Enable the university to meet the challenge of the operating budget reduction, and balance its budget, mainly through reductions in administrative costs.**
- 2. Reduce the university’s administrative costs and activity in line with UniForum peers.**

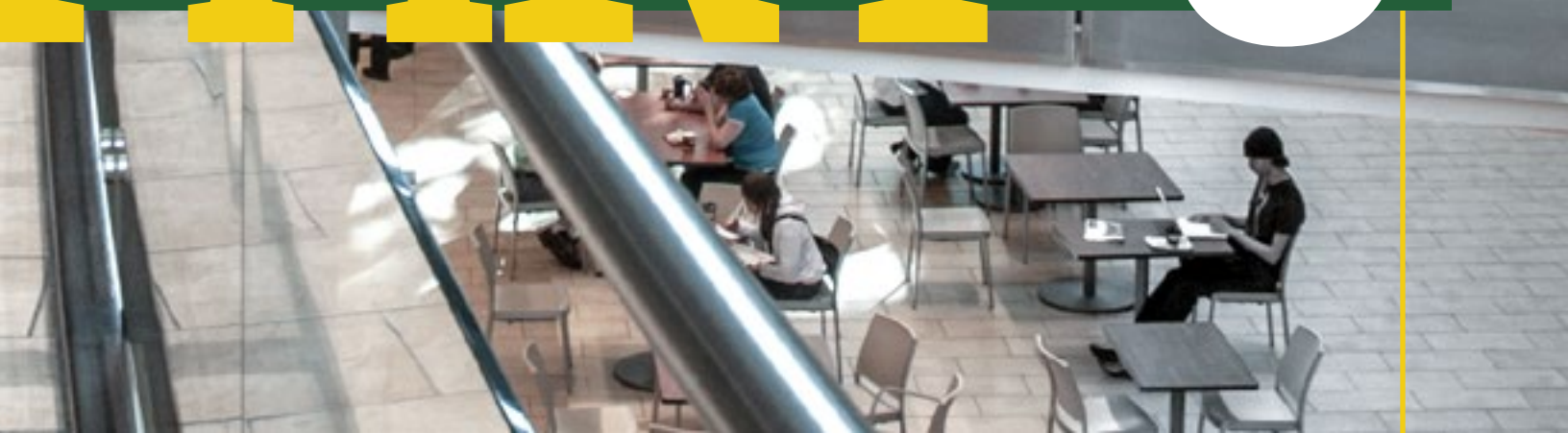
In Fall 2020, the U of A began implementing a new administrative operating model that centralized and streamlined many administration services and functions, aimed at creating annual labour cost savings of approximately \$95 million. In addition, non-labour costs were also examined; the university’s footprint and maintenance costs were reviewed to ensure that physical assets served the core mission, and a procurement review was initiated to identify significant potential savings.

In December 2020, the General Faculties Council and the U of A Board of Governors approved three new colleges which brought together 13 of 18 faculties into the College of Health Sciences, the College of Natural and Applied Sciences, and the College of Social Sciences and Humanities. With economies of scale, the colleges will provide high-quality administrative services at a lower cost. Launched on July 1, 2021, the new colleges form the foundation for increased university-wide collaboration, facilitating enhanced interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary teaching and research programs. Together as one university, there is now greater opportunity to tell an even more compelling story about the impact and relevance of the teaching and research strength of the University of Alberta.

This report summarizes the administrative restructuring process at the University of Alberta, the work of the SET program, as well as the impacts and outcomes of administrative restructuring thus far.



PART 3



Service Excellence Transformation program

Administrative restructuring

To facilitate administrative restructuring at the university, the Service Excellence Transformation (SET) program was created. SET was a comprehensive, pan-university, end-to-end and fast-paced program designed to transform institutional business processes and tasks, changing how the university delivered core administrative functions to drive service improvements and greater efficiency, and ultimately better support the university's academic mission.

Administrative restructuring supported the UAT vision by:

- Resetting the university's administrative structures to align with U of A's core mission of excellence in teaching, research, and community engagement.
- Enabling a more collaborative, accountable, strategic, and responsive leadership team.
- Enabling academic staff to focus on the frontline delivery of the university's mission, rather than unit-level administration, and promoting greater professionalism and leadership across administrative staff.
- Providing an overall enhanced student experience.
- Supporting institutional objectives for equity, diversity, and inclusivity.
- Simplifying workflows, automating processes, reducing bureaucracy and finding efficiencies.

The three primary goals of the SET program were the following:

1. To create administrative structures that focused the maximum amount of the university's resources and energies on its core mission of excellence in teaching, research, and community engagement.
2. To restructure so that the university achieved financial sustainability.
3. To reimagine how the university worked, to be able to continue to provide high-quality services with fewer staff members.

Administrative changes were not simply a stop-gap measure to meet the significant budgetary constraints; in the long term, by re-examining and restructuring how the university provided administrative service, the university could continue to:

- Serve and support the core teaching and research mission of the university effectively and efficiently.
- Provide high-quality services (with fewer staff members).
- Create sustainable, meaningful careers for the future.



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After facilitating the creation of a new administrative operating model, the emphasis of the SET program was to implement the new organizational structures and systems needed to enact the model while also coordinating the labour cost reductions necessary to meet the budget requirements through fiscal year 2022-23.

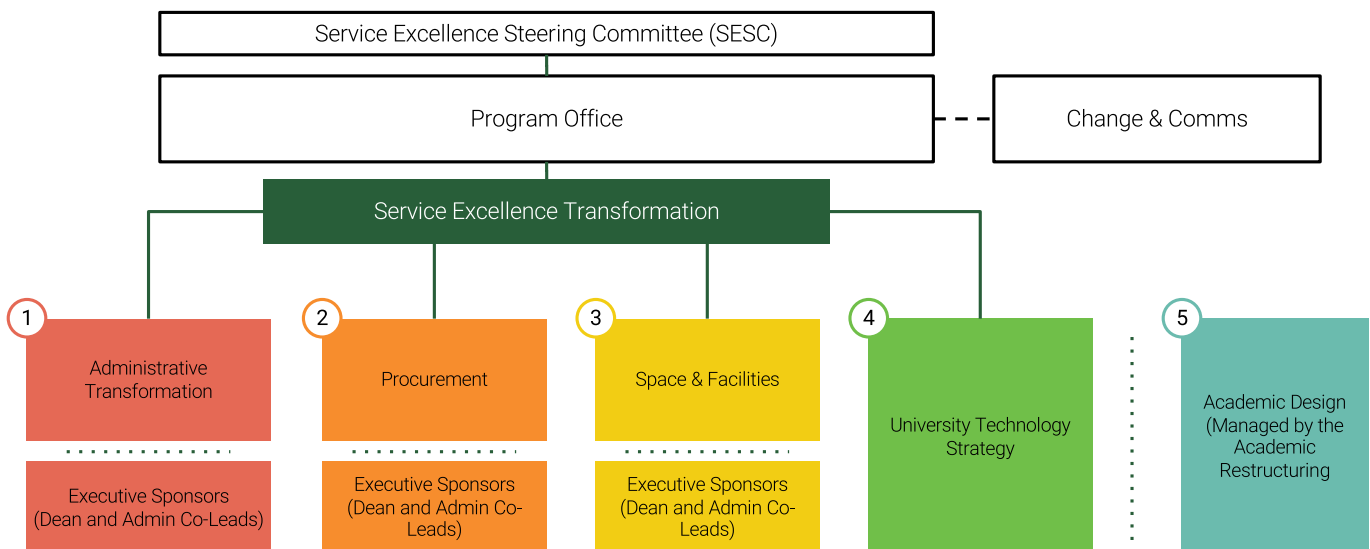
Transitioning the university's administrative services to the new model is substantially complete with continuous improvement activity continuing into the future. Redistributing administrative services, with a significant portion of the university's workforce from faculties and portfolios to new units in central service teams, will allow the university to take advantage of economies of scale and provide services more efficiently.

SET initiatives

The SET program consisted of four primary projects, as shown in Figure 2 below, aimed at reducing administrative costs and enhancing efficiencies:

1. Restructuring **administrative functions** throughout the university and redesigning services and processes with a focus on achieving economies of scale and specialization.
2. Redesigning **procurement and general discretionary spending practices** to reduce costs, including consolidation of suppliers and implementation of a strategic procurement framework.
3. Reviewing the current approach to **space and facilities** and accelerating plans to use space and facilities more efficiently.
4. Creating a university-wide **University Technology Strategy** (an initiative added in March 2021).

**Figure 2:
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Program
Structure**



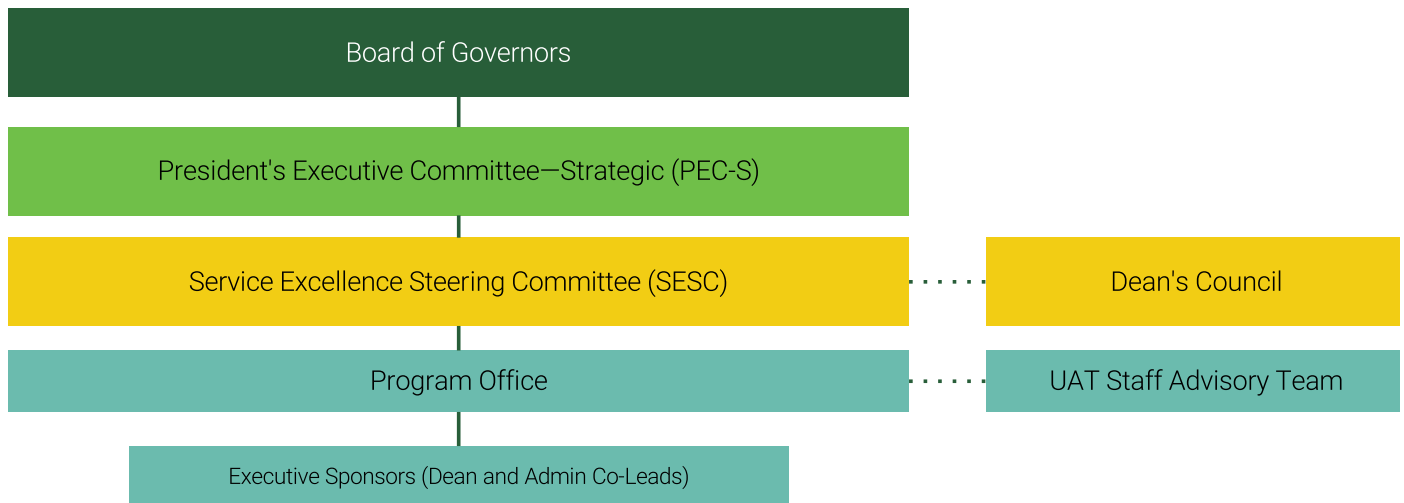
Governance

Under the Post-Secondary Learning Act of Alberta, the U of A Board of Governors has senior oversight of the institution and concerns itself with the long-range planning and business affairs of the university. While final decision-making authority rested with the board of governors, the Service Excellence Steering Committee was formed in spring 2020 with a mandate to develop recommendations for administrative restructuring. They acted as the conduit between the SET Program Office, which administered the SET program, and existing governance bodies.

To support the governance process during administrative restructuring, a decision making matrix was developed to provide clarity and agreement among stakeholders; it acted as a key document to capture who was accountable, responsible, consulted, and informed for decisions related to the SET program. As a result, the decision-making matrix ensured the SET team was able to confidently implement decisions and deliver outcomes at scale and with speed.

The decision-making and advisory roles in the governance for the SET program are outlined below in Figure 3.

**Figure 3:
Service
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Governance
Structure**



U OF A BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The U of A Board of Governors provided final approval of proposals for the university's new administrative framework, operating model and organizational structure.



PRESIDENT'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE—STRATEGIC

President's Executive Committee—Strategic (PEC-S) advises the president on all matters related to the administrative functions of the university. Through his advisory committees, the president has ultimate responsibility for administrative decisions and for determining what will be presented to the U of A Board of Governors for their consideration and approval. The SET team met regularly with PEC-S to provide status updates on administrative restructuring as well as receive feedback and approval on SET initiatives.

SERVICE EXCELLENCE STEERING COMMITTEE

The Service Excellence Steering Committee (SESC), chaired by the executive co-sponsors, provided oversight and guidance of the SET program, which included acting as the conduit between the SET Program Office and existing governance bodies at the university, including PEC-S. SESC membership included both senior academic and administrative leaders to ensure that all SET initiatives incorporated a range of university perspectives. SESC worked in parallel with the institutional efforts for academic restructuring and the initiatives related to structural changes to academic units at the U of A. A list of SESC members can be found [here](#).

SET PROGRAM OFFICE

Facilitating administrative restructuring efforts was the responsibility of the SET Program Office, which ensured alignment and cohesion across five key areas: governance, engagement, resource management, reporting, and benefits realization. The SET Program Office took direction from SESC and implemented approved changes and initiatives.

Membership of the SET Program Office was composed primarily of U of A employees who were seconded from across the university and who were recognized for their knowledge and expertise. A [list of members](#) and a [complete organizational chart](#) of the SET Program Office are available. For more information about the design of the SET program, see page 13 of the [SET Interim Report](#).

SET EXECUTIVE SPONSORS

To ensure expertise and knowledge guided proposed changes, each administrative functional area was sponsored by both an academic and administrative leader at the university. Each sponsor worked with their co-sponsor to review their respective workstream or functional area, with support from staff in the SET Program Office. The sponsors also sought guidance from staff subject matter experts to help define specific processes, activities, and services in each area. The list of executive sponsors can be found [here](#).

ADVISORY BODIES

DEANS' COUNCIL

Deans' Council played an integral, advisory role in the development and implementation of the SET program. Deans' Council was frequently briefed and consulted and provided input on proposals for administrative change.

UAT STAFF ADVISORY TEAM

As part of the U of A for Tomorrow transformation, the Staff Advisory Team provided critical insight and feedback as the stages of academic and administrative restructuring unfolded. This team included staff representatives from all faculties and major academic support units, as well as broad representation across job levels, employee categories, and equity-deserving groups. On a volunteer basis, SAT members provided feedback directly to SESC. A list of Staff Advisory Team members can be found [here](#).



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SET principles

In addition to being guided by the university's core values, the SET program adopted a set of principles – endorsed through the administrative governance process – to guide the development of recommendations for the university's administrative structure.

GENUINE OPENNESS TO THINKING DIFFERENTLY

The SET team was committed to working with leaders and staff to solve the problems that exist and build a solution collaboratively that set the university up for long-term success.

COMMITMENT TO TAKING URGENT ACTION

Given the immediacy of the financial challenge, the SET team moved quickly to pursue their objectives. The SET program started quickly and focused on simplifying processes and improving service experience while undertaking detailed operating and organizational design work.

TRANSPARENT CONSULTATION PROCESS

The SET team was consultative and transparent in their work, communicated frequently and openly, and established a robust change management and consultation strategy led by the SET Program Office to ensure the approach was transparent and sustainable.

ENTIRE-UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT

The SET Program Office and leadership communicated frequently and openly, addressing known challenges, creating an inclusive space for meaningful engagement throughout the process.

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EMPLOYING AN II + EDI LENS

The SET team assessed impacts on Indigenous initiatives and equity, diversity and inclusivity (II + EDI) to ensure that new structures and services did not negatively impact institutional efforts towards II + EDI.

REGULAR PROGRESS EVALUATION

The SET team ensured work was data-informed and future-focused, and that the transformation process was regularly evaluated against agreed criteria, supported by clear metrics.

Human resources principles

Throughout the administrative restructuring process, and given the speed and scope of the transformation, the university was committed to supporting staff and adhering to human resources principles. The following principles were developed with input from advisory groups and approved by SESC in October 2020:

- Recognizing and acknowledging the anxiety and confusion that staff will feel through the UAT transformation.
- Treating staff with compassion, dignity, empathy, and respect in any action taken.
- Understanding the important and meaningful work that administrators did within faculties and units and the valued contributions staff made to the university's success.
- Creating a vibrant and healthy working environment that provides staff with meaningful work, engaging experiences, and fulfilling career paths.
- Supporting staff if changes to their role and responsibilities occurred.
- Sharing consistent, transparent, clear, truthful, and timely information.
- Providing services and supports that helped staff build and maintain good mental health and wellbeing.
- Being guided by the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion in decision-making.
- Engaging the Non-Academic Staff Association (NASA) and the Association of Academic Staff of the University of Alberta (AASUA) in meaningful consultation regarding changes affecting staff terms and conditions of employment.
- Following the employment processes and practices outlined within the collective agreements, handbooks, policies, and legislation.
- Sharing the processes and steps being used to implement the new model once union consultation is complete.



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PART 4

Administrative transformation

The largest of the SET initiatives was administrative transformation, redesigning how the university's core administrative services are provided and administered.



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Operating model

DEVELOPMENT OF THE OPERATING MODEL

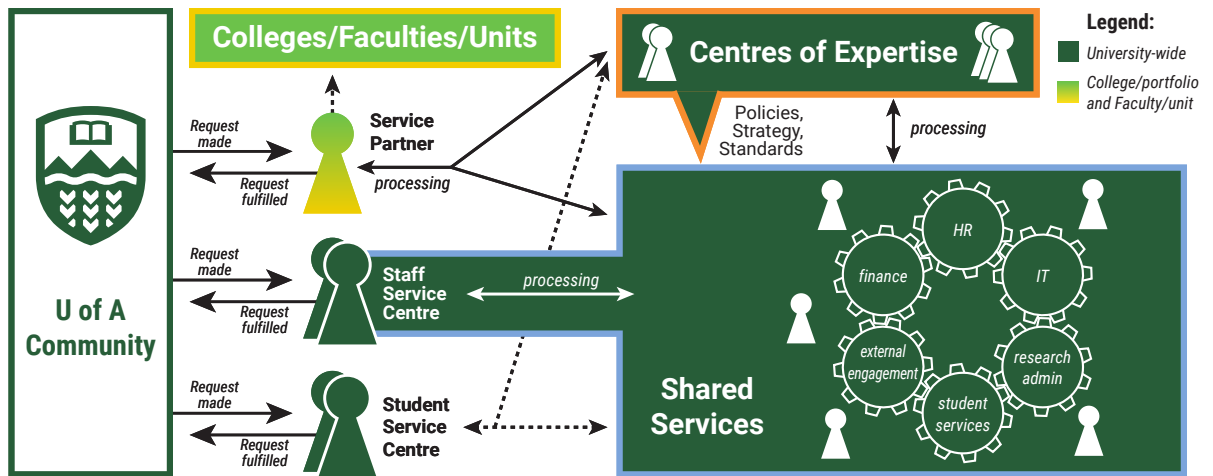
With the launch of the UAT initiative, the Service Excellence Steering Committee and the SET Program Office worked toward the development of a new administrative operating model through a process of extensive consultation with university leadership, which included executive members, faculty deans, and other academic and administrative leaders.

Through this consultation process, leadership in all faculties and portfolios were engaged to establish and prioritize certain design criteria to provide a basis for the establishment of the new model. A number of model options were evaluated against these design criteria, which were then narrowed down to three primary considerations, ranging from highly centralized to fully decentralized. After much deliberation, a hybrid model was proposed.

On October 16, 2020, the proposed administrative operating model was approved by the U of A Board of Governors; this model consists of a hybrid of centralized and decentralized services and functions to promote consistency, avoid duplication, and support a university-wide service culture. A visual representation of the administrative operating model is shown in Figure 4 on the next page.

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Figure 4: Administrative Operating Model



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Initially, the development of a new operating model was approached from two angles simultaneously – reviewing the academic structures that deliver the university’s core mission while also analyzing administrative functions that support this mission. On this basis, the new administrative model was created (led by the SET program) and three colleges were established (led by the Academic Restructuring Working Group).

Through the winter of 2020 and spring of 2021, university leadership and the SET team worked to bring these two branches of UAT together. The university’s new operating model (released June 2021) represents the complete integration of the administrative and academic branches of restructuring into a single vision for the university moving forward.

The model is a significant shift from the historical approach to operating the university. It integrates administrative and professional services (those required for operation of the university, such as human resources, information technology services or finance) with academic services (those specific to delivering teaching, research and community engagement, such as teaching resources or student services). It also introduces new structures such as colleges, centres of expertise (CoEs), and service partners to liaise between central services and the colleges, faculties, portfolios and units.

As a result of this new model, administrative services and transactional activities, processes and functions that are common across the university are centralized through two service centres – one for students and another for staff – the latter of which is administered by a new central unit called Shared Services, which focuses on the delivery of cross-functional and high-volume services. Advisory support services are distributed within the colleges, faculties, portfolios and units through the use of service partners who are embedded in academic units but who report primarily into the CoEs within the vice-president portfolios.

This model combines functional expertise with academic and disciplinary knowledge at the faculty and department level. It keeps services in close proximity to their points of delivery, while also promoting alignment with university core business.

For more detailed information about the operating model and the new structures that were established, please refer to the [Operating Model Report](#).

DEGREE OF CENTRALIZATION

A key objective of the new operating model was to shift work centrally to improve and provide a consistent level of service across the university while focusing faculty efforts and resources on the core mission. Previously, administrative work was split between central units and faculties, with customized processes and services across units, faculties and departments. This created inconsistent user experiences, duplicative efforts, and higher costs with wide disparities between how well different areas of the university were resourced and supported.

In the new operating model, the majority of common administrative services, along with areas of expertise, moved to central portfolios to ensure standardized processes and university-wide services. However, some administrative support was maintained in faculties and departments to allow the use of more resources to deliver on the core mission and ensure students, instructors and researchers have the critical support needed to be successful.

The following targets were developed using UniForum data which profiled the best-performing institutions within the selected functional workstreams. While not a precise fit for the U of A, the selected data served as initial targets and helped guide restructuring and process amalgamation activities. Through these targets, budgets were established for the various operational areas to create a more centralized approach. Figure 5 shows the projected end state for various activities:

**Figure 5:
Centralization
Targets
with the
Administrative
Operating Model**

ACTIVITY TYPE	CONSOLIDATION TO CENTRAL STRUCTURES (compared to current central staff)	TARGET % STAFF ALLOCATED TO:		
		COE/SHARED SERVICES	SERVICE PARTNERS	FACULTY/UNIT
Research Administration	+5%	10%	20%	70%
Information Technology	+15%	80%	5%	15%
Human Resources	+30%	60%	25%	15%
Student Services	+8%	50%	10%	40%
Finance	+35%	65%	20%	15%
External Engagement	+30%	65%	10%	25%
Facilities Management	+9%	95%	0%	5%
Library	0%	95%	0%	5%
Governance	0%	70%	0%	30%
General Administration	0%	30%	0%	70%
Teaching Administration	0%	30%	0%	70%
Operations Total	+12%	56%	10%	34%

TRANSITIONING TO THE NEW OPERATING MODEL

Transitioning to the new operating model was (and continues to be) complex, but there were two key aspects of the transition process that remained constant:

- **Maintaining critical services:** The transition approach ensured that the university maintained critical services throughout the process.
- **Supporting a fair and consistent transition:** The university carefully followed the agreed-upon employment principles, practices and processes throughout the transition process.

As part of the transition process, units and faculties provided the SET team with recommendations for the types of roles that they believed should shift to a different part of the university to better align with the new operating model. From these recommendations, a unit-level staffing impact analysis was completed in November 2020, and the design of implementation approaches was completed in December 2020.

In January 2021, central portfolio units and faculties developed more detailed transition plans to inform the shift of staff to central roles, and the HR team within SET designed new and consolidated roles to support the centralization and consolidation of core service delivery functions in accordance with the HR principles, collective agreements, handbooks, procedures and legislation.



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Functional workstreams

The administrative transformation project was divided into six areas of focus, or functional workstreams. These areas of focus were included in the UniForum data collection and reflect key areas of administrative services at the university. They were as follows:

- External engagement.
- Finance.
- Human resources (HR).
- Information technology (IT).
- Research administration.
- Student services.

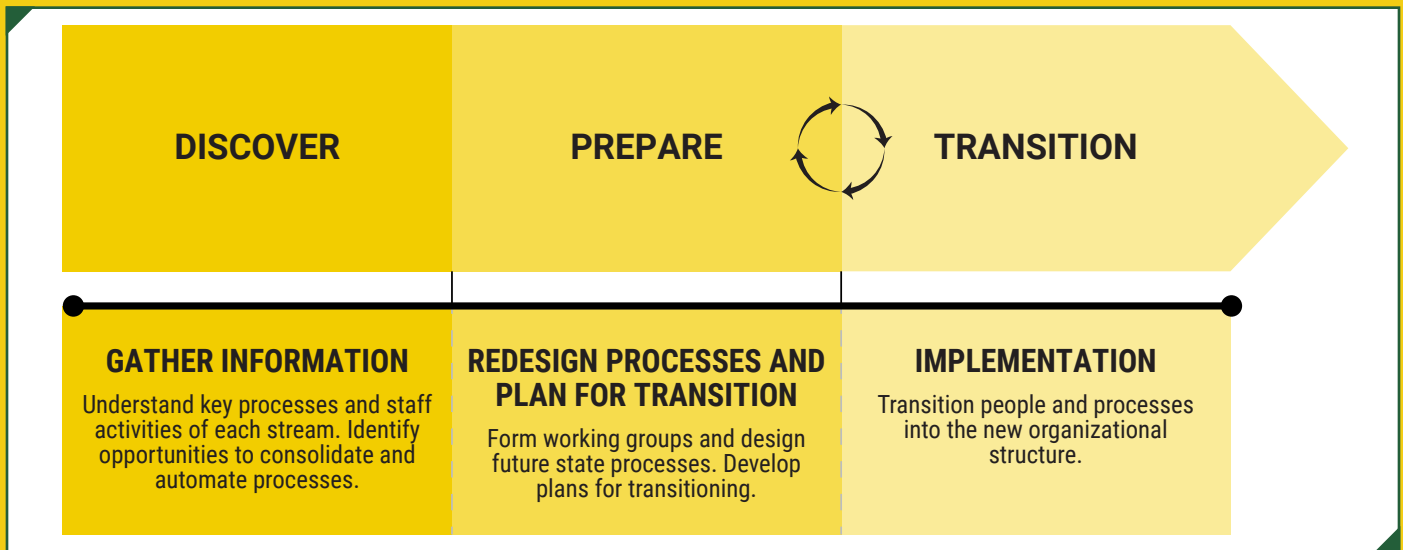
FUNCTIONAL REVIEWS

With the magnitude of budget reductions required, the workload for remaining staff would have been unsustainable unless the university reorganized functions and improved process efficiency to continue to provide the necessary services. Therefore, processes needed to be reviewed and redesigned to ensure optimization with the new operating model.

To facilitate this process, the SET team created a functional review methodology on how to shift from the current state into the new administrative operating model, which consisted of three phases as outlined in the Figure 6 on the next page.

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Figure 6: Functional Review Methodology



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Rapid process improvements (RPI)

Before the functional reviews were finalized, the SET team selected several processes that could help resolve administrative pain points with immediate benefits in terms of cost as well as user satisfaction. Called rapid process improvements (RPIs), these projects focused on quick wins for better efficiency. Opportunities for administrative improvements were submitted by staff and leaders across the university; selection was based on whether or not the process could be improved with one or more of the following actions:

- Simplified by removing unnecessary steps and duplication.
- Better allocated by changing where and by whom they are completed.
- Changed in quality or quantity of services to what is needed to achieve outcomes.
- Automated or enhanced through the use of new or existing technology.
- Built with specific and technical capability of staff to enhance service performance.
- Streamlined in compliance or risk approach changed to enable processes to be more efficient.

As a result of the RPI process, the following processes were completed:

- Centralization of awards and scholarships management.
- Tracking of professional expense reimbursement (PER) and value of assets.
- Changing financial corrections defaults.
- Streamlining the grant signing matrix.
- Simplifying the research funding policy and procedure.
- Refining procedures for financial exception situations.

View [more information on each of the above RPIs](#).



Discover phase

The discovery process was the first phase of the functional reviews. Its purpose was to understand key processes and staff activities within each of the six functional workstreams, as well as identify opportunities to consolidate and automate processes. This phase consisted of two steps:

1. **Gathering information:** identifying key contacts and reviewing service catalogues.
2. **Process impact:** assessing similarities and exceptions in processes.

GATHERING INFORMATION AND THE SERVICE CATALOGUES

With a new administrative operating model in place, the SET team continued consultation with leadership in faculties, portfolios and central units for more detailed analysis and planning as to how and where services and processes were best delivered within the model. As part of this process, the executive sponsors for each workstream composed focus groups of staff subject matter experts to help create an expansive list of all services in a particular functional portfolio. This included mapping where they would be best placed within the model (in a centre of expertise, with service partners, in a service centre, or within a faculty).

This process helped the SET team determine what kind of work was being done, where it was done, and by whom. Once the activity lists were fleshed out, the team worked through them, discovering better practices, systems and processes within the faculties, portfolios and units that could be applied more broadly to the institution through the redesign process.

The end result was called a service catalogue, one for each function. These catalogues helped the SET team formalize how the operating model would work and also assisted in the decision-making of the faculties, portfolios and central units as they prepared their staffing transition plans.

The service catalogues are intended to be living documents and as such were updated several times throughout the SET program as more details were uncovered through the functional review process and the operating model became more established.



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PROCESS IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Data from the discovery phase was used to create a prioritized list of processes to be redesigned first. The prioritization list was based on a variety of criteria including size of impact, speed of change, degree of risk, change effort required and dependencies. Processes and activities underwent a detailed process analysis, which included further consultation with working groups comprised of operational staff and service end-users. Discovery findings also helped ensure that proper supports were in place for transitioning to the new model.

Prepare phase

In the prepare phase, each workstream prepared and planned for transitioning staff and services to the new operating model. The primary task was to redesign the current processes within each workstream to create a more efficient and enduring state. This required considerable engagement and feedback from staff who knew the processes best; staff from their respective areas of expertise were engaged to review each of the activities and services in the service catalogue and help inform how processes and other functional elements would change or shift within the new operating model. It is crucial to note that this was not a linear process. As some processes were redesigned and readied for transition, other processes were starting with impact assessments.

In most cases, the prepare phase consisted of three steps:

- Completion of **process impact assessment** (that began during the discovery phase): analyze current-state processes and develop high-level process maps, as well as identify measures for service expectations for major business functions.
- **Validation of end-to-end operating model:** finalize the service catalogue for each workstream to prepare for transitioning the identified services.
- **Engagement in transition planning:** identify transition requirements (including people mapping; policies, processes and procedures; technology needs; and operational aspects such as facilities), create training plans for staff, identify opportunities for automation technology and more.

PROCESS REDESIGN METHODOLOGY

During process redesign, the key objective was to optimize processes for the new operating model to ensure a greater focus on the end user's needs and the value that services provided to the university community. Several design principles (heavily influenced by lean management methodology) guided process redesign to ensure that goals were being met, including:

- Simplify and streamline.
- Perform work where it makes the most sense.
- Leverage technology.
- Digitize and standardize.

Functional teams began by focusing on processes and activities that were identified as priorities during the discovery phase. While redesigning, the process redesign team aimed to adapt to the new operating model by transitioning services to the applicable area (e.g., either Shared Services, centres of expertise or the partner networks). They also looked for ways to standardize to achieve efficiencies.

The general approach to process redesign followed these four steps:

- **Information gathering:** work with stakeholders to determine the current state and scope of change. Conduct appropriate engagement (small stakeholder consultations) to identify pain points and develop minimum viable improvement proposals.
- **Statement of work development and approval:** develop a statement of work that defines the scope, the approach and the timeline based on the information gathered, as well as clear handoffs and deliverables.
- **Process improvement consultation and recommendations (documentation):** based on the statement of work, perform the required activities to deliver expected outputs, which may include handoff and coordination with the Information Services and Technology unit or other parties. Conduct workshops with the larger community based on impact scale and necessary information gathering.
- **Implementation and transition:** based on the statement of work, transfer the relevant documents required by the service delivery area and organizational change management team to prepare for launch and conduct any necessary training. This may include some updates to documents created during the process redesign.

Each process redesign took between eight to 10 weeks to complete, not including the launch timelines for the redesign services. The development of launch plans and timelines was the responsibility of the service delivery area once the redesigned process was completed. However, the SET business analysts continued to work with the service area to help transition process redesign documentation and provide support if changes were needed.

■ PROCESSES REDESIGNED AND METRICS

From November 2021 to March 2022, the SET team redesigned 13 full processes in the human resources (HR), research administration, and finance workstreams.¹

The following processes have been partially or fully redesigned with further enhancements identified and proceeding for several processes.

HUMAN RESOURCES

- Time and labour services (e.g., payroll)
- Salary and benefits adjustments (SBA) (further redesign work is proceeding)
- Preboarding (in-progress)
- Job evaluation
- Employee appointment/re-appointment (further redesign work is proceeding)

¹ The IT workstream redesigned services and processes as part of the Information Services and Technology (IST) consolidation, which occurred prior to 2020; therefore, IT process redesigns were not performed as part of the SET program. The external engagement and student services workstreams had not yet reviewed and redesigned processes when the SET program concluded on March 31, 2022; as such, this work has been transferred to the appropriate operational unit.



RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION:

- Contract administration (ongoing)
- Initial research administration help desk review (in-progress)

FINANCE:

- Procurement support:
 - » Order goods and services
 - » SupplyNet requisitions (create and validate)
- Chart of accounts:
 - » Maintain budget owner data and one-over-one approval structure
 - » Manage faculty/unit chart of accounts
 - » Request a new speed code or chartfield
- Payment services:
 - » Payments to suppliers’ support (further redesign work is proceeding)
 - » Non-employee reimbursement
 - » Payment requests
 - » Reimbursements to staff (travel and expenses)
- Credit cards:
 - » Request and manage staff credit cards – onboarding, management and offboarding
 - » Prepare credit card reconciliations
- External and internal invoicing and refunding:
 - » Create and process invoice to external customers (further redesign work is proceeding)
 - » Create and process invoice to internal customers (indents)
 - » Refunding
 - » Account collection activity
- General ledger adjustments and reconciliations:
 - » Travel and expense adjustments
 - » Prepare/process salary and benefits adjustments
 - » Prepare/process accounts payable journal vouchers
 - » Reconciliations

The process redesign team engaged with hundreds of stakeholders at the university to review and redesign the aforementioned processes:

- For HR processes: 297 meetings (1,592 people, 379 hours)
- For research administration processes: 100 meetings (58 people, 171 hours)
- For finance processes: 155 meetings (642 people, 145 hours)

Transition phase

In the transition phase, people and processes were moved into the new organizational structures within the operating model (e.g., centres of expertise, Shared Services or partner networks).

In December 2020, all units and faculties were required to submit transition plans to implement by the end of fiscal years 2020-21 and 2021-22. These plans identified new roles, changed roles, roles where work would be consolidated to a central unit and roles to be eliminated.

For the HR, IT, finance and research administration workstreams, the transition phase also included shifting the redesigned processes into the new model. (As noted above, external engagement and student services are continuing to work through the different phases of the functional review.)

FUNCTIONAL WORKSTREAM OUTCOMES

Through functional reviews and the development of service catalogues, each of the workstreams have developed a restructured and reorganized, university-wide network of services aimed to safeguard cost-efficient, responsive, professional and effective resources and services across the institution. By streamlining each function's service offerings, each administrative functional area is better positioned to support faculties and departments in fulfilling their missions, as well as help administrative staff in building rewarding career paths.



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Organizational restructuring

Administrative restructuring also presented an opportunity to realign the structure of the vice-president portfolios and other university units with widely-accepted best practices – in particular, spans of control (how many staff report to each manager) and the number of reporting layers within the institution. Over the past 18 months, the following organizational redesigns have taken place:

- July 2020: Executive leadership portfolio restructured, including vice-presidential portfolios and the President's Office.
- March 2021: University Services and Finance portfolio reorganized.
- July 2021: External Relations portfolio reorganized; Shared Services including the Staff Service Centre launched.
- August 2021: Student Service Centre launched.
- December 2021: Reorganization of the Research and Innovation portfolio planned; a vision for the future of student services shared with the university community.
- February 2022: Facilities and Operations portfolio reorganized.
- March 2022: Provost's portfolio review completed to be implemented early in fiscal year 2022-23.
- Ongoing: Upon a request, faculties have undergone administrative structure reviews in order to better integrate with the operating model. These included the faculties of Engineering; Kinesiology, Sport and Recreation; Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences; and Education.

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EXECUTIVE TEAM RESTRUCTURING

Administrative restructuring impacted leadership positions in the President's Office and included reducing the number of vice-presidents through the merger of University Relations and Advancement, as well as reducing the number of direct reports to the president through the merger of General Counsel and University Secretary into one role. As a result of these changes, the executive team decreased in size by 22 per cent, with a dollar savings of 25 per cent. These changes have reduced salary expenditures in the executive team by over \$900,000 a year.

UNIVERSITY SERVICES AND FINANCE PORTFOLIO

In November 2020, the university announced a high-level restructure of the Finance and Administration portfolio, which included changing the name to University Services and Finance (USF). As this portfolio houses many of the university's administrative functional units, it was the first unit to restructure in order to set up the remainder of the university transformations for success. Through a review process, the units within the USF portfolio identified their functional needs and laid out new structures to meet the university's budget, service, and quality goals. This included redesigned organizational structures for the following departments:

- Human Resources, Health, Safety and Environment
- Finance, Procurement and Planning
- Information Services and Technology
- Shared Services
- Performance, Analytics and Institutional Research
- Internal Audit and Risk Management

[Organizational charts are available for more information.](#)

EXTERNAL RELATIONS PORTFOLIO

As part of the executive team restructuring in the fall of 2020, the offices of University Relations and Advancement were merged into one office of External Relations under the leadership of one vice-president, rather than two. This merger allowed for better integration and alignment, particularly in terms of enhancing engagement with community, government, and other external audiences and stakeholders. To ensure strategic, responsive and timely service, redesigned organizational structures for the following service areas were formed:

- Communications
- Marketing
- Development
- Alumni Relations
- Government and Community Relations

[Organizational charts are available for more information.](#)



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RESEARCH AND INNOVATION PORTFOLIO

In December 2021, a new redesigned structure for the Research and Innovation portfolio was announced to better integrate strategic research and innovation support. The planned end-state is to offer researchers and faculties expanded services delivered via four centres of expertise as well as consistent access to the portfolio from a new research partners network; however, the evolution from this baseline state to the desired end-state will take some time. With better integration and tighter focus on service delivery, the new structure will help increase research funding success and research and innovation impact, as well as further develop ambitious interdisciplinary projects.

The four new centres of expertise include the following:

- Research Development and Services
- Partnerships, Innovation and Knowledge Mobilization
- Strategic Research Initiatives and Performance
- Research Integrity Support

Organizational charts are available for more information.

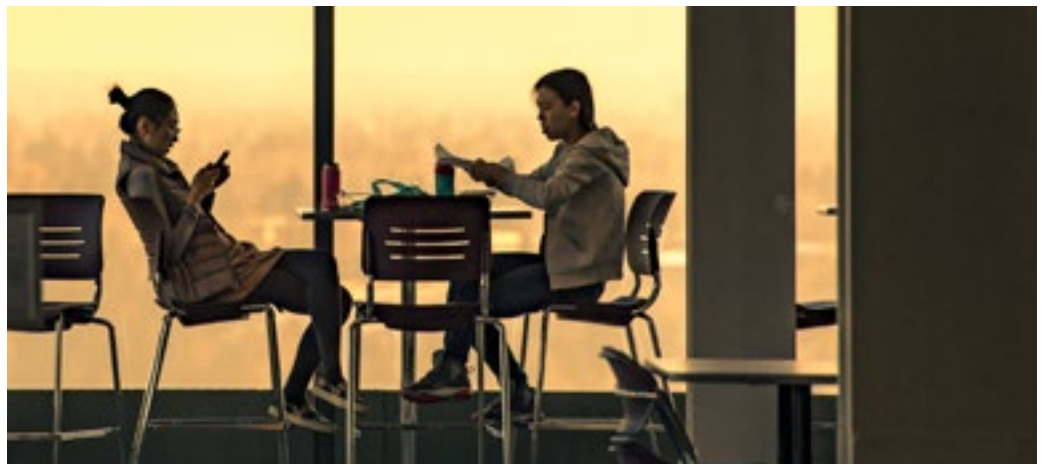
FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS PORTFOLIO

In 2020, the Facilities and Operations (F&O) portfolio welcomed eight new units to its portfolio including Campus and Community Recreation, U of A Botanic Gardens, Glen Sather Sports Medicine Clinic, Emergency Management, Technical Training Centre, U of A Pharmacy, U of A Bookstore and U of A Protective Services.

Organizational changes continued in March 2022 when the F&O portfolio was redesigned to include the following units:

- Asset Management and Operations
- Campus Services
- Integrated Planning, Development and Partnerships
- Support and Recreation Services
- Utilities

Organizational charts are available for more information.





STUDENT SERVICES REDESIGN

Throughout 2021, student services leaders across the university worked collaboratively with the SET team to establish a high-level vision with a goal to drive an improved student experience as well as advance staffing structures, processes, and technology. The vision, announced December 2021, outlined a future in which the university's student services are seamless, technology-enhanced, integrated, equitable, consistent and student-centred. To support this vision, a detailed structural design has been developed and will maintain deep expertise in central units and complementary expertise in program-specific services outside of central units.

The vision outlined changes to the following four central student service units:

- The Office of the Dean of Students
- The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
- The Office of the Registrar
- University of Alberta International – [reorganized in May 2022](#)

[Review the student services visioning announcement.](#)

REVIEW OF THE PROVOST AND VICE-PRESIDENT (ACADEMIC) PORTFOLIO

An organizational review of the Office of Provost and Vice-President (Academic) highlighted opportunities for structural change to effectively drive strategy and provide core support to the university's academic mission.

Changes to the portfolio include the creation of separate divisions for academics and students and enrollment. The changes also create new emphasis on EDI and online learning. The proposed changes will be implemented in the 2022-23 fiscal year.

FACULTY-LEVEL ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN

Representatives from the SET team have worked with faculties throughout the transformation to understand their needs and provide support to their teaching, research and engagement mission. Upon requests from their deans, some faculties have undergone administrative structure reviews in order to better integrate with the operating model. This has included the faculties of Engineering; Kinesiology, Sport and Recreation; Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences; and Education ([Education reorganized in June 2022](#)). Continued engagement with other faculties will be coordinated through the University Initiatives Office at the request of faculty deans.



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PART 5

Non-labour initiatives

Non-labour savings are a key component of responding to the institution's financial situation. The SET program supported three initiatives that significantly contributed to non-labour efficiencies: procurement, space and facilities and the development of an enterprise-wide technology strategy.



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Procurement and discretionary cost savings

The university's Procurement and Contract Management (PCM) team, within Finance, Procurement and Planning (FPP), is responsible for the purchase of goods and services, contract management, vendor management, customs services, travel management and compliance.

As part of the SET program, the PCM team led the procurement initiative, which aimed to reduce costs associated with processing procurement activities, purchased goods and services as well as the overall spend in non-labour categories.

To support this process, a third-party consultant completed a detailed procurement review and analysis of enterprise-wide procurement practices to quantify potential savings. The review included the following:

- **Strategic sourcing:** benchmarking existing prices against the market and analyzing the university's current suppliers, which included multiple suppliers of similar services and products, to find where consolidating suppliers and spending can achieve lower prices.
- **Category management:** reviewing specifications available for key items, reviewing internal and supplier compliance and reviewing opportunities for better supplier performance management.
- **Demand management:** reviewing spend policies against sector best practices, reviewing stock management and utilization levels for key categories.

While the original non-labour savings target outlined by the SET program was \$29 million, once this detailed external review was performed, it was determined that an additional and ongoing savings of \$17 million was more achievable. In order to address the shortfall between the original savings target and achievable savings, discretionary spending was targeted across the university and recognized that \$12.5M savings had been achieved prior to the SET initiative. As a result the total procurement and discretionary savings were \$29.5 million.

The following areas were identified to achieve \$8.5 million of these total savings:

- Cleaning services
- Library journal subscriptions
- IT maintenance service
- Internet service
- Job advertising service
- Office supplies
- Electrical and lighting supplies
- Printing

In October 2021, certain procurement transactional processing was transferred to the Shared Services unit, including changes to “Travel and Expense” and “Corporate Purchasing Card Reconciliation” processes. This was a critical milestone in the university’s shift to centralizing administrative activities, improving efficiencies and streamlining processes from the units in the new operating model.

With consultation from stakeholders across the university through the Foundational Procurement Task Force, and approval to proceed on recommendations from SESC, the PCM team focused efforts on redesigning U of A purchasing processes to find efficiencies and cost savings to help achieve the remaining \$8.5 million in annual savings by March 31, 2022. The PCM team also supported the community through ongoing communications, information sessions and the development of website resources to guide and support users through the changes.

As part of these efforts, the following critical changes were implemented on April 1, 2022:

- Mandatory use of Preferred Supplier Agreements (PSAs).
- Clear understanding and use of university purchasing methods.
- Multiple-quote process for non-PSA vendor purchases between \$20,000-\$75,000.
- Discretionary oversight for Request for Proposals (RFPs).
- Process identification for Contract for Services.

These changes ensure that researchers, faculty and staff receive the best value for the purchases being made, thus allowing for the reinvestment of resources into the university’s core mission of teaching, research and engagement. Additional value is obtained through extended warranty, free delivery, payment processing and vendor support.

■ PROCUREMENT OUTCOMES

Due to a reduction in purchasing levels as well as a distribution of budget reductions to individual faculties and portfolios, \$29.5 million in savings were realized by fiscal year-end 2021-22. Through fiscal year 2022-23, the PCM team will continue to implement cost savings initiatives with support from the University Initiatives Office.

Space and facilities optimization

The University of Alberta has the largest inventory of land and buildings of any other research-intensive institution in Canada. The **Integrated Asset Management Strategy** guides the management of the university's physical assets, with a focus on the U of A core mission, a reduction of leased space and appropriate renewal of buildings.

Internal analyses revealed that the U of A has 50 per cent more research lab space and over 25 per cent more office space than comparable U15 post-secondary institutions across Canada. At the same time, the university had 486 buildings across five campuses to operate, maintain, and renew. Thus, the challenge facing the university is to reduce its physical footprint significantly.

This data and the current context underscores the importance of reducing the university's volume of buildings, tightening space planning and oversight, and shifting the culture at the university to support a more efficient approach to asset management. As part of the SET program, the space and facilities initiative reviewed operational costs associated with all university spaces, facilities, and estates, and determined strategies for optimizing the use of university spaces.

The SET space and facilities initiative originally targeted \$12 million in savings over two years; however, upon review by a third-party consultant, it was determined that this target was not realistic. Both the actual timelines involved in making changes and the level of new investment were underestimated in the original assessment.

To maintain momentum and ensure the initiative progresses beyond the SET program, the Space and Facilities Oversight Committee, as well as the Implementation Committee, were established. The Oversight Committee has established principles that will be used to determine opportunities for the rationalization of space while allowing for enrolment and research growth. The Implementation Committee is supporting the development of a detailed space inventory to help inform how to reduce the university's large footprint.

While Facilities and Operations has decision-making authority for facility and space decisions, advice and guidance from the Facility Optimization Oversight Committee is crucial to ensuring clarity and consistency in messages and actions.

SPACE AND FACILITIES OUTCOMES

As of March 31, 2022 the initiative had achieved \$5.5 million in non-budgetary efficiency savings by reducing the number of buildings, sale of assets and release of some leased space. This resulted in \$2.6 million reduction in lease costs and \$2.9 million in associated maintenance costs.

The following deliverables were completed by the end of March 2022:

- Inventory of all lease agreements across the university.
- Initial review of the Facilities and Operations portfolio structure as part of administrative restructuring.

- Implementation of select findings based on the recommendations made by the Facilities Optimization Oversight Committee.
- Sale of assets, including Husfloen and Ronning House in Camrose, Newton Place, Lot 84 and Ring Houses, and East Campus Village Houses.

ACTIVITIES IN PROGRESS:

- Develop a Space Optimization Strategy for the university.
- Complete the consolidation of space and transition of staff to Enterprise Square.
- Achieve a targeted 15 per cent reduction in annual expenditure for space and facilities by 2025.

As part of the Facilities and Operations portfolio, ancillary services include a diverse group of departments and service units that generate sufficient revenue to build operational and capital reserves and deliver strategic business solutions.

THE FOLLOWING TASKS FOR ANCILLARY SERVICES WERE COMPLETED BY THE END OF MARCH 2022:

- Detailed financial and strategic value analysis for **Campus Services**, including Residence Services, Dining Services, Conference Services, ONEcard, Parking Services, the Campus Bookstore, University Health Centre Pharmacy, the Glen Sather Sports Medicine Clinic, and the Technology Training Centre;
- Detailed financial and strategic value analysis for Campus and Community Recreation and the Botanic Gardens within **Support and Recreation Services**.
- Final report with two to five year financial targets for all ancillary services.
- Financial and strategic value analysis with recommendations for further actions.
- Work plan developed for implementing the findings from the study.

As part of the UAT transformation, the Facilities and Operations portfolio has committed to optimizing campus spaces and ensuring they are being used to serve the university's mission. They are in the process of collaborating with university stakeholders to create a more comprehensive inventory of all campus spaces, including data that reflects their unique uses and utilization – from research to infrastructure tie-ins to third-party partnerships.

University Technology Strategy development

To support the new operating model as well as the growth strategies outlined in the vision for UAT, a new SET project was added in March 2021: the development of an enterprise University Technology Strategy. As part of this strategy, the university is committed to striving for equitable and accessible learning experiences through innovative, seamless and transformative technologies.



To guide the delivery of technology experiences, the following defined principles have been established by the Technology Strategy Steering Committee:

- Technology at the U of A is focused on supporting and enabling the broader university vision through innovative technology experiences.
- The university will seek to dismantle/mitigate barriers to accessing services through implementation of principles such as Universal Design (UD) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) frameworks.
- Engagement with the university community is vital to learn and adjust.
- Business processes will be reviewed end-to-end prior to evaluating and adopting any supporting technology solutions.
- Technology decisions will be guided by an Enterprise Technology Architecture, enabling community-driven solutions.
- University services will be rooted in a balanced, secure and protected technology foundation.
- Institutional data will be high quality, accessible in a timely manner and interoperable to support decision making.

As well, the following five-year goals have been defined:

1. Enable data-supported decision-making.
2. Simplify technology experiences.
3. Commit to overcoming barriers.
4. Establish collaborative and cohesive governance of technology at the U of A.
5. Enable innovation across the university.

UNIVERSITY TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY OUTCOMES

Between February and April 2022, a current and future state analysis was completed by a third-party consultant, which will form the basis for the overall university technology strategic roadmap. The finalized University Technology Strategic plan will be issued in the 2022-23 fiscal year.



PART 6

Service culture and service excellence

The success of large-scale transformation at the U of A depends in part on a parallel shift in the culture. Key to the operating model is a common understanding of service excellence and the development of a service culture with a shared commitment to continuous improvement.

To build a strong service culture at the U of A, a number of activities were created to reinforce service excellence and culture, which included developing a service excellence training program, establishing governance oversight processes, and enabling transparent measuring and reporting of service standards and performance.

SERVICE EXCELLENCE PRINCIPLES

All faculties and units identified a major concern at the introduction of the new operating model: the need for accountability and client orientation in a more centralized model. Prior to restructuring, faculty and units largely provided services within their own silos. As a result, they were skeptical that the same level of service could be maintained in the new hybrid model. To address this distrust, a focus on the client experience became critical.

The following service design principles for service providers were established through SESC to address service users' concerns and engender their trust:

1. **User-focused, not inward-looking.** We work to deliver outstanding service that results in high user satisfaction and enhanced value, considered through the lens of students, staff, researchers, and faculty.
2. **Respectful, not commanded.** Our people are supportive, act professionally, and engage respectfully. Services are designed, delivered, and received in a manner that respects individuals and our values of equity, diversity, and inclusion.
3. **Designed with, not for.** We work to understand our clients' expectations, striving to co-design services for each stage of their journey.
4. **Working together, not in silos.** We work collaboratively and push to break down siloed thinking. We adopt a pan-university perspective.
5. **Empowered and accountable, not passive.** We empower people to make decisions at the right level. We are clear where accountabilities lie. We support personal and professional growth.
6. **Simple and standardized, not over-engineered.** We favour simple, standardized and efficient processes that are reliably delivered.
7. **Continuously improving, not static.** Our approach is forward-thinking, considered and planned, with a focus on identifying and meeting unmet and growing needs innovatively.



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Using these principles, the SET team developed three initiatives to foster a culture of service excellence:

- University-wide shared vision of service excellence (at the institutional level).
- Ownership and accountability for service delivery (at the portfolio level).
- Clear language around service expectations (at the functional level).
- Transparency and feedback mechanisms (across multiple layers).

Using these principles, the SET team developed three initiatives to foster a culture of service excellence:

- Leadership development with the service excellence training program.
- Governance process initiation.
- Service level measurement.

SERVICE EXCELLENCE TRAINING PROGRAM

In order to foster a common language and understanding of the desired service culture for all employees, the SET team developed the Service Excellence Training Program (SETP) in coordination with a third-party contractor, Academic Impressions. The goal was to equip employees with core competencies as well as initiate important conversations that would enable the university to emerge from the restructuring stronger and even more committed to the university's core mission.

The initial program was developed for frontline staff with guidance on improving client service. This is an important element of service excellence and is the start of a comprehensive program needed to shift leadership mindsets and behaviours.

A leadership development program that addresses all levels of leadership in the university was initiated by the SET team and approved by SESC. This program will have a phased approach and will be tailored for the following groups:

- Leading UAT (top 60 leaders).
- Delivering service excellence (200+ leaders).
- Embedding service excellence (all staff).

Development of this program was transferred to the Learning and Professional Development team within Human Resources, Health, Safety and Environment (HRHSE), with support from the newly established University Initiatives Office. As of March 31, 2022, 400 individuals had gone through the program and it was opened up to the greater university community in May 2022. Phase 2 of the program will focus and deepen the understanding of service excellence.

In addition to SETP, the SET program supported the development of a university-wide onboarding program, which was designed to create a consistent, coherent and comprehensive onboarding journey for new and transitioning employees and was intended to complement college, faculty, portfolio and units job-specific onboarding. This program has since been further developed and advanced by HRHSE.

SERVICE EXCELLENCE GOVERNANCE PROCESS INITIATION

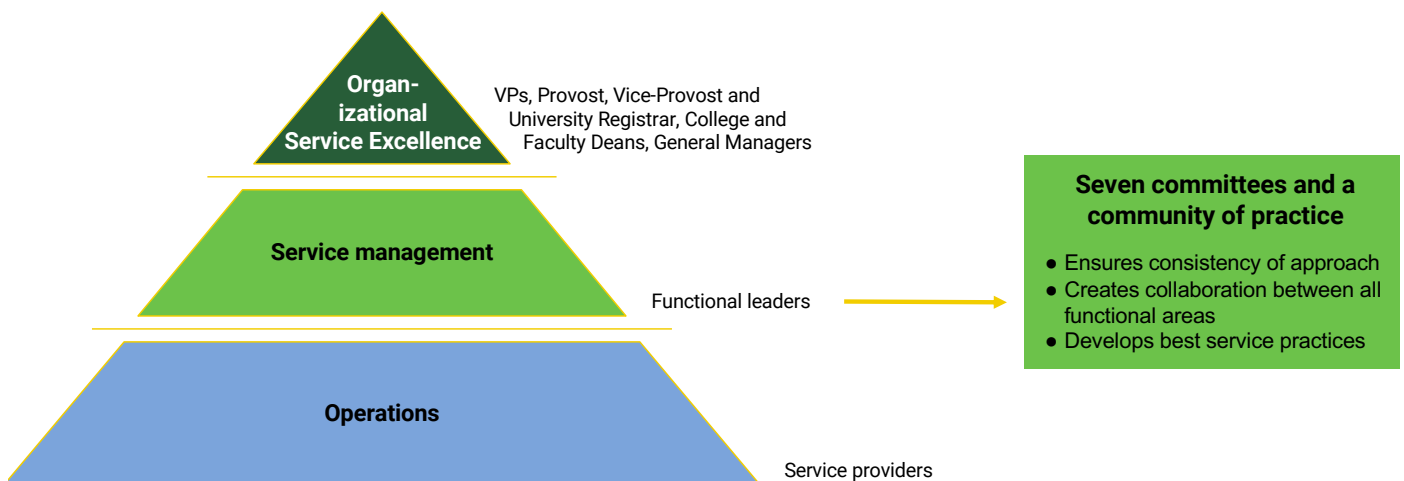
Implementing and training new processes and modes of delivery is disruptive and can initially lead to a drop in service and satisfaction levels. However, with a commitment to continuous improvement, the long-term outcome can result in higher levels of satisfaction, as has been seen at other universities that have undertaken similar organizational change.

Studies have shown that large-scale change to processes, structures and systems can also drive a change in culture, when leaders take the opportunity to define and demonstrate new behaviours that become embedded and sustained in the culture.

A service excellence governance framework was developed and initiated with the Service Excellence Review Committee (SERC). The framework, as shown below in Figure 7, will be implemented by the University Initiatives Office and consists of three tiers:

- **Enterprise service excellence:** an executive level committee consisting of executives, faculty deans, and college general managers – focused on service strategy systemic performance and ongoing university-wide improvement.
- **Service management:** senior-management level committees consisting of AVPs, director of partners, faculty general managers – focused on functional service streams across the university ensuring they are delivered to benchmarks.
- **Operational management:** operational issues are addressed at the activity level day-to-day.

**Figure 7:
Service
Excellence
Governance
Structure**





PART 7

Change management and communications

The interest and engagement of the university community was vital to the future well-being of the U of A. Success of the SET program depended upon **guiding principles**, including a transparent consultation process and engagement with the entire university community. To support these principles, the SET change management and communications teams developed a robust change management plan, bolstered by an integrated communications plan and engagement strategy.



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As part of the change management plan, an organizational readiness approach was adopted, which is high in its commitment to structured and disciplined project management as well as organizational engagement in order to increase stakeholder awareness. Throughout each stage of the administrative restructuring process, the team executed a combination of change management, communications, and engagement activities.

Stakeholder engagement and consultation

From the onset of the UAT initiative, the SET team worked closely with leadership teams and staff from all colleges faculties, portfolios and units to hear feedback, answer questions and honour the original guiding principles for transformation. Consultation and engagement occurred throughout the restructuring process through a combination of the following activities:

○ Regular meetings

There were many regularly scheduled meetings which included the SET program on the agenda. Discussions about restructuring were regularly held with the Association of Academic Staff of the University of Alberta (AASUA), Non-Academic Staff Association (NASA), Students' Union, Graduate Students' Association, Dean's Council and others.

○ Community consultations

Through a variety of venues, including targeted round-table discussions, staff and faculty were invited to ask questions, provide feedback and suggest ideas throughout the administrative restructuring process.

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Feedback was collected and shared with UAT committees and advisory groups and summary reports shared with the community via the UAT website. Engagement events were also recorded and available for viewing at any time, along with answers to [frequently asked questions](#).

○ Community leadership meetings¹

Throughout the restructuring process, and particularly as new administrative positions were created to support the operating model, staff and faculty leaders representing the interests and values of the university community met with the SET team to collaborate, advise and share information. Examples of these meetings are listed below:

- 22 Staff Advisory Team (SAT) meetings (monthly with 40 members)
- 21 Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry Staff Advisory Team meetings (monthly with 25 members)
- 13 SET Change Network meetings (monthly with 30 members)
- 21 Senior Administrators Community of Practice meetings (bi-weekly with 55 members; ongoing)
- College General Manager meetings (weekly)
- College and stand-alone faculty meetings (monthly)
- 13 chair engagement sessions (60+ people), 13 Chairs' Council presentations, November 2021 chairs' survey (26 responses)

○ Ask SET Anything event series

To help address questions and concerns from staff, an online, open forum question and answer (Q&A) event was created based on the "Ask Me Anything (AMA)" format; these online events were called Ask SET Anything (ASA).

Each one-hour ASA focused on a different administrative functional area (e.g., finance, HR, etc) and consisted of a short presentation followed by questions from staff to a panel of leaders/functional experts. In addition to sharing the vision and goals of UAT along with more information about administrative restructuring, the ASA sessions created an authentic, engagement experience that allowed for varied and diverse discussions in an informal and accessible setting.

Participants had the option of attending a live Zoom meeting to ask questions in-person or watch a livestream and submit questions through an online form. For those unable to attend, a closed-captioned recording of the event was made available along with a recap article and written responses to the questions asked.

- 15 ASA events ran from December 3, 2020 to March 29, 2022.
- 6,125 staff and faculty attended live.
- As of April 1, 2022, the recordings of the events had been viewed 8,164 times.

Feedback to the ASA events has been overwhelmingly positive and the format has been adopted for other initiatives across the university.



○ Workstream consultation

A key aspect of the review process for each functional workstream was engagement and consultation with leadership and staff subject matter experts, which included the following activities:

- **Discovery process:** during the first phase of the functional review, the teams connected with functional experts in the respective area to learn more about the current state of processes, discover what work was being done, where and by whom. [Learn more »](#)
- **Development of the service catalogues:** the academic and administrative sponsors for each functional workstream led the development of the catalogues, consulting with staff and subject matter experts in each of their respective streams. [Learn more »](#)
- **Functional reviews:** staff have been and will continue to be engaged to review each of the activities and services in the service catalogue, and help inform how processes and other functional elements must change or shift to work within the new operating model.
- **Process redesign workgroups:** through the formation of workgroups, staff working directly with functional processes had the opportunity to be engaged and provided input into how processes were redesigned.

○ Targeted presentations and workshops

To provide more personalized information on the administrative restructuring process, customized presentations and workshops were delivered to targeted audiences. In addition to providing SET presentations for specific faculties and units, the following presentations and workshops were delivered to the university community:

- Change Management and Communications presentations to the Campus Communicators Network, October 27, 2020.
- SET Change Management and Communications presentation to the UAT Staff Advisory Team December 18, 2020.
- SET Change Management and Communications presentations to the SET Change Network on April 28, 2021 and August 24, 2021.
- Integrating the Operating Model workshops delivered to 215 participants throughout January and February 2022.

○ Feedback mechanisms

To ensure feedback from the community was captured, various feedback mechanisms were made available throughout the restructuring process. These included:

- 18 pulse surveys were sent to 12,600 employees (700 per month).
- 4,342 responses to pulse surveys were received.
- 225 individuals submitted feedback through forms on the UAT website.
- 122 messages were received and responded to from the UAT email account.

ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

Because of COVID-19, all consultation and engagement was virtual. While this had its limitations, the numbers of people engaged hit record highs. In the past, faculty roundtables were limited to 20-30 people; by contrast, many virtual presentations had 300+ attendees. Real-time attendance at nine town halls for both academic and administrative restructuring totalled approximately 14,400 and approximately 56,600 post-event views. In addition, over 6,000 attendees participated in 15 Ask SET Anything events and the recordings were viewed over 8,100 times, while the post-event recap articles were viewed over 4,100 times.

Review a [full listing of engagement events](#).

Change management

The SET Program Office created a robust change management strategy, crucial to ensuring that the administrative structuring was sustainable and well-received. Change management resources and expertise was added to each functional workstream, led by a change management specialist, to support the transformation by building leadership capability, redefining key performance indicators (KPIs), developing training programs and reviewing governance mechanisms.

CHANGE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Successful change initiatives focus on three aspects: the project, the organization, and the people. The SET project followed a change management framework that incorporated four key phases, see Figure 8 below, in an effort to enable change. Within each phase, a number of activities relating to project management, organizational readiness and people were undertaken in order to implement transformational and sustainable change.

Figure 8:
SET Change Management Framework



1. Set direction and build awareness of the transformation

- » Example: the UAT vision, the intent behind restructuring and why change was necessary was included in all change communications.

2. Equip and activate leaders for change

- » Example: leadership toolkits were developed with change management resources, key messaging and answers to frequently asked questions from staff.

3. Build support and momentum for implementation

- » Example: leaders, staff, faculty and key stakeholder groups were engaged and consulted frequently throughout the SET program.

4. Embed and sustain the change

- » Example: a service governance framework, along with a service measurement and reporting structure to ensure continuous improvement has been developed.

CHANGE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

- SET Change Management Toolkit (open to the wider university community) and UAT Leadership Toolkit (for senior leadership)
- SET Change Network (30 change champions from faculty and staff) – more information below
- Quad articles on change management and change readiness for staff and leaders
- Wellbeing Through Change website with health and wellness resources for staff
- Five (5) Integrating the New Operating Model workshops (215 total participants)
- Service Excellence Training Program and employee onboarding resources

○ SET Change Network

Champions of change are a critical component to effectively managing change. They are visible, credible, and help build trust within the organization. In February 2020, the **SET Change Network** was established to serve as change ambassadors and help guide and counsel colleagues in understanding, moving through, and managing transformation within their respective faculties and departments. The SET Change Network met monthly to learn more about SET, share updates, and set a course for continued conversations to occur throughout the transformation.

Communications

The SET Program Office was tasked with the significant role of coordinating the implementation of communications for administrative restructuring. Given the scope and scale of work, communication activities needed to be targeted, timely, comprehensive and frequent.

Working closely together, communications and change management planning took place in the summer of 2020. The SET communications plan championed the UAT vision and outlined the strategic direction for communications and engagement throughout the implementation and delivery of the SET program. In particular, the use of multiple communications channels and tools was planned to reach stakeholders and ensure consistent and timely exposure to information on restructuring.

To execute the plan, a team of six full-time communications professionals was seconded from other areas in the university to support each of the functional workstreams as well as the overall SET program. Throughout the SET program, this communications team maximized the potential of existing internal communications channels, such as the university's website, internal blog/newsletters, mass email system and employee email digests and also created new engagement opportunities and events.

COMMUNICATIONS PRINCIPLES

The following change management communications principles were applied throughout the course of the transformation:

- **Use of preferred senders:** information was communicated by deans and immediate supervisors to reinforce messaging and reasons for the restructuring as well as discuss the personal impacts of the change.
- **Answering the question “why?” and “what’s the risk in not changing?”:** all communications included details about the case for change, including the urgency of the university’s financial situation.
- **Answering “what’s in it for me?” (WIIFM):** because one of the outcomes of the administrative restructuring was staff job losses, it was also important to emphasize the opportunities to simplify workflows, reduce bureaucracy and find efficiencies.
- **Using multiple channels:** multiple channels were used to reach stakeholders including the website, virtual town halls, e-newsletters, online Q&A forums, direct email, etc.
- **Creating opportunities for feedback:** stakeholders had the opportunity to share concerns, provide feedback and ask questions through town halls, Q&A forums, ongoing faculty and unit workshops, and advisory groups.
- **Consistent evaluations:** pulse surveys and qualitative feedback were used to help identify gaps, which allowed us to continually correct and refine communications.
- **Face-to-face communication:** although an online format was necessary due to COVID-19 restrictions, face-to-face messaging was achieved with virtual town halls, Q&A forums, targeted presentations, stakeholder meetings, etc.
- **Repeating key messages five to seven times through the course of the change:** messaging was repeated several times and through different channels to ensure information was heard by staff and other key stakeholders.



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COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

The SET communications and change management teams worked closely together to ensure messaging was aligned and consistent with the overall UAT initiative. The following change management strategies were applied to all communications:

- Intentional and frequent internal change management communications.
- Clarity, consistency, and transparency in communications.
- Celebration of every success, often and publicly.
- Open and regular communication about the process.
- Instilling the importance of internal alignment around a common vision.
- Engagement with individuals is critical:
 - » Create a compelling story of the why (future state, objectives), what's in it for them;
 - » Provide context, vision, calls to action that resonate with individuals emotionally
 - » Personalize the motivation;
 - » Focus on the outcomes and the future;
 - » Emphasize accountability and sense of ownership at all levels of the institution;
 - » Ensure the individual knows how they contribute to the effort's success; and
 - » Acknowledge the challenge, but focus on the effort and the outcome benefits.

COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

- Coordinated messaging, plans
- Weekly updates in The Quad, which were also accessible on the UAT website
 - » 200 UAT Updates + SET-related posts published in The Quad (195,162 pageviews)
 - » 131 SET workstream updates published (20,712 pageviews)
 - » 351 FAQs posted to SET FAQ and workstream pages (36,116 pageviews)
- 46 email updates from Vice-President, University Services and Finance to leaders
- Monthly updates to the U of A Board of Governors

WEBSITE CONTENT:

- Well-being through Change website with health and wellness resources for staff
- UAT website (more information provided below):
 - » Weekly updates and information added
 - » Total number of views = 610,401 pageviews (516,433 pageviews to SET-related content)
 - » 622 views on the average workday (1,237 average pageviews on days when new information was released)

- » Top three sections:
 - UAT Updates + workstream updates = 215,874 pageviews
 - SET/Services section = 97,477 pageviews
 - Position Opportunities Page (POP) = 61,416 pageviews

LEADERSHIP SUPPORT:

- Communications resources were included in the UAT Leadership Toolkit including key messaging and answers to frequently asked questions from staff
- Bi-weekly email updates to provide leaders with a “heads-up” about upcoming activities, hiring announcements, etc
- Speaking notes and presentations for leadership meetings

SUPPORT FOR ENGAGEMENT EVENTS:

- Technology support, video captioning, recap articles for ASA events
- Speaking notes and presentation graphics for governance and advisory meetings

MONITORING FEEDBACK MECHANISMS:

- Monthly pulse surveys, feedback forms on the UAT website (general and specific to administrative support function)
 - » A consistent >70 per cent of respondents reported they knew where to find information and understood why change was needed.



UAT website

With faculty, staff and students working remotely due to COVID-19 precautions, the U of A website was the primary communications channel for updates and information related to restructuring. Within the ualberta.ca domain, the communications team created a dedicated web space called the UAT website as a consistent vehicle for updates and information.

The UAT website clearly outlined the goals and vision of the UAT initiative and provided details on academic restructuring, administrative transformation, upcoming timelines and milestones, opportunities for consultation and engagement, upcoming job opportunities in the new operating model, and answers to frequently asked questions.

Through monthly pulse surveys, faculty and staff have positively indicated that they know where to find information about the UAT initiative, which is demonstrated with the consistently high traffic to the UAT website. In a period of major disruption, the UAT website was (and continues to be) a consistent and reliable source of information for staff and students.

The UAT website also needed to reflect the living transformation of the university. Beyond frequent updates, the team restructured the site twice to reflect the institution’s own restructuring in progress. There were also several expansions so that viewers had as much information as possible, in a timely and clear format.

Initially, the site had a section for each branch of UAT: academic restructuring and administrative transformation (through SET). Administrative restructuring progressed more quickly and the website grew to include detailed information about all of the workstreams being reviewed (ie: administrative functional areas of the university, such as HR, finance, etc) along with upcoming timelines.

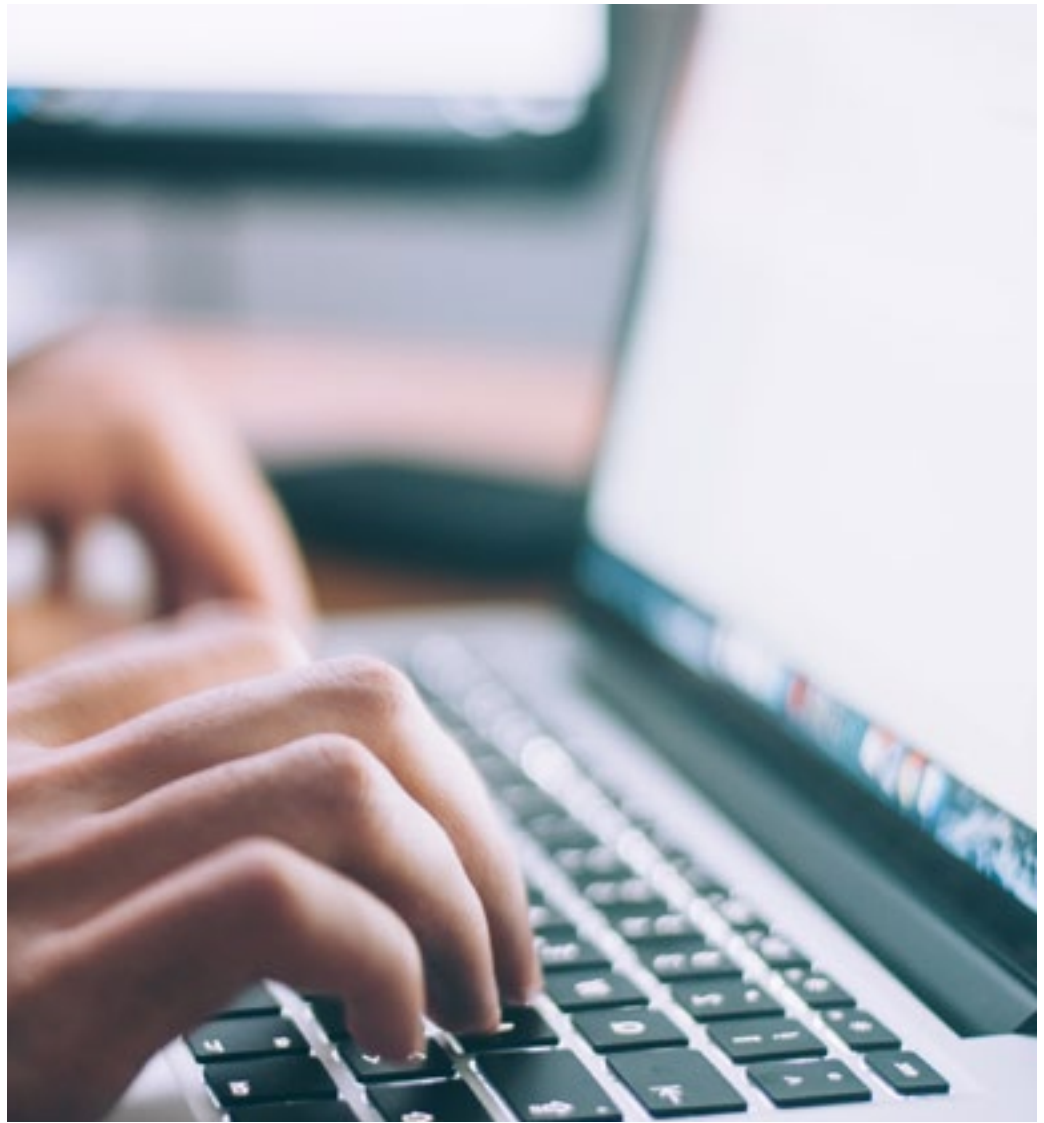
In February 2021, as jobs were being redesigned, staff were uncertain about what positions would exist in the future model; to help alleviate this uncertainty, the SET team built a Position Opportunities Page (or POP) to highlight upcoming positions with as much information as possible. This page soon became the most viewed page on the site.

In June 2021, the new operating model integrated both branches of restructuring into a single vision for the U of A moving forward; therefore, the UAT site also needed to integrate both sections to help the university community understand how the new organizational structures and services worked together. The communications team restructured the site and reorganized much of the content, ensuring all pages were redirected to the new information. At all times, the site has provided clear information about the rationale, vision and goals of the UAT initiative.



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An aerial photograph of a person walking on a wide, paved concrete path. The path is surrounded by green grass and trees, with long, dark shadows cast across it, suggesting late afternoon or early morning light. A set of stairs with a metal railing is visible in the lower center of the frame. A vertical yellow line runs down the center of the image, and a horizontal yellow line runs across the bottom, intersecting at the top of the text area.

PART 8

Results and outcomes

SET project milestones

The project milestones are shown in Figure 9 below.

Figure 9: SET Project Milestones



The following timeline outlines the events leading up to the the university’s strategic response with the University of Alberta for Tomorrow initiative as well as the major activities and milestones that took place during administrative restructuring:

FEBRUARY 2020

- Government of Alberta tabled its 2020 Budget

MARCH 2020

- Public announcement of a projected job losses

APRIL 2020

- Initial report to recommend effective response to funding reductions

MAY 2020

- President-elect Bill Flanagan launched the University of Alberta for Tomorrow initiative

JUNE 2020

- Academic Restructuring Working Group (ARWG) and Service Excellence Steering Committee (SESC) launched
- ARWG and SET established, principles passed

JULY 2020

- The first town hall for SET is held
- Planning and development for administrative restructuring continues
- Changes to senior leadership structure announced

AUGUST 2020

- Employee pulse survey launched

SEPTEMBER 2020

- UAT Staff Advisory Team established
- Community consultation continues

OCTOBER 2020

- A new administrative operating model approved by the U of A Board of Governors
- Vice-President reorganization approved by the U of A Board of Governors

NOVEMBER 2020

- The SET Interim Report released to keep the community updated on completed and future work for administrative restructuring

DECEMBER 2020

- The SET Transition Plan released
- The first in the series of Ask SET Anything events is held

JANUARY 2021

- New positions begin to be recruited
- Interim College Deans appointed

FEBRUARY 2021

- Colleges started integration into the structure
- The Position Opportunities Page (POP) released for career planning

MARCH 2021

- Phase 1 of staff disruptions completed
- IT transitions (processes and people) began
- The new structure for the Vice-President University Services and Finance Portfolio released
- IT, HR and Finance service catalogues released
- Procurement savings projects launched

APRIL 2021

- College General Managers appointed
- SET Change Network launched



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MAY 2021

- Shared Services prepared to stand up the unit

JUNE 2021

- The U of A's one operating model under the UAT initiative introduced
- Two more service catalogues released (research administration and external engagement)

JULY 2021

- A UAT retrospective shared with the community: looking back on year one of the UAT initiative
- Shared Services and the Staff Service Centre launched
- The new structure for External Relations was released

AUGUST 2021

- The new Student Service Centre launched
- IT services transitioned across the university

OCTOBER 2021

- Administrative functional streams planned for end of SET
- Central support services planned for end of SET
- Non-labour streams planned for end of SET
- Supporting and sustaining activities planned for end of SET

NOVEMBER 2021

- Select HR services moved into Shared Services

DECEMBER 2021

- The Research and Innovation portfolio structure is planned
- The vision for the future of student services at the university released
- Select finance services moved into Shared Services
- The SET process redesign team introduced a new methodology

JANUARY 2022

- The final service catalogue (student services) was released

FEBRUARY 2022

- The new Facilities and Operations portfolio structure was released

MARCH 2022

- New foundational procurement initiatives were released
- The final Ask SET Anything event was held
- The final job losses (excluding FoMD) were completed
- The remaining SET initiatives were transferred to the new University Initiatives Office (UIO)

Staffing impacts

Throughout administrative restructuring, the university remained committed to finding solutions to retain its skilled workforce to the greatest extent possible and to ensure the working conditions for those remaining continued to be as positive and rewarding as possible.

From fiscal year 2020 (when the institution began addressing budgetary reductions) to the end of the 2022 fiscal year, the total overall reduction in staff headcount at the U of A was approximately 860, which represents a significant loss of people, skills and talent for the institution.

As a result of administrative restructuring, approximately 650 positions have been either changed or created to accommodate the new operating model. As of March 31, 2022, approximately 475 of these positions were successfully recruited, 84 per cent of which were staffed with internal candidates. The remaining positions created through administrative restructuring were intentionally deferred and will be forthcoming despite the end of the SET program.

Financial results

The scale of the savings achieved by the university in only two years is unprecedented among Canadian universities. As a result of efforts of colleges, faculties, portfolios and units across the university, the SET program achieved nearly \$102 million in savings to the university's annual budget. The following savings were realized as of March 31, 2022:

- \$66.9 million in administrative restructuring (due to labour reductions).
- \$29.5 million in non-labour spend (due to a reduction in procurement and discretionary spending).
- \$5.5 million in space and facilities (due to operational efficiencies such as reduced lease space, lower operating spend, etc).

The university balanced its budget in 2020-21 and 2021-22, and has a planned balanced budget for fiscal year 2022-23 and beyond. As well, the Government of Alberta grant per student (FLE) has dropped from \$18,259 in 2018/19 to an estimated \$10,452 for 2022/23.

In addition, the U of A has significantly decreased its administrative operating costs in comparison to the UniForum benchmark, experiencing a drop of over 20 points in one year. This represents the most significant benchmark decrease in the program that year.

Although the university is balancing its budget, reducing costs and increasing efficiencies, university leadership determined that the final SET target of reducing the operating budget by \$118 million does not capture the university's administrative complexities, as well as additional pressures created by the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically related to the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry (FoMD) as well as space and facilities. Because of these circumstances, the financial target originally outlined by the SET program will not be met by the original timeline of March 31, 2022.



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More time is needed to realize the full savings initiated by the SET program. Projections indicate that additional FoMD efficiencies will be achieved by March 2025 along with significant additional space and facilities reduction targets by 2026. With more time, the university can ensure that the restructuring process addresses the unique complexities in these two areas and establishes permanent solutions that support the long-term sustainability of the university. It is important to underscore that the balanced budget plan for fiscal year 2022-23 has been adapted to ensure that these delays will not place the university's balanced budget at any risk.

COST OF SET

The total amount spent on the SET program between June 2020 and March 2022 was \$13.3 million. This was a one-time cost in order to facilitate continued, annual savings of ~\$102 million for the U of A.

Staff expenses for the SET program totaled \$6.9 million, the majority of which were internal costs though secondments Additional external expenses included:

- External implementation support throughout the SET program: \$5.7 million
- Space and facilities and procurement reviews: \$312,000
- University Technology Strategy development: \$260,000
- Support developing the service excellence training program: \$196,000

The remainder of expenses were minimal and included office supplies as well as technology and accessibility support for the Ask Set Anything events.



Indigenous initiatives and equity, diversity, and inclusivity activities

As part of its strong commitment to Indigenous initiatives and equity, diversity, and inclusivity (II + EDI), the university developed the **Strategic Plan for Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity**. The university continues to strive for an accessible, equitable and inclusive community of students, faculty and staff that supports the learning environment shaped by curiosity, rigorous inquiry, evidence-based decision-making, respect for diversity and expression of ideas and human rights. The SET program acknowledged that this commitment required identifying and addressing formal and informal obstacles, barriers and biases that limit equitable access and opportunities, as well as intentionally pursuing and implementing system-wide equity initiatives to embed a culture of diversity in all university structures, programs, policies and practices.

In alignment with those commitments, the principles of II + EDI guided the SET team's decisions regarding the transformation of administrative services and how the program impacted those who devote their careers to delivering these services to the university community.



■ DIVERSITY COMMITMENTS

The Service Excellence Steering Committee evaluated II + EDI impacts throughout the administrative restructuring process. The following points illustrate some of the ways in which the SET program endeavoured to meet the university's II + EDI commitments:

- Welcomed the diverse ideas, knowledge and perspectives of faculty, staff, leaders, students and broader community by engaging in a process of open consultation and discovery, including town halls, faculty/unit forums, focus groups, blog posts, digital feedback mechanisms and surveys.
- Consulted directly with leaders from faculties and units whose focus is on providing services and support to students, faculty and staff from Indigenous and other equity-deserving groups to ensure these services are not disrupted, and that layoffs do not disproportionately affect these members. Consultation with leaders is continuing.
- Ensured that the 40 member Staff Advisory Team includes proportional representation of equity-deserving groups.
- Analyzed aggregate Workforce Diversity Census data for administrative services functions impacted by the new administrative operating model and, applying an intersectional lens, monitored impacts on women, Indigenous, Black, visible minority, persons with disabilities, and other equity-deserving groups and mitigate disproportionate impacts that may result from the SET program implementation.
- Sought to increase the diversity of job candidates as new administrative roles within the service centres, processing hub, service partners and centres of expertise were filled and ensured that hiring and expression of interest review panels for those roles were trained in bias and anti-racism awareness.
- Aimed to increase the representation of women, Indigenous, people of colour and other equity-deserving groups in new administrative and academic leadership positions created as a result of UAT and SET.
- Worked to identify and remove structural barriers that prevent equity-deserving staff from their skills, talents and perspectives valued and recognized within administrative services.
- Increased accessibility within any new or modified practices, policies, procedures, systems, technology and spaces.



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SUPPORTING II + EDI THROUGH SET

Achieving the II + EDI goals requires responsible and accountable leadership at all levels of the university. The SET team regularly evaluated the program's progress toward achieving the university's goals throughout the implementation of the SET program. Below are examples of the actions taken to support these goals:

- **Review of recruitment policies, strategies and processes:**
 - » Methods to ensure the creation of diverse talent pipelines.
 - » Diversity statements for position postings that describe the university's commitment to II + EDI.
 - » Selection criteria to assess candidates' commitment to and knowledge of II + EDI.
 - » Training for the HR team on their roles and how they can support II + EDI in people practices (in conjunction with the Senior Advisor, Equity and Human Rights, Office of the Provost).
- **Training for SET team members included:**
 - » Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) training offered by the Government of Canada.
 - » Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI) courses as applicable (e.g., webinars on unconscious bias, systemic racism, etc).
- **Process redesign preparations:**
 - » All working group members were asked to complete GBA+ training and the SET process redesign methodology incorporated ways to understand how the changes impact different employee groups, including meeting with impacted stakeholders and completing a change impact assessment asking working group members to consider questions such as:
 - *How will you train your employees to consider II + EDI and GBA+?*
 - *How can diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging be incorporated into processes?*
 - *What gaps do you see?*
- **Staff Advisory Team (SAT) membership and activities:**
 - » Membership was composed of an appropriate blend of faculty and functional membership, staff teams, and levels of hierarchy, and endeavoured to ensure representation and participation from equity – deserving groups.
 - » As part of SAT, an EDI sub-group was developed; this group developed a **number of recommendations** which were presented to the Service Excellence Steering Committee and also shared with the university's EDI Working Group.
- **Outreach for EDI work with SET:**
 - » A presentation by the Senior Advisor, Equity and Human Rights, Office of the Provost was completed with both the UAT SAT team, as well as the SET team with materials shared that could be incorporated into SET project work.

- **Accessibility for communications and engagement:**

- » The monthly UAT pulse survey was available in both English and French.
- » *Ask SET Anything (ASA)* events included representatives from the Sign Language Interpreting and Real Time Captioning (CART) Services; Accessibility Resources team. Registrants were also asked if they had any other accommodation requirements.
- » The UAT website complied with all accessibility recommendations.

- **Ongoing professional development:**

- » Service Excellence Training Modules included an EDI component that is being developed by internal resources.
- » II + EDI training is currently under development and will be made available to the university community once completed.



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Efficiency benchmark improvement results

UniForum is a multi-year benchmarking program that supports continuous improvement in university administrative services. Administrative spend is predicted based on an institution's research and teaching revenue. Institutions above the 100 global benchmark spend more on administration than predicted and those below spend less.

A key measure of success for the SET program was to move operational costs in line with comparator universities. Using the U of A's membership as part of the UniForum program, the university has been able to track the impact of changes in operational spending and service effectiveness before and during SET program reforms. Results are based on two main collection streams: **staff activity data** and results obtained through a **satisfaction survey**, both of which reflect administrative services across the institution.

STAFF ACTIVITY RESULTS

Prior to the UAT initiative, the university was well above the UniForum benchmark for research-intensive universities at 127 points (with 100 being the global average). With rapidly decreasing funding, the university's normalized score increased to 138 in 2020.

The program has resulted in remarkable progress in cost efficiency compared to global peers. Using 2021 data, the university's normalized average cost results dropped 24 points (of the targeted 30 points), from 138 in 2020 to 114. This is, by far, the largest gain of the 50+ universities in the UniForum program.

Data for 2022 will be available later in 2022 and it is expected to confirm further progress towards the goal of 108 points by 2023. It is also expected to support the university's long-term strategic goal to reach the mean (100 points) and the top-quartile in service satisfaction by 2026.



SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

Analysis of the survey data at the university reveals that satisfaction with university administrative services has declined in overall terms since the previous iteration of the survey. This decline was not relegated to select administrative areas, as there was a decrease in satisfaction with most functions. While not welcome, this was expected, as many changes have occurred since the first administration of the survey roughly three years earlier.

According to Cubane (the organization that manages the UniForum survey), the U of A faced challenges during the three years in between surveys that no other university has had to confront, especially given the scale and speed of change. This includes implementing and adjusting to significant budget restrictions, comprehensive institutional transformation initiatives, and prominent academic and administrative restructuring, all occurring during the same time period – in addition to responding to a global pandemic.

The latest iteration of the satisfaction survey was conducted in November and December 2021 and the university received the raw data in February 2022. The survey – open to academic and professional staff who met certain seniority and longevity criteria – solicited responses on 70 different university administration activities (as defined by the UniForum program) rolled into 12 distinct functions.

The overall response rate was roughly 29 per cent:

- ~19 per cent of academic staff (out of 1,533 eligible participants)
- ~40 per cent of professional staff (out of 1,167 eligible respondents)

Now that significant work in improving cost efficiency has occurred, a primary goal at the university is to improve service satisfaction while transformation and cost efficiency initiatives continue and support the university's long-term strategic goal to reach the mean (100 points) and the top-quartile in service satisfaction by 2026.

Pulse survey results

Pulse surveys provided an opportunity to quickly and regularly understand the university community's attitude to the UAT initiative. The survey consisted of a short set of statements covering both administrative and academic restructuring, as well as the opportunity to provide open-ended feedback. Surveys were sent monthly between August 2020 and March 2022 to a representative, randomly selected sample of 700 university employees (in order to ensure adequate representation, each sample set included five per cent of potential respondents from Augustana, five per cent from Campus Saint-Jean and five per cent from the Faculty of Native Studies). Each pulse survey included the following statements to be rated on a Likert scale:

1. I understand the vision for the University of Alberta for Tomorrow (UAT).
2. I understand the reasons why the University of Alberta needs to go through this transformation.

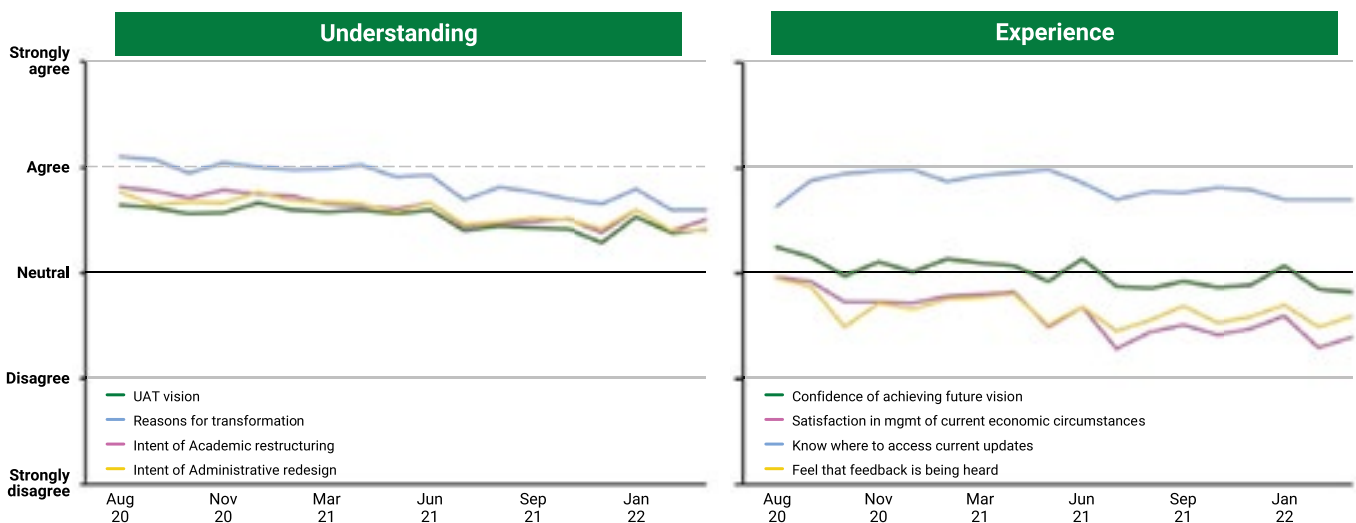
3. I am confident that the University of Alberta can achieve this future vision.
4. I am satisfied with the way the University of Alberta is managing their current economic circumstances.
5. I understand the intent of what the University of Alberta seeks to achieve through academic restructuring.
6. I understand the intent of what the University of Alberta seeks to achieve through administrative services redesign.
7. I know where to access the latest updates about the UAT.
8. I feel that the feedback I am giving is heard.

From August 2020, 18 surveys were sent out to a total of 12,600 staff and faculty members across the institution:

- 4,342 responses were received (the average response rate was 34.4 per cent)
- 3,093 comments were received
- Support staff provided 60 per cent of the responses

Pulse survey results are shown in Figure 10 below. Generally, staff and

**Figure 10:
Pulse
Survey
Results**



faculty understood the reasons for change but found the experience of transformation challenging.

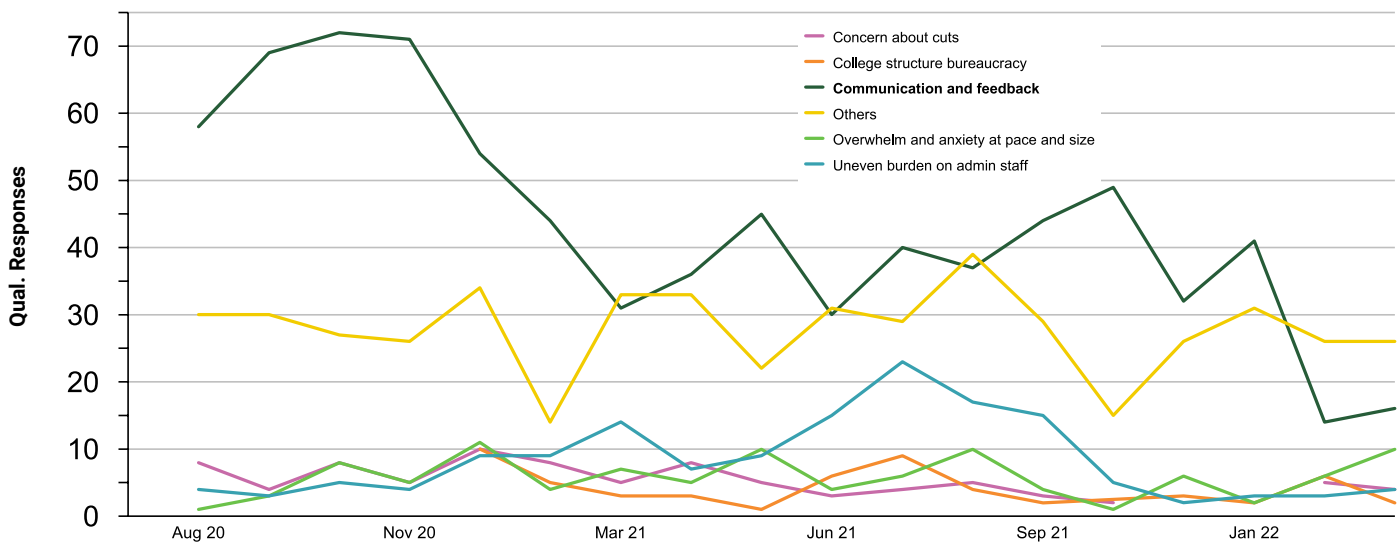
- There was a good overall understanding of the UAT vision which remained consistent throughout the SET program.
- There was initially a strong understanding of the case for change, but trended downward during restructuring.
- Employee confidence to achieve the future vision remained close to neutral but fluctuated month to month.

- Employees were dissatisfied with the management of the circumstances, particularly since April 2021.
- Understanding of the intent of academic restructuring began high, but dropped in summer 2021, and has fluctuated since December 2021.
- Views on the administrative services redesign have moved in line with those around academic restructuring.
- Knowledge of where to access the updates improved greatly in the first few months and remained high throughout the program.
- Employees continued to feel that feedback was not being heard, with minor variations over the last 12 months.

Qualitative results, as shown in Figure 11, below showed several themes over the course of the survey:

**Figure 11:
Pulse
Survey
Qualitative
Results**

- Concern about cuts.
- Concern that the new college structure would add rather than reduce bureaucracy.
- Desire for increased opportunity to provide feedback and be actively involved in the transformation process.



- Feeling overwhelmed and anxious at the pace and scope of the transformation.
- Uneven burden on administrative staff in terms of job loss.

In general, responses showed a gradual shift from resistance to exploration (e.g., acceptance and hopeful stages on the change curve), with employees requesting more information on progress made during restructuring as well as recognition opportunities for positive changes.



PART 9

Lessons learned

Administrative restructuring was both a challenging and rewarding experience for those involved, including university leadership, faculty, staff, and students. To document the lessons learned, a consultation process was conducted involving members of SESC, the SET team, as well as feedback from advisory team members.

What worked well?

The SET program was demonstrably successful in achieving its core goals of a new administrative operating model, overall budget savings, and substantial progress toward functional benchmarks in all areas. From the perspective of the SET team, university leadership, and other key stakeholders, the following activities were critical in supporting these goals:

- 1. The SET program adopted principles to guide the development of the operating model and service design and held firmly to these principles throughout the program.**

Central to the One University vision was embedding a level of consistency in the design and implementation of the future state operating model. This was achieved in multiple ways, including through the development of a set of organizational design principles that brought best practice organization design into the U of A context. These principles were firmly held throughout the SET program to achieve similar results across varied units and contexts.

- 2. Leadership support was active and visible to provide credibility to the SET program.**

UAT and SET required a united leadership vision and approach to be successful. The president and PEC-S were focused and clear on the challenges, opportunities, and objectives of administrative restructuring throughout the SET program. This level of leadership involvement and support gave credibility to the SET program and helped unite the community towards a common vision.

The scale and scope of the changes designed and delivered through SET required active involvement by leaders in moving the new operating model forward. Leaders at all levels were tasked with, in addition to their business as usual work, sponsoring streams of work and projects, reporting to governing bodies on progress and regularly making decisions and removing barriers to implementation. This leadership expectation went all the way to the top, with the Provost and Vice-President, University Services and Finance, acting as executive sponsors who regularly reported to the president and PEC-S on the SET program.



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3. The SET program's measurement framework established targets and measured continuous progress throughout restructuring, including benefits tracking.

A critical element in the success of the SET program was the establishment of targets and measurement of continuous progress throughout restructuring. This allowed university leaders and the SET team to respond and shape future state design and pivot on implementation through data-driven decision making. Additionally, the measurement framework laid a foundation for measuring the performance of administrative services at the university and improving performance through continual improvement.

4. University leaders were honest and clear on the staffing impacts from the beginning, and committed to engaging with representative groups in a constructive manner.

The SET program required change at a scale previously unseen at the university, meaning there was limited understanding up front on what changes, including staffing impacts, would occur. Amid this uncertainty, leaders committed to communicating staff impacts as often and as fully as possible, drawing on and strengthening the relationships with representative groups to facilitate implementation as smoothly as possible under challenging circumstances.

5. The SET team was well-structured and empowered to act quickly and responsively.

SET would not have been successful without the dedicated project teams working both independently in projects and streams, and collaboratively through connection with the SET Program Office. The SET program was structured with focused projects, a dedicated team and prioritized resources to enact quick and responsive decision making.

In addition, the resourcing of a SET Program Office resulted in the creation of a dedicated, monthly SET program report that consolidated information from many different stakeholders and streams to provide PEC-S, and other senior stakeholders, a clear view of progress across the university. This structured and succinct reporting system was highly commended by executive leaders and resulted in the design and funding of a University Initiatives Office to maintain progress in the long term. See Part 10 for further detail.

6. Change management was critical to ensure community consultation, engagement, and support.

The importance of a change management practice in a transformation like SET was recognized from the beginning of the program. A dedicated change management team worked closely with a communications team to provide frequent, accurate and accessible communications and engagement opportunities. This required building channels and avenues aimed specifically at allowing and enabling many voices to be heard for the first time at the university.

7. External resources provided support and expertise.

Given the scale and timeline of the funding challenge, the university needed to rely on external expertise to support the transformation. This external support offered an impartial perspective, provided credibility, and adapted global best practices for the U of A context to ensure the future state could be designed and implemented at pace.

What lessons were learned?

Due to the urgency and scale of the funding reductions, the timeline for transformation was ambitious, and in some cases aggressive, which created a number of constraints during administrative restructuring. While a transformation at the scale of SET is unlikely to occur in the future, administrative restructuring through the SET program provided a number of valuable lessons:

1. Maintain an integrated approach to administrative and academic change.

As the U of A moves away from a decentralized model to one that integrates both sides of the university more closely to operate at scale, there will be few transformations that can be delivered in only the administrative or only the academic spheres — both must be included together. Towards this end, it would have been beneficial to complete college, faculty and unit reorganizational work in parallel to administrative restructuring.

2. Set reasonable deadlines to deliver all critical pieces of work while still moving at pace.

Time was not on the SET program's side and more time would have helped to integrate the operating model with the colleges. Future transformation should ensure ample timelines to allow completion of critical projects while delivering all initiatives to a high standard.

3. Plan and articulate the future state in detail.

To reduce transition concerns and mitigate risks, it is important to place focus on articulating the details behind an organized, mapped future state for key services and processes. Though the SET program followed a more iterative approach due to time constraints, ideally all base processes would have been mapped and web content updated, so that the university could prioritize and dedicate resources to functions in the future.

4. Ensure change management and communications resources are in place as soon as possible.

To help build awareness and support for organizational change, it is essential to have well-resourced change management and communications professionals in place at the beginning of a project. This will ensure stakeholders understand what is changing and why, and how the changes will specifically impact them. While uniquely different, change management and communications processes together help deliver timely information and materials to support key milestones, ensure stakeholders receive consistent information about what is important to them, and provide a mechanism to share feedback and ask questions.

5. Take the time necessary for comprehensive process improvements.

To drive progress on process improvements, the following steps should be taken early in the change project:



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- Conduct as much stakeholder engagement as possible with regard to process review and redesign.
- Ensure the targets of process improvement result in efficiency gains for the end users.
- Redesign processes from end-to-end as an integrated service versus picking out portions to redesign.
- Streamline consultation processes for those services where the process is set by industry (e.g., HR and finance).
- Improve process automation capacity and embrace technology improvements as a means to improve process efficiencies.

6. Recognize, identify, and communicate additional budget impacts.

The complexity of the university’s previous budget model created challenges after implementation of staffing structures and process redesign. Non-labour changes in budget impacts should be identified as early as possible and budgeted in the later years of a project. For example in the SET program, non-labour budget transfers were necessary for IT, external engagement and procurement, though these were not identified until late in the program which was not ideal.

7. Clearly communicate targets in a language that leadership and the community understand.

The strength of successful transformations is in providing clarity to leaders so they can deliver effectively and efficiently. There was confusion in the SET program for leadership in the framing of numbers in terms of dollars rather than FTE values during administrative restructuring. Use of FTE and average salary initially resulted in a budget deficit when the average salary was not met, although the SET project did meet the first-year FTE targets. However, framing the numbers in terms of FTE values was useful to give context to the conversation.

8. Position the transformation as ongoing work.

At the conclusion of SET, clearer messaging was required to ensure the community remained well informed on what had been achieved and what work was still required. The SET program has built a foundation of continual improvement at the university meaning that, while major transformation projects will be initiated and delivered as needed, the work is ongoing and never complete or static.





PART 10

Looking ahead

The end of fiscal year 2022 marked an important transition for the UAT initiative with the conclusion of the SET program. While more work lies ahead, the core activities to develop the new operating model and redesign central administrative streams has been completed. With this foundational work done, the ongoing transformation of processes, procedures and policies has shifted to senior leaders and staff in the central portfolios and centres of expertise.

The SET program has played an instrumental role in providing a foundation for the university's long-term financial sustainability as well as future growth and investment. Looking ahead, the university must continue to build the institution's ability to adapt to change and execute strategic initiatives as well as develop and sustain a university-wide service culture that is highly responsive to the needs of students, faculty, staff, donors, alumni and other partners.



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University Initiatives Office

To support this future vision, a University Initiatives Office (UIO) was created in April 2022 to manage strategic enterprise-wide projects and support functional areas as they continue to embed and refine the operating model. Its primary responsibilities are planning and alignment, enabling execution of projects, and building the university's capability to adapt to ongoing, large-scale change.

The UIO will be housed within the University Services and Finance (USF) portfolio, but will operate with executive sponsorship primarily from the Provost, Chief Strategy Officer, and the Vice-President, University Services and Finance. The UIO will also work closely with other operational units to ensure strategy is effectively formed, executed, operationalized, and monitored with collaboration and sponsorship from unit leaders.

The UIO has three primary accountabilities:

- **Planning and strategy:** establishing a scalable and systematic approach to delivering major initiatives across the university.
- **Enabling execution:** managing these initiatives end-to-end with progress updates to the Executive.
- **Institutional change management:** building the university's capability to adapt to ongoing, large-scale change.

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UJO INITIATIVES

The UJO will initially be responsible for a series of SET initiated, pan-university initiatives including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Complete the transfer of SET initiatives

The UJO will continue to support key SET initiatives, including IT consolidation, procurement cost reductions, external engagement integration, assessment and redesign of research administration activities, as well as faculty and unit redesigns.

2. Deliver the student services vision

The UJO will develop an implementation plan for the student services vision that takes into account activity volume by time period.

3. Support the execution of the college structure

The college structure will reduce administrative costs by consolidating faculty-led services within the college. The UJO will support the college deans as they develop the newly established structures.

4. Implement the sustainment plan as developed by SET

As the operating model is a completely new approach to service delivery for the university, there may be a natural inclination to drift back to past practices and inefficient ways of working. Therefore, to ensure the operating model is sustainable, the UJO will be responsible for activities to maintain the new structures, processes and behaviours required to operate them.

5. Budget Model 2.0

A new budget model (2.0) will be implemented for the 2024/25 fiscal year and UJO will support this project.

EFFECTING AND SUSTAINING SERVICE EXCELLENCE

To continue to thrive in the future and achieve the vision outlined in UAT, the university will require an ongoing capability in several operating dimensions, including the following: service delivery governance and accountability, policy reformulation, process improvement, technology enablement, standardized, non-duplicated roles and responsibilities, and performance monitoring and reporting. Core to this will be the ongoing enhancement of the university's commitment to service excellence evidenced through a unified service-oriented culture with continuous improvement and innovation.

In particular, to realize the longer-term benefits of the transformation and new operating model implementation, the following will be required:

- Work as one to continue the journey to sustain the benefits already achieved.
- Identify, prioritize, and effectively execute strategic initiatives.
- Drive further service quality, innovation, and continuous improvement opportunities.

- Develop people and leadership to build a culture of service excellence across the university.
- Adopt evidence-based decision making enabled by data and information technology.

○ Sustaining approaches

Sustaining and building commitment for the transformational changes achieved by the SET program, as well as ensuring that financial stability is maintained in the future, will require ongoing sponsorship and commitment from university leadership. It will also require a shift in thinking from colleges, faculties, portfolios and units to ensure their work aligns with and supports what is best for the university overall, and not just their respective area.

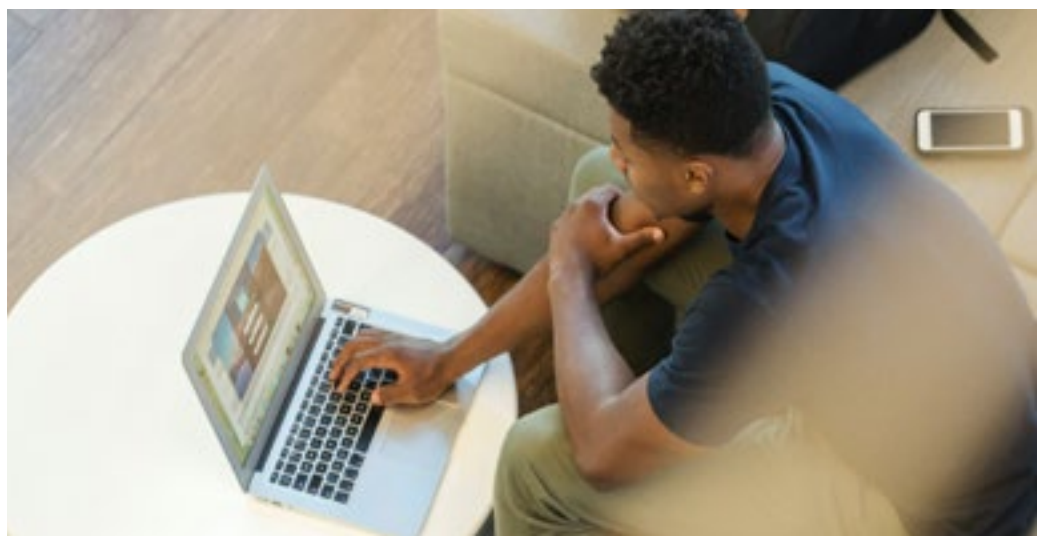
It is important to note that success will depend on the university taking a more integrated approach and providing the oversight and governance necessary to ensure everyone is working as one to fully realize the benefits of the transformation.

Four key themes have been identified to support and sustain the transformation:

1. Establish a culture of service excellence with leadership, governance, and measurement.
2. Ensure financial sustainability and benefits realization.
3. Enhance institutional change and agility.
4. Continue the adoption and a deepening understanding of the operating model.

○ Service excellence measurement and continuous improvement

Service governance requires the support of clear service measures and metrics that are aligned to UAT's strategy. To provide this, a Service Excellence Measuring Framework has been developed with a dashboard currently under development; initial metrics are also being compiled into a dashboard. It will prove essential to ongoing service credibility that metrics provide unambiguous indications of service effectiveness and are shared with the university community. Community acceptance and reliance on the dashboard will be critically dependent on the suitability and currency of the reported metrics.





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■ NEXT STEPS

Thus far, an initial organizational structure for the UIO has been developed along with a comprehensive list of activities to be completed through the UIO. These activities have been prioritized and a subsequent project schedule through the 2022-23 fiscal year has been developed.

An executive director for the UIO has been hired. The UIO will initially start with a small complement of staff and will increase resources as it demonstrates value; a secondment approach will be used for staffing in order to reduce costs and build capacity through the entire university. Building on the initial outcomes of the 2022-23 fiscal year, a scalable plan for the UIO will also be developed.

Within each of the aforementioned themes to support and sustain the transformation, activities have been identified which will require some level of oversight and governance. These activities will be prioritized at both the strategic and operational level to ensure that the university sustains and extends the gains from restructuring. Next steps will include formulating the activities into initiative plans and to identify the requirements to bring them to a successful conclusion.

The UIO will coordinate and oversee the formation and actioning of the activities, reporting through its sponsors to PEC-O. And in a manner consistent with the SET program, the UIO will ensure their effective achievement enabling sustained change thereby attaining a sustainable operating model that is consistent with the institution's benchmark targets.

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PART 11



Conclusion

With fundamental systemic reform, the SET program has helped the U of A meet its financial challenges head on and set a bold new direction for the university of tomorrow. From the very beginning, the SET program played a critical role, from framing the scope and scale of the transformation to leading the development of a new operating model to engaging in both broad and detailed engagement and communication with faculty, staff, and students across all colleges, faculties, portfolios, and units.



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As a result, the university centralized most administrative services, including Finance, Human Resources, IT, External Relations, and Research Administration, launched new central units such as the Student Service Centre and the Shared Services unit, reduced redundancies, and invested in specialization and technology. These efforts also involved focusing on developing a university-wide service culture that is highly responsive to the varied needs of the university community.

Transformations of this scale take time. While there is more work to be done, the SET program has laid the foundation and provided units the design and tools they need to fully operationalize new processes and systems. Over time, the U of A will achieve all of the original savings and benchmarking targets, making the university a global leader in the efficient and cost-effective delivery of services. To support this goal, the SET program and university leadership has implemented a long-term continuous improvement plan which will ensure that the greatest possible percentage of resources advance the core mission of teaching, research, and community engagement.

Restructuring the University of Alberta was a massive change at an unprecedented pace and didn't come without its challenges, uncertainty, and loss. However, working together as **one university**, the U of A has emerged as a stronger, more powerful institution, able to compete in the modern post-secondary landscape on a global scale while continuing to advance the core mission of building one of the world's great universities for the public good.

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PART 12



Appendices



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1. [Service Catalogues](#)
2. [Organizational Restructures](#)
3. [SET Interim Report](#)
4. [SET Transition Plan](#)
5. [Operating Model Report](#)
6. [Shared Services Briefing Note](#)
7. [EDI recommendations](#)



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