

## ***Check Against Delivery***

### **State of the University 2023 – *Powered by Place***

**Delivered by: Dr. Annette Trimbee**

**October 19, 2023**

**Betty Andrews Recital Hall, MacEwan University**

*(Campus video plays)*

- What an incredible way to start this event. Isn't MacEwan beautiful?
- Thank you, Craig and welcome everyone.
- “The city is our campus”
- Fifty years ago, those were the words used to describe MacEwan, which at the time was just coming to life as a small community college.
- I'm not sure if the college's first President, John Haar imagined just how prescient and enduring his words would be.
- Over the last 50 years, “The Edmonton College” evolved from its humble beginnings in an old high school and a former grocery store into MacEwan University -- “Edmonton's downtown university.”
- Our name has changed a few times...
  - students have graduated, programs have evolved...
  - our campus has developed...
  - challenges have been overcome, achievements celebrated...
  - and we have proudly grown into an exceptional undergraduate university in Alberta, and indeed Canada.

- I feel we are at a watershed moment in our history as an institution...
- ...one where we are stepping more fully into our place—embracing our strengths and challenging ourselves to take MacEwan even further.
- Where we were once humble, we now challenge ourselves to be bold and unapologetically MacEwan.
- We celebrate our achievements more enthusiastically.
- We have undertaken an ambitious plan to build a new School of Business building – a plan which garnered \$125 million in support from the provincial government.
- We are more courageous and confident—in who we are and in the important role we play—in this place and in our community.
- Our students are active in addressing real world problems through work-integrated learning and a personal dedication to make our community better.
- We are not standing still but are driving MacEwan forward in a state of perpetual motion.
- We are educating the next generation of leaders who will grow and enhance our community.
- We support business and industry through the development of graduates ready to hit the ground running.

- We partner with community to contribute our expertise and ideas to address pressing and emerging issues that impact all of us.
- We are actively contributing to the revitalization of downtown and the growth and development of our city, our province and beyond.
- We are doing things differently than many post-secondary institutions and we're proud of that.
  - We are nimble, flexible, well-rounded, and responsive.
- I'm encouraged by this enhanced confidence.
- We have an important role to play in our community and I'm excited to see all of us – students, faculty and staff – embrace it.
- What has stayed constant over more than 50 years at MacEwan is the understanding that the city is indeed our campus.
- It is at this place, in this city, on this ground that we continue to forge our legacy.
- And in return, MacEwan University – through the work we do, the students who fill our classrooms, the faculty with their passion and knowledge to share — has shaped and influenced our city, our province, and beyond.
- We are truly powered by our place in the centre of Edmonton.
- MacEwan students, faculty, and staff are not the first to study, learn, innovate and collaborate on this land.

- Indigenous people have been coming to this place to meet and trade since time immemorial.
- More recently, settlers, new Canadians, and others have gathered here, attracted by abundant resources, flowing waterways, fertile ground, and sense of opportunity that makes Edmonton unique.
- Their steps, their achievements, and their challenges have established the foundation upon which MacEwan's story continues to grow and evolve.
- Train tracks – the remnants of which lay beneath our campus from one end to the other – brought people and prosperity to Edmonton...people focused on a fresh start, the promise of community, and economic advancement.
- People eager to make this place their home.
- Those same tracks also delivered challenges. Newcomers to this place made decisions which, at times, had a devastating impact on the Indigenous peoples who lived and thrived here.
- We must respect and address those experiences and recognize our responsibility to support all reconciliation efforts – economic, social, and personal.
- While the train tracks are gone, MacEwan continues to bring people to this place – each with their own story, their own goals, their own dreams and ambitions.
- Our strategic vision, [Teaching Greatness](#) includes a focus on place.

- The idea of place extends beyond the physical to include meaningful connections and supports for students outside the classroom.
- It includes collaboration with our community, and honouring the space our university holds in the heart of the city, within the ward of O-day'min
- Students are at the heart of *Teaching Greatness*. And word is definitely getting around!
- In our fall and winter terms, an average of 20,000 students, staff and faculty come downtown to MacEwan University every day.
- They come to learn, to teach, to aspire, and understand their place as leaders and community builders.
- Last year, we welcomed just over 12,500 full time equivalent students to campus.
- We are experiencing incredible growth in our student body – some of the highest increases in our history. And we're not done yet. We are on track to achieve our goal of 14,200 in 2025 and 20,000 in 2030.
- And 20,000 FLEs is about 30,000 unique students.
- This growth speaks to MacEwan's strength in providing the programs and credentials employers and students want.
- We are intentionally smashing the calendar – literally and figuratively.

- We know students want flexibility and our world is too complex to remain rigid in what we offer and how we offer it.
- Many of our students arrive, depart and then arrive again, assembling a unique package of knowledge, experience and skills to drive forward.
- MacEwan students can put together the building blocks to a creative, multi-disciplinary education they can't get anywhere else.
- This place is special.
- But we are not focussed on growth for growth's sake. We are intentionally addressing demands, picking our spots carefully, working to balance the needs of our community with ways of making the most impact.
- Our campus is stunningly beautiful, well-used, and vibrant. I'm very excited that our physical space continues to grow.
- As I noted earlier, we recently celebrated a \$125 million commitment by the Province of Alberta to support our new MacEwan School of Business building.
- This new space will welcome 7,500 additional students to our campus and the downtown core when it opens in 2027, contributing to the revitalization of Edmonton's core, and elevating our impact on our community.
- Let's take a few minutes to look at what this fabulous building will look like when complete.

- Isn't that impressive!
- We are so excited to get shovels in the ground next spring and see this new building take its place in O-day' min.
- Bolstered by the Provincial funding, we are now focussed on the MacEwan Means Business fundraising campaign.
- We are fortunate to have a highly engaged campaign cabinet of senior business and community leaders, including our co-chairs John Day and Rob Seidel, who have volunteered to steer this campaign.
- This remarkable group of volunteers believes in MacEwan and this project enough that they are donating their time and talent to help make it a reality. I am very grateful for their support.
- This new building will be one of the most dramatic additions to downtown Edmonton and will be integral in bringing increased vibrancy and energy to our city's downtown core.
- Our goal is to raise another \$25 million.
- Just last month, we celebrated a gift of \$250,000 from the Bouchier Group – Canada's largest private Indigenous company.
- Bouchier's donation recognizes the integral role MacEwan plays in developing future leaders and our contribution to the economic development of the Capital Region and Northern Alberta.
- We are so thankful for this generous gift and can't wait to celebrate more as the campaign continues.

- Including the MacEwan Means Business campaign, the support of our donors has seen steady growth.
- In the past year, donors contributed to a number of MacEwan's priorities, including:
  - student support,
  - research initiatives,
  - the Centre for Sexual and Gender Diversity,
  - and the Distinguished Visiting Artist in Country Music program.
- MacEwan students received \$8.2 million in financial support last year through over 1500 scholarships, more than 2,200 bursaries and over 1,300 awards.
- These numbers, while impressive, are more meaningful when you appreciate that these gifts impact individual students directly...some of whom would not be able to contemplate a post-secondary education without them.
- Our donors and their gifts truly open doors for students and we are grateful.
- Many of our donors also work and teach here. They interact directly with our students and understand their needs.
- I am proud and very grateful that our staff and faculty choose to support these important campaigns.
- A tremendous thank you to everyone who has gone above and beyond in supporting the students we serve. You are inspiring, and truly a credit to the MacEwan community.
- While we often speak of the impact of MacEwan on the community and places around us, it's important to also recognize the influence



of our community on what we do.

- On a regular basis our community comes to us with real-life issues to explore and opportunities to engage, collaborate, and build relationships beyond the classroom.
- We call this being “Grand as a Griffin” – attracting community organizations, businesses, and industries eager to partner with us.
- In many cases, it’s MacEwan’s Work Integrated Learning and Community-Engaged Learning programs that nurture these collaborations.
- MacEwan students are eager to engage and make a difference in the community, and our faculty and staff are ready to help them find meaningful opportunities that add value to the student experience.
- In just last year alone, 5,100 Work Integrated Learning placements were available to MacEwan students.
- These opportunities allow students to contribute their skills and passions to tackling real-world problems, while working with community partners — and potential employers.
- Ultimately, our goal is for 100 per cent of eligible programs to have a work-integrated learning component by 2030.
- MacEwan is further supporting students by implementing a new Experience Record, which allows students to track their co-and-extracurricular activities.
- This valuable tool for students can be shared with prospective employers or other educational institutions to illustrate their

experiences and career-readiness.

- Our goal is to ensure 50 per cent of students have an experience record by 2025 and 100 per cent of students will have one by 2030.
- MacEwan students have such remarkable stories.
- Here is just one example, albeit a tremendous one:
- last year, Bachelor of Social Work students Mitchell Johnson and Kayla Huxter created the Street Outreach and Resource Team to respond to the overdose crisis they witnessed first-hand during their practicum placements and volunteer work.
- A couple of times a week, these two students packed up snacks, harm reduction supplies, and information on social resources to share with unhoused residents of Edmonton's core.
- Almost immediately their team of two grew to over 20 volunteers – people inspired by the project and wishing to help. At times, these volunteers stepped in with Naloxone and CPR to save individuals from opioid overdose.
- From a simple desire to respond to a need, the Street Outreach and Resource Team provides comfort and life-saving care to a very vulnerable population in our community.
- Our place in O-day'min – a historic gathering place of indigenous communities – also calls us to ensure a meaningful and unwavering commitment reconciliation
- Improving access to educational opportunities for Indigenous students is a key call to action stemming from the Truth and

## Reconciliation commission.

- There are significant barriers for many Indigenous students aspiring to post-secondary education, and MacEwan is committed to reducing those barriers.
- In *Teaching Greatness*, we recognized the importance of ensuring the demographics of our student body more closely reflect our community, with greater participation from Indigenous and other historically underrepresented learners.
- A key element of that work involves opening our doors and inviting young students in, so they can experience what a university is like and imagine themselves here, long before they make the decision to attend.
- Recently, Dr. Emily Milne and Dr. Kaitlyn Towle, teamed up to create and launch a pilot project called MacEwanCYU (Child and Youth University).
- Dr. Milne, Dr. Towle, and their student research assistants worked alongside teachers and students at Ben Calf Robe/St. Clare Elementary and Junior High School to share a fun and engaging glimpse into university life.
- And this is just one example, MacEwan has a long history of inviting young people to explore our programs and experience our campus.
- In May, as a result of a partnership with Indspire, MacEwan hosted their annual gathering called, “Soaring”. That event filled our halls with hundreds of Indigenous high school students from all over Canada who came to gain a first-hand experience of post-secondary education and be inspired to chart their own paths for their future

careers.

- Early next year, kihêw waciston will another host the Indigenous Youth Rising Conference. This two-day event in March will celebrate Indigenous culture and foster connections between young students and Indigenous role models.
- This year's role models will be athletes! Stay tuned!
- When we invite young students onto our campus and into classrooms, they can see themselves here—for some, maybe for the first time—and these kids can begin to imagine...

And that's just one of the barriers.

- Last year, 6.77 per cent of our student population was made up of self-declared Indigenous students, exceeding our goal of 6 per cent.
- We would like to continue growing the Indigenous student population, welcoming them to MacEwan and supporting them as they forge their own paths. We aim to increase the Indigenous population of students to 8 per cent by 2030. We are confident we are on track to meet these goals.
- MacEwan's place in O-day'min also provides meaningful opportunities to partner in support of our neighbourhood.
- When Dr. Ozlem Cankaya, decided to replace an essay in her Bachelor of Early Childhood Curriculum Studies course with a community-engaged project, she had no idea what a dramatic impact that decision would have.
- Dr. Cankaya connected her students with C5 Northeast Hub – a community agency which offers a 'one-stop shop' for social supports

in Northeast Edmonton.

- Over the 2022 fall term, MacEwan students teamed up to support six projects, from helping newcomers navigate the city's transit system to researching food security.
- The students' passion and drive filled an essential need for the C5 Hub and the people who rely on their services.
- More formal partnerships with organizations like the Edmonton Elks, the Citadel Theatre, and the Edmonton International Airport, connect MacEwan – staff, faculty and students – with spaces and places in the community beyond our campus.
- The power of a place like MacEwan is brought to life by its people—those who learn, work, study, and collaborate within it.
- Our students bring deep curiosity, incredible energy, and a desire to pursue their own paths in life.
- Our faculty members nurture that curiosity and enthusiasm—they educate, challenge, and mentor our students to find their own greatness.
- That is why *Teaching Greatness* is so much more than the title of our vision.
- It is our fundamental principle, and in its various ways, serves as a beacon that guides our commitment to ourselves, our students, and our community.
- Teaching Greatness requires great teachers.

- Their expertise and passion for their work brings life and energy to the classroom and sparks interest and ambition in the students they teach.
- I am excited that we hired more than 60 new faculty members over the last year – the single largest cohort in recent MacEwan history.
- And this hiring is **across** the academy!
- I am very proud of all our faculty who have found a home at MacEwan as scholars and teachers.
- Their impact on students and our community will be significant, and I can't wait to see what they bring to our university.
- We expect to add another 50 new faculty to our roster in the upcoming year – further energizing and inspiring our campus and those who work and study here.
- We also continue to grow the percentage of courses taught by tenure-track and tenured faculty members ensuring our students have access to high quality professors throughout their academic career.
- Our stated goal is to maintain the percentage of associate and full professors teaching first-year courses above 50 per cent. I'm pleased to report we have surpassed that goal.
- This is more than a data point, however. It means that our students – including those just beginning their studies – learn from and develop meaningful relationships with experienced professors.

This focus on exceptional undergraduate teaching and learning is

one of the things that powers our place.

- We hear regularly from students who reference this unique experience as one of the things that makes MacEwan different from other institutions.
- We like it that way.
- MacEwan's spaces are also powered by research and scholarly work.
- The spectrum of topics MacEwan faculty explore is fascinating and vast...from using zebrafish to understand anxiety...to exploring social connectedness and resilience among marginalized seniors...to investigating how innovation ecosystems work.
- This range of scholarly work also benefits our students, as they have opportunities to work alongside these researchers as part of their undergraduate education – another essential element of the MacEwan experience.
- Over the last year, 14 MacEwan University faculty members received more than \$4 million in federal research funding across a wide variety of disciplines.
- I'm also happy to report that more than 270 students received funding to engage in scholarly activity through research assistantships last year – providing them the opportunity to work with researchers and nurture their own research aspirations.
- Many of these students also participate in MacEwan's Student Research Day, showcasing their community-based scholarship, art

and design creations, original compositions and scientific experiments.

- Earlier this year, MacEwan also finalized a tactical plan for scholarship to further promote continued growth in scholarly activity in support of *Teaching Greatness*.
- This plan concentrates on strengthening the quality of MacEwan's scholarship.
- It is also focussed on pursuing areas of scholarly excellence that will position MacEwan on the local, national and international stage in a variety of areas, including:
  - gender and sexual diversity,
  - urban wellness,
  - social entrepreneurship,
  - and immersive learning.
- MacEwan is here to grow and inspire the next generation of leaders.
- What they learn and experience in this place will power their impact on places beyond our campus.
- They will become leaders in our communities addressing some of our most pressing issues.
- They will become nurses, providing high-quality, compassionate care.
- They will become artists, designers and performers bringing their unique creativity to enhance our communities.
- But before they can do any of those things, they need to feel welcome and supported, and that their time spent learning and



studying is of value.

- This past year 85 per cent of graduating students reported satisfaction with their experience at MacEwan, exceeding our stated goal of 80 per cent.
- That tells us that their time in this place was meaningful and valuable to them.
- Our alumni agree. Our goal was to maintain or exceed alumni satisfaction at 80 per cent, and I'm pleased to report that 89 per cent of alumni reported satisfaction with MacEwan. (
- They liked it here! Their experience was impactful, they made life-long friendships, they grew and evolved as individuals and are using what they've learned to enhance their communities.
- Powered by our place, MacEwan is positioned to continue to achieve greatness.
- Last year, our university community collaborated to bring *Teaching Greatness*, our strategic vision, to life. It's gratifying and exciting to see the incredible progress we are making.
- We have so much to look forward to. MacEwan has momentum right now, and it's exciting to be a part of it.
- Powered by our place in downtown, we are attracting attention from government and community partners, business, industry and other post-secondary institutions all wanting to know more about what we're doing and how we're different.
- To be honest, we're still not quite accustomed to the attention.

- We're a humble bunch.
- But it's time for us to fully step into our place and our role as a university focussed on providing an exceptional, accessible, relevant and innovative post-secondary education.
- There will be challenges on our road ahead, no doubt.
- But I am encouraged by our progress to date and confident that our unwavering focus on the goals and directions of Teaching Greatness will guide us.
- Our new School of Business building will further power our place in O-day'min, opening up our campus to the north and providing opportunities to learn and grow together as a university community.
- Our students will take advantage of an increasing number of work integrated learning opportunities to bring what they're learning in the classroom to power our communities.
- Our alumni population will continue to grow and serve as champions and ambassadors for this university, further enhancing our reputation for preparing the next generation of leaders.
- Our faculty will continue to grow, bringing their passion and dedication to scholarship and teaching to inspire our students.
- And it's all because of this place, our campus, and the power of what goes on inside and outside these walls. What we do and will do here could not occur anywhere else.
- It's the power of this place and the people within it that makes it happen.

- Thank you very much for joining me here today to share in our excitement, I am pleased to take any questions you may have.