MacEwan University:  
A New Beginning

An integrated strategic plan to develop a distinctive, student-focused undergraduate university

2014/15 to 2018/19

Approved by the Board of Governors: May 22, 2014
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

A University in Transition ........................................................... 1

The Planning Framework .................................................................. 3
  University Pillars ....................................................................... 3
  Strategic Directions and Foundation Plans .................................. 4

Strategic Directions, Goals, Objectives and Measures of Success .......... 6

I. A Unique Academic Environment ............................................ 6
   A. Academic Programs and Learning Environment .................... 6
   B. An Integrated Knowledge Model ........................................... 10
   C. Recruitment and Student Success ..................................... 11
   D. Academic Governance ...................................................... 13

II. Strong Community Engagement ............................................. 14
    E. Community Engagement .................................................. 14

III. Institutional Excellence ....................................................... 16
    F. University Environment and Culture .................................. 17
    G. Information and Technology Management ....................... 19
    H. External Relations .......................................................... 20

Implementation ............................................................................. 21

Conclusion .................................................................................. 23
A University in Transition

MacEwan University has been an institution in transition since its inception as Grant MacEwan Community College over forty years ago. From a two-year community college with no mandate for university-level programming, to the Province's largest university transfer institution, and then to a degree-granting institution, MacEwan has continuously evolved and adapted to meet the changing needs of its students and the communities it serves. The most recent phase in this evolution began in 2006, with the initiation of full degree programming, and continued in 2009 with the official transition from college to university status. Since that time, the first major phases of degree program development have been completed, with the majority of students now enrolled in degree programs.

The challenge now facing the University is to define clearly its future directions and priorities. This process began in 2012/13 with the articulation of key values for the institution (University “pillars”), as well as a new University brand statement. As reflected in these statements, MacEwan University sees the opportunity to create a unique identity among post-secondary institutions in western Canada by re-defining the meaning of a comprehensive undergraduate university. Throughout the 2013/14 academic year, the University engaged in a comprehensive strategic planning process with precisely this purpose - to articulate clearly and unequivocally the type of university it wishes to become. This integrated plan summarizes the results of this planning activity, the outcomes of which will be realized as the plan is implemented over the next five years.

In essence, MacEwan University’s strategic plan is about recreating the University through a judicious amalgamation of the strengths of its past, the characteristics of its new status and the opportunities for a unique future role. By combining its student-centred ethos and focus on teaching excellence, which have been hallmarks of MacEwan throughout its history, with a new program framework based on degree programming and an enhanced emphasis on research, scholarly and creative activity in support of its teaching and learning mission, MacEwan University aspires to create a distinctive identity as an undergraduate teaching university with the following key characteristics:

- a strong, over-arching and genuine focus on and dedication to teaching and learning
- provision of an outstanding student experience combining personal growth and career preparation
- a distinctive blend and balance of teaching, research, scholarly and creative activity which focuses on enhancing student learning and providing students with direct research experience
- provision of a variety of learning pathways and credential options to enable students to meet their current learning needs and career goals while ensuring opportunities for continued learning and additional credentials
- an environmental ethic and focus on sustainability, in both programming and operations
engagement as a strong and active member of and contributor to the growth and development of Edmonton and other communities

creation of a diverse community of students, faculty and staff from around the world, coupled with extensive opportunities for students and faculty to learn and grow in international settings

care for and commitment to promoting the physical, mental, emotional and social well-being of all members of the university community

a culture of integrity, accountability and transparency

From this perspective, MacEwan University’s first integrated strategic plan truly represents the desire for and commitment to “a new beginning” for the University.
The Planning Framework

The strategic planning process in which the University has been engaged is based on the recognition that the transition from college to university involves far more than the development of new degree programs. Defining the role of research, scholarly and creative activity within the context of an undergraduate university focused on teaching, learning and the student experience is critical to the evolution of the unique role the University envisions for itself. The transition to a university model of academic governance, based on the central role of faculty in determining the University’s academic directions, is another major element of the broader cultural shift from college to university. Establishing a strong role for the University in relation to its location in the downtown core of Edmonton, and to the broader communities of Edmonton and northern Alberta, is also an important aspect of MacEwan University’s planning for its future, reflecting the institution’s long-standing linkages with and contributions to the communities it serves.

In recognition of the multitude of issues and challenges to be addressed in its planning, the University began its strategic planning initiative by examining and articulating the key characteristics that define its unique identity and must therefore be reflected in planning for its future development. This process, which occupied much of the 2012/13 academic year, resulted in the articulation of eight key “pillars” or value statements. Over 700 people – faculty, students, staff, administrators and community representatives – were involved in identifying, reviewing and refining these key statements of the University’s identity. These pillar statements, which were endorsed by the University’s Academic Governance Council and approved by the Board of Governors in February 2013, are as follows:

University Pillars

- **Students First**: Focussed on learner-centred teaching, student growth, opportunity and achievement.

- **Personal Learning Experiences**: We are a welcoming, intimate and inspiring learning environment where the individual student – the whole person – thrives.

- **Quality Education**: Excellence is achieved here by combining a first class education with an extraordinary student experience.

- **An Engaged University**: A ‘connected’ culture where students, faculty and the community are linked – and collectively, collaboratively engaged in realizing their full potential.

- **At the Heart of the City**: A vibrant and vital urban experience. We are a hub of creative, scholarly and cultural activity in the core of the city – building, sharing in and contributing to its growth and prosperity.

- **Sustainability**: We are committed to creative approaches to sustainability in education and campus operations – activating solutions for positive environmental, social and economic impact.
• **Student-Engaged Research:** We support and foster research and innovation that engages students, faculty and the community across all our programs.

• **The MacEwan University Spirit:** Our youthful energy comes from a pervasive excitement about the future – about how all of us can contribute to helping the university grow and succeed.

These foundational statements were intended to provide a foundation for more detailed planning. At the beginning of the next phase of the planning process, the University made the following commitment:

*MacEwan University will reflect and give life to its student-centred values (pillars) in all its planning, policies and actions, including programming, services and administration. The MacEwan University Pillars are at the core of what the institution is and what it aspires to become in the future. It is essential that these pillars, which clearly place students at the centre of the university’s identity and purpose, be reflected in all aspects of university planning and activity. By actively and consciously reflecting this student-centred focus, MacEwan University can distinguish itself as an undergraduate university that truly considers students its highest priority.*

**Strategic Directions and Foundation Plans**

During the fall of 2013, the University engaged in an extensive process of consultation with faculty, students and staff regarding the strategic directions which the University should pursue over the next five years as it launches its “new beginning.” A total of twenty-three consultation sessions were held with groups including the Board of Governors, Academic Governance Council, faculty councils, administrative teams, the faculty, staff and student associations, the alumni council and others, as well as a series of open forums on each campus. An on-line mechanism was also established for interested employees and students to provide their input. Through these mechanisms, a total of over 500 members of the University community provided their input into the institution’s future direction. As a result of this consultation process, eleven strategic directions were identified to guide the University’s development. These directional statements received approval from the University’s Board of Governors in December 2013.

The next phase of planning involved the development of foundation plans by key areas of the University, outlining the ways in which they would contribute to the achievement of the institutional strategic directions. The foundation plans defined detailed goals and objectives, timelines for their achievement, indicators and measures by which success would be judged, and assessment of the risks associated with the proposed initiatives. Foundation plans for the following areas of University activity were finalized in February 2014:

• Academic programming, research, scholarly and creative activity
• Student services
These foundation plans were also subject to a process of review, feedback and revision, in which alignment of the proposed initiatives with the strategic directions and with the other foundation plans were key criteria.

The outcomes of the University’s planning activity are reflected in three levels of planning documents:

1. This integrated strategic plan, which outlines at a high level the University’s strategic directions, goals and aspirations for five-year period from 2014/15 to 2018/19. This document is intended to reflect clearly the University’s determination to establish itself as a distinctive undergraduate university with a unique balance of teaching and research activities and an overriding focus on student success and a unique student experience.

2. The seven foundation plans, which provide more detailed goals and objectives to be pursued by various areas of the University in support of its strategic directions. These foundation plans will provide the basis for detailed operational planning and action over the next five years.

3. On an annual basis, the University’s Comprehensive Institutional Plan (CIP) submissions to the Government of Alberta will provide a framework for implementation by identifying shorter-term priorities, initiatives and timelines, and relating plans to resource requirements (human, financial and physical) through an operating budget and capital plan. In addition, a detailed three-year enrolment plan will reflect the University’s academic directions in terms of anticipated student numbers and program mix.

Taken together, these documents express the University’s plans and aspirations from the broad conceptual level to the more detailed level of budgets and planned enrolments. Operational plans will be developed following approval of the integrated strategic plan, to ensure the effective implementation of these directions, goals and objectives over the next five years. The University’s annual budget process will also be guided by the priorities of the strategic plan.
Strategic Directions, Goals, Strategies and Measures

The University’s strategic directions fall into three broad groupings:

1. A Unique Academic Environment
2. Strong Community Engagement
3. Institutional Excellence

For each set of strategic directions, high-level goals and strategies are identified, along with indicators and measures by which progress will be assessed. These measures, along with the links to the more detailed foundation plans, are intended to ensure accountability for results on the part of the various areas of the University which have developed and committed to the pursuit and achievement of the various initiatives.

I. A Unique Academic Environment

The primary focus of MacEwan’s strategic plan for the next five years is to establish the University as a university of first choice for Canadian undergraduate students, and for students from around the world, who are seeking an engaging and inspiring student-centred education, led by dedicated, expert and productive scholars. Their experience at MacEwan will prepare them with the knowledge, skills, experience and connections needed for personal and professional success. Seven of the University’s eleven strategic directions relate to this determination to create a unique academic environment for its students – four of which relate as a group to the program and learning environment the University intends to develop.

A. Academic Programs and Learning Environment

Strategic Directions

Undergraduate degrees will form the framework for the University’s comprehensive range of credential and program offerings.

Diploma and certificate programs will be offered at the undergraduate university level to facilitate bridging to or from degree programs.

MacEwan University will provide a broad range of program offerings through its School of Continuing Education to ensure maximum program flexibility for students.

MacEwan University will expand and enhance its international education activities to bring the world to its campus and send its students and faculty to the world.
Goals and Strategies

All four of these strategic directions can be encapsulated in a goal of providing an undergraduate student experience of life-changing personal meaning and professional preparation. This goal expresses the University’s commitment to defining a unique role within the post-secondary “universe” by virtue of the centrality and primacy it places on its teaching function and the totality of the student learning experience. This experience will take place in a re-envisioned “classroom” - one that encompasses the physical and the virtual world, involves a mix of lecture, seminar, workshop, laboratory and workplace learning and includes a broad and diverse range of student experiences beyond the curriculum.

Achieving this goal will require that the University refocus its student recruitment activities, admissions policies and procedures, academic regulations and support strategies for student success in the context of its undergraduate degree programs. It also focuses on the importance of being a culturally diverse campus at home and a leader in providing opportunities for our students to study abroad.

The strategies associated with this goal aim at the creation of a variety of learning for pathways for MacEwan students – from diploma and certificate programs into degrees, from degrees into post-degree credentials, and through continuing education opportunities. The focus of the student learning experience will be broadened beyond program curricula to incorporate common learning outcomes and recognition of extra-curricular learning. These strategies also focus on the creation of a culturally diverse learning environment to reflect the increasing international context within which our graduates will live and work, and on supporting student success by addressing the specific needs of various groups of learners. Expanding the technological infrastructure through which both programs and services are delivered is another key component of the University’s commitment to providing a unique learning experience for its students.

MacEwan University has already established itself as a provincial leader through its contribution to the advancement of online post-secondary learning opportunities. The University will continue to enhance the integration of educational technology into the teaching and learning environment while maintaining and strengthening its traditionally strong commitment to face-to-face pedagogy in small class settings.

Creating a unique academic environment depends not only on transformation of academic programming but on excellence in student support services, in order to create an overall student experience in keeping with the University’s values (pillars). With this goal in mind, the University will enhance its student services in four key areas:

- Inspiring students to be engaged within the university, their local community and as global citizens
- Developing the whole student through concepts of personal wellness and health
- Creating and adopting technology, business processes, policies and procedures, staffing models and skill sets that reflect the needs of learners and the University, in order to manage effectively all aspects of enrolment.
- Developing support systems, practices and activities that contribute to an inclusive, accessible environment that fosters an outstanding student experience

Through these initiatives, the University intends to maintain and enhance the high levels of satisfaction that have been expressed by its students in national and
Maintain and enhance the high levels of satisfaction expressed by students in national and international surveys

In support of these goals and the four strategic directions which underlie them, MacEwan University will undertake the following strategies:

A1. Align the academic requirements of its diploma programs to fulfill the requirements, or their equivalents, of the first two or three years of existing MacEwan degree programs. There will be no distinction between college and university courses, with all courses being understood to be university level courses and reasonably transferable among all our programs.

A2. Develop and submit for government approval proposals for new programs to provide specific degree completion pathways for those with diploma credentials.

A3. Develop and submit for government approval proposals for new and distinctive degree programs.

A4. Reframe current University Transfer programs as new degrees or as integrated streams within existing MacEwan degrees.

A5. Develop credential strategies, including post-graduate certificates and diplomas, for students holding bachelor degrees who wish to complete career-focused postgraduate studies.

A6. Approve and implement meaningful and measurable institution-wide learning outcomes that complement individual course and program learning outcomes.

A7. Create a co-curricular record mechanism to capture value-added experiences that have helped to deepen and broaden the learning from academic programs.

A8. Create an integrated campus-wide system of student academic advising, including an early-warning system to identify students at academic risk and provide them with timely strategies to succeed.

A9. Develop the School of Continuing Education as the home of innovative educational experiences and credentials that complement and enhance MacEwan’s diploma and degree programming and pedagogy.

A10. Significantly increase international student enrolment to create a culturally and socially diverse campus and learning environment for all students.

A11. Expand and enhance opportunities for MacEwan students to study abroad for some part of their academic program.

A12. Expand and enhance opportunities for MacEwan students to engage in work-integrated learning for some part of their academic program.

A13. Develop, implement, support, document and assess opportunities for students to actively participate in university governance, projects and leadership opportunities, within and beyond the classroom.
A14. Expand on-campus employment opportunities for students, in order to provide employment experience, hands-on learning opportunities and resources to continue their education.

A15. Develop, implement, support and evaluate programs, services and activities to address the physical and mental health and wellness of students.

A16. Research, develop, implement and evaluate a wide range of services in support of specific learner groups, including but not limited to: Aboriginal students, students with disabilities, international students, e-learners, athletes and continuing education learners.

A17. Enable flexible learning and delivery pathways for students and faculty. Develop and implement a three-year integrated eLearning and eServices strategy to enrich learning and enhance student and faculty access to online learning opportunities, online support, information services, virtual learning environments and digital library resources.

A18. Increase on-line credential opportunities for students.

**Success Indicators and Measures**

Monitoring progress against pre-determined indicators and measures is a critical element in ensuring the effective implementation of a strategic plan. The University will assess its achievement in these areas through the following indicators and measures:

- An increased percentage of students formally registered in degree programs.
- An increased percentage of students who choose to complete degree programs rather than opting for a pre-degree diploma credential.
- An increased number of students who choose to study in diploma programs on a post-degree basis.
- Sustainable enrolment in programs and learning activities housed within the School of Continuing Education.
- Sustainable increases in Spring and Summer course enrolments, and the existence of a more vibrant Spring and Summer campus environment in which to study and to work.
- Increased international student population to the target of 8% of overall course enrolments, with a reasonable distribution of countries of origin to ensure the kind of campus diversity we seek.
- An increase in the number of domestic students who access opportunities and support for pursuing study abroad and student exchanges as curricular activities.
- Students will express high levels of satisfaction with the University’s student support services and with their academic, personal, social and emotional development.
Integrated Strategic Plan 2014/15 to 2018/19

- Enhanced student access to and satisfaction with eLearning opportunities.
- Availability of all primary information sources and key services on mobile devices.
- Provision of training and internal certification for all faculty members in the use of eServices and eLearning tools to support instruction.
- Development of a minimum of 75 additional courses in an on-line format.

B. An Integrated Knowledge Model

A great university begins with great faculty whose scholarship forms the foundation for great teaching. In order to achieve the vision of providing an outstanding student experience through a unique balance of teaching and research activities, the University will need to align the primacy of its teaching mission with the means by which it promotes, supports and recognizes teaching, research, scholarship and creative activity, professional practice, and service contributions. Achieving this goal will also require that we have in place the right incentives and supports to attract and retain scholars with a strong commitment to MacEwan University’s unique undergraduate teaching and learning role. An integrated knowledge model in which knowledge creation, transmission and circulation are seen as mutually supportive and synergistic endeavours in proper balance, will distinguish MacEwan University and enhance its primary role of undergraduate teaching and learning.

Strategic Direction

MacEwan University will develop and foster an integrated knowledge model in which research and creative activity support and reflect the primacy of the university’s undergraduate teaching and learning role.

Goal and Strategies

With the goal of creating a thriving culture of faculty scholarship as the basis for excellence in teaching and learning, MacEwan University will undertake the following strategies:

B1. Support faculty development in all its facets through the work of the Centre for the Advancement of Faculty Excellence, with a focus on the learning needs of our students.

B2. Structure and integrate the annual review of faculty performance, determination of rank and title, and evaluation of continuing faculty status to align with MacEwan’s student-centred teaching and learning mission.

B3. Identify opportunities to engage faculty, staff and students in a diverse range of research, scholarly and creative activities, in order to create a unique identity and reputation for MacEwan University as a place where important new ideas are not only taught but also discovered and transformed into actions that make a difference.

B4. Align internal financial and administrative support for scholarship as a key strategy to advance the learning needs of our students.
B5. Expand the scholarly network within which every faculty and school works internationally with colleagues in universities in other countries.

B6. Identify key areas in which knowledge creation, integration and translation by faculty and students will generate greater public support for the University, greater government awareness of the regional and national importance of our universities and greater capacity to leverage our expertise and experience in entrepreneurial ways.

Success Indicators and Measures

The University will assess its progress toward this integrated knowledge model through the following indicators and measures:

- Effective alignment of the University’s support for faculty development with faculty needs and the University’s mission.

- Enhanced participation of faculty in development activities and successful disbursement of all available funds to initiatives qualifying for support.

- Development of a model of faculty evaluation that reflects the University’s focus on the integration of teaching, research, creative activity and service, and supports student engagement in research and knowledge creation.

- An increase in internal and external faculty applications for support for their scholarly work.

- An increase in faculty dissemination of scholarly activities, including those conducted in collaboration with students.

- An increase in the number of faculty working in academic collaboration with international colleagues and/or on international faculty exchanges.

- A review process for faculty performance for annual review, continuing appointment, and rank and title that is genuinely formative for faculty and that creates the right environment of accountability, responsibility, and transparency with respect to the contributions faculty make to the University’s academic mission.

C. Recruitment and Student Success

In an era of increased fiscal uncertainty, all post-secondary institutions are being challenged to consider issues such as their optimum size, the nature of students they wish to attract, the composition of their student population in light of changing demographics and their approaches to retaining students through to graduation. Initiatives to improve student access, engagement, retention and success must be recognized as university-wide priorities, requiring collective leadership and ownership and involving program faculty, student services and administrative personnel in enhancing the overall university experience for all students.

MacEwan University’s strategies in relation to enrolment planning and management reflect both its commitment to enhancing the means by which it promotes and
supports student engagement with the University and success through to graduation, and the strategic use of information on applications, admissions, enrolment, retention and program completion to inform planning and decision-making and improving the effectiveness of the University in meeting student needs.

**Strategic Direction**

MacEwan University will develop and implement a strategic and integrated approach to enrolment planning and management to enhance student access, engagement and success.

**Strategies**

To pursue this direction, the University will undertake the following strategies:

C1. Establish strategic enrolment objectives for the University as a whole and for individual programs. These objectives will include clear enrolment goals and incentive budget plans for aboriginal and international students, students with disabilities, and students studying online, as well as providing guidance for the creation of support systems to ensure student success.

C2. Use the University’s business intelligence software capacity to provide detailed, timely, and accurate information to academic and administrative leaders to guide planning and decisions in recruitment and retention, human resource management, and financial management.

C3. Research, develop and implement structures and activities focusing on strategic enrolment management. Successful enrolment management practices will improve student recruitment and success (retention) by managing enrolment, in detail, from first inquiry to graduation.

**Success Indicators and Measures**

The University will assess its achievement in this area through the following indicators and measures:

- Achievement of institutional and program enrolment targets.
- Implementation of an “enrolment dashboard” that summarizes key elements of enrolment data and analysis to inform enrolment management decisions.
- Development of evaluation and assessment tools to facilitate student feedback on orientation and other activities focused on student engagement.
- Development and implementation of an assessment process for identifying students at risk.
- Effective management of prospective students from first contact through to registration with technology and staffing support.
- Development of effective retention/student success initiatives, including regular assessment of their impact.
D. Academic Governance

The transformation from a college to a university involves not only a name change and the development of degree-level programming, but a significant cultural shift toward a collegial model of governance in which faculty members, through their department and faculty/school councils and the Academic Governance Council, play a key role in academic decision-making. MacEwan University’s evolution toward such a collegial structure, while having advanced significantly, is not yet complete. Education and developmental opportunities for faculty must be provided to enhance awareness of and ability to exercise effectively their key role in setting academic directions for the University. Clarity of leadership roles (for deans and department chairs in particular) and a coherent organizational structure are also essential for this model to function effectively. The University is committed to promoting a strong role for and representation of students and staff in institutional governance.

Since the establishment of an Academic Governance Council (AGC) in 2009, considerable progress has been made in developing and implementing academic governance as part of the institution’s bicameral governance system. As part of its Bylaws, AGC is mandated to “review its mandate and bylaws three years following initial implementation and subsequently every five years.” To this end, in fall 2012 AGC established a Review Task Team and engaged a consultant to conduct an external review. The Task Team’s final report and recommendations were presented to AGC in January 2014 for discussion and feedback and approved by Council in April 2014.

**Strategic Direction**

MacEwan University will cultivate an academic governance model that strengthens collegial decision-making and provides clear lines of academic authority.

**Strategies**

The recommendations of the AGC Review Task Team form the basis for the University’s strategies to enhance academic governance, including the following:

D1. Create and clarify faculty leadership roles and opportunities at all appropriate and legislatively-supported levels of academic governance, and support these roles with education, communication and administrative processes which ensure continued and sustained faculty involvement in academic governance.

D2. Create a communications plan for the University’s governance bodies to ensure that timely and easy access to governance information is available to the University community.

D3. Create a process for faculty service planning through which faculty are made aware of academic governance opportunities and view academic governance leadership as part of career planning.

D4. Create and clarify roles for students, staff and senior administrators in academic governance through education, documentation, communication and administrative processes.

D5. Identify barriers to participation in academic governance, and create and implement a plan to address or minimize these barriers.
Success Indicators and Measures

The University will assess achievement of its academic governance strategies through the following indicators and measures:

- Council members and the University community demonstrate clear understanding of MacEwan’s academic governance model.

- Student and staff participation in University governance is consistently strong and effective.

- Rules, responsibilities and clear lines of authority are articulated in University governance documents.

- Members of the University community demonstrate a good understanding of how to bring ideas, concerns, and solutions forward within the University’s governance structure.

- Legislative, policy-related and other barriers that impede participation are removed.

- Future reviews demonstrate that decision-making is clear and operating appropriately and effectively at all levels.

II. Strong Community Engagement

The second major focus of MacEwan’s strategic plan relates to the University’s role in the economic, social and cultural development of the Edmonton region and other communities it serves. As a strong partner in Campus Alberta, MacEwan University is committed to working collaboratively with other post-secondary institutions, government, business and industry to create an integrated post-secondary education strategy in which MacEwan University plays a unique and important role. The University is committed to serve as a leader and exemplar in the area of sustainability and environmental stewardship, both in its academic programming and its operations.

A strong focus on community engagement also impels the University to work actively on its own and with a wide variety of partners to address social, economic, health and cultural issues of importance to all Canadians, for whom access to relevant advanced education is key to the ongoing development of a prosperous, caring, just and sustainable civil society.

E. Community Engagement

Strategic Directions

MacEwan University will be a leader in sustainable operations and education for sustainability.
MacEwan University will be a vibrant presence and contributor to the vitality of Edmonton and other communities it serves.

Goal and Strategies

With the goal of becoming an academically, socially, and environmentally sustainable and responsible university of local and global significance, relevance and value, MacEwan University will undertake the following strategies:

E1. Position MacEwan University as a leader in sustainability by implementing educational programs and operational practices that reflect the University’s definition of sustainability as “the practice of managing human and ecological systems in accordance with our global responsibility to conserve and restore the environment while advancing social equity.”

E2. Align academic courses and programs and disciplinary and interdisciplinary research wherever possible to reflect and advance the University’s commitment to sustainability.

E3. Engage Aboriginal leaders in Alberta and, with them, decide upon the contribution that MacEwan University should make to serve the educational needs of Aboriginal people in Alberta and Western Canada more broadly.

E4. Engage with charitable, non-profit, and for-profit organizations best positioned to help the University understand how it might contribute to the educational needs of other traditionally under-represented groups in Canada’s post-secondary institutions, and with these groups, move forward to make an educational difference in more lives.

E5. Engage with business, government, social agencies and others involved in downtown development to define the role to be played by MacEwan University over the next two decades in the intellectual, social and cultural life of the city centre and the Edmonton region as a whole.

E6. Partner formally with other post-secondary institutions in Edmonton to create a framework for collaborative promotion of the City of Edmonton as a provincial, national, and international destination for advanced education of all kinds.

Success Indicators and Measures

The University will assess achievement of its community engagement strategies through the following indicators and measures:

✔ Development and approval of a charter describing our commitment to our role in urban development as created by our discussions with community and business leaders.

✔ Creation of a strategy for collaboration among Edmonton post-secondary institutions and the City of Edmonton.

✔ Establishment of regular, cooperative promotion campaigns nationally and internationally to attract students, research and business partnerships, and
collaborative student services initiatives to post-secondary institutions in Edmonton.

✓ Creation of a Centre for Sustainability Studies with significant participation by MacEwan faculty, staff, and students in its ongoing work.

✓ A clear determination of whether MacEwan University has a distinct role to play in achieving the higher education goals of Aboriginal people and, if so, what that role is.

✓ Consolidation of the programs and operations of the Centre for the Arts Campus and the MacEwan South Campus onto existing and new purpose-built space on the City Centre Campus.

✓ Supporting the development of a dedicated building for the Students’ Association of MacEwan University (SAMU) to support the association’s initiatives and foster a robust campus environment.

✓ A Campus Master Plan will be in place that reflects the University’s academic and community engagement goals. The Master Plan will support and promote academic, research and athletic excellence, specialized and dedicated facilities for targeted growth, and a more robust and vibrant variety of retail and ancillary services to meet the demands of both MacEwan University constituents and the community at large.

✓ Development of Corridor Concept Plans for 104 Avenue and a 105 Avenue that reflect an integrated urban campus bound by a major, revitalized streetscape development, incorporating pedestrian and public transit with academic, institutional, commercial, and student life. The University will also have established strategic partnerships with external constituents that enable participation in these Corridor Concept Plans.

✓ Effective incorporation of sustainability practices into university procedures and operations. The University will have developed its climate action plan with measurable targets and will have implemented selected tangible actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

III. Institutional Excellence

A commitment to excellence in institutional operation is the third major element of MacEwan University’s strategic plan. By consciously aligning its administrative functions in support of its unique academic environment and strong community engagement, the University will ensure that all areas of the institution contribute directly to creating an outstanding student experience.

Post-secondary education is above all else an enterprise that depends on human interactions, whether these interactions are mediated through technology or face to face, or whether they take place one to one, in small groups or larger gatherings. In order to achieve its academic, community-focussed and other strategic directions and goals, MacEwan University must continue to be successful in attracting, retaining and developing the faculty, staff members and administrators whose knowledge, skills, talents and dedication lie at the heart of any university’s success. Anticipated shortages of qualified faculty and staff across the post-secondary system (as the baby boom
generation retires over the coming ten to fifteen years) suggest that the University will need to position itself to attract and retain people within a highly competitive environment.

The environment in which the University is required to operate in terms of legislative compliance, audit and accountability requirements, code of ethical conduct and conflict of interest policies has also become much more complex, and the risks of failing to meet these requirements have grown correspondingly more serious. By establishing a credible, integrated, effective and sustainable system of controls and risk management practices, the University will support its core academic mission while minimizing risk and safeguarding its security and reputation.

F. University Environment and Culture

Strategic Directions

MacEwan University will be a preferred employer for both new and existing employees.

MacEwan University will promote a culture of integrity, accountability and transparency that supports its academic mission, encourages opportunity and manages risk.

Strategies

In support of these strategic directions, MacEwan University will undertake the following strategies:

F1. Cultivate a high-performing, healthy, and collaborative university environment that serves to retain, attract, and engage faculty and staff to deliver on our commitments to students and communities.

F2. Develop an education and training strategy to enhance competencies and skills among faculty, staff, and administrators to address both opportunities and uncertainties.

F3. Develop a campus environment through services and infrastructure that supports the University’s vision, creates an inspiring, creative, and accessible learning environment and engages our communities.

F4. Develop and implement business and resource models that increase employee and institutional capacity, capability, accountability and expertise to respond to the changing needs of the University and the community.

F5. Develop and strengthen programs, plans and system of controls aimed at the management of risk and compliance, in order to support the academic mission and university operations and provide a required level of assurance to the executive team and the Board of Governors.

F6. Develop and implement an integrated emergency incident response, recovery and business continuity plan for the University. Through a focus on health, safety, well-being and continuing business operations, provide support to
student, staff and faculty recruitment, retention and success initiatives as well as sustainable university operations.

F7. Promote a culture of accountability in which all employees are fully engaged and openly participate in risk and legal compliance activities, and where such activities are embedded in day to day decision making and operations throughout the University, in order to assist the University in achieving its goals and objectives and enable all areas to focus on core business.

**Success Indicators and Measures**

The University will assess achievement of these strategies through the following indicators and measures:

- Implementation of a comprehensive workforce planning tool to inform retention and recruitment initiatives, along with a leadership competency framework to articulate the competencies needed by current and future leaders.

- Implementation of an engagement strategy that clearly articulates and communicates the benefits of working at MacEwan and positions the University as a preferred choice for employment.

- Improvement in recruitment and hiring practices to promote alignment with our core commitments as a university, along with enhanced onboarding processes so that new hires feel welcomed, connected, and part of the University.

- Provision of education and training to develop necessary competencies among faculty, staff, and administrators, as well as a system of performance excellence that nurtures a performance based culture.

- Increased employee participation in training and development opportunities provided by the University.

- Development and implementation of enterprise risk management, compliance, insurance, audit and information management plans and programs aimed at managing risk and ensuring compliance in ways that are appropriate and useful for the University and support its academic mission and operations.

- Implementation of a university-wide crisis communication solution.

- Development and approval of an Integrated Emergency Management Program and Master Plan, including a post-disruption/emergency redeployment plan.

In addition to two strategic directions relating to the University’s environment and culture, the planning process also identified key strategies in two other areas relating to institutional excellence. The first is the information and technology substructure that underlies and supports all aspects of the University’s operations, both academic and administrative. The second is the external relations superstructure through which the University communicates and interacts with a wide range of external stakeholders and ensures that the community is well-informed regarding its programs, services and activities.
G. Information and Technology Management

A university environment is highly diverse, with myriad information and technical functional requirements. Technology continues to evolve rapidly and has reached a degree of ubiquity that makes it a vital support to a university’s mission, academic programming, and business operations. Technology supports instructional delivery, research, and innovation in the academy, while outside the classroom, virtually every business process depends on some form of instructional or communication technology. On any given day, thousands of university constituents make transactions, conduct research, plan, learn, teach, collaborate, and communicate using technology. Consequently, information and technology management has become fundamental to integrated planning, implementation and sustainment in higher education.

Strategies

Over the next five years, significant enhancement of the University’s information and technology infrastructure and systems will be required to support the University’s strategic directions and goals. Strategies to be undertaken in this regard include the following:

G1. Enhance interactive pathways for students, faculty and staff. Develop and implement a strategy for the aggregation and delivery of learning, information, communication, collaboration, and transactional services over mobile devices and on the web that will simplify access, expand learning environments, enhance the user experience and enable seamless communication and collaboration. Regularly assess user experiences and satisfaction.

G2. Implement a five-year plan for Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and ancillary system development, integration, and sustainment that aligns with business and academic requirements, and ensures currency of technology.

G3. Implement a Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) solution to support student recruitment, strategic enrolment management, external relations management and fund development.

G4. Build a reliable, accessible and available information repository which will serve as a “single source of truth” for university data. Plan and implement an enterprise information management program across the University.

G5. Complete the development and implementation of a comprehensive program of information technology controls as part of an overall university compliance framework.

G6. Build a foundation for future innovative services. Enhance the connected and engaged university through an enterprise architecture management model that provides a foundation for the holistic management and continuous improvement of data, applications, infrastructure, controls, policy, and business processes.
Success Indicators and Measures

The University will assess achievement of its information and technology management strategies through the following indicators and measures:

✓ Student access to eLearning opportunities will be enhanced and student satisfaction with these experiences will increase.

✓ Faculty use of technology to support teaching and learning will be enhanced, and faculty satisfaction with technology support will increase.

✓ Business processes and systems are in place to meet needs of continuing education.

✓ CRM system is successfully implemented and integrated with existing systems with minimal customization.

✓ Information holdings are organized and information management processes are structured so that the University can undertake change with agility.

✓ Increased ability to aggregate information vertically for accountability, and horizontally for program/service support.

✓ High risk areas are regularly monitored and managed, and control measurements are reported and evaluated.

H. External Relations

The significant changes MacEwan University intends to make over the next five years in its programming, research, scholarly and creative activity, community engagement activities and other areas, also pose substantial challenges to how the institution interacts with the external community. Addressing these challenges will require that the University have a comprehensive external relations function that both serves and represents the institution well. During a period of transition and new beginnings, MacEwan’s external image will be critically important, and will require a significant repositioning of the University’s external relations strategy.

In support of the University’s strategic directions and goals as outlined above, an enhanced focus on the University’s external relations will also be required. Over the next five years, MacEwan University will undertake the following strategies in this regard:

Strategies

H1. Organize external relations functions and structures at the University to ensure that units can best represent and market the institution to the external community.

H2. Reinforce our brand to the internal and external community.

H3. Complete the campaign to secure funding for the Centre for Arts and Culture and other institutional priorities.
H4. Implement a comprehensive long-range fund-raising plan based on broad institutional priorities.

H5. Increase opportunities for alumni to engage in university affairs.

H6. Optimize marketing and communication strategies and protocols in support of the University’s priorities.

H7. Implement domestic and international student recruitment activities aligned with academic priorities and student demand.

H8. Create student recruitment tools that reflect the University’s brand, speak with a single institutional voice, and tell our collective story through our many and diverse examples of excellence in MacEwan education.

**Success Indicators and Measures**

The University will assess achievement of its external relations strategies through the following indicators and measures:

- Establishment of distinct units to support external relations functions.
- Implementation of an internal and external communications plan.
- Implementation of a yearly marketing plan to guarantee consistent messaging across the institution.
- Increased opportunities provided to Alumni to engage in university affairs.
- Implementation of a strategy for marketing the institution’s programs both domestically and internationally.
- Establishment of an External Relations Council.

**Implementation**

Any plan is only as good as the implementation process through which its goals, strategies and measures are put into action and the desired results attained. Examples abound of organizations squandering the potential of strategic planning processes through insufficient attention to implementation. MacEwan University is determined to avoid this pitfall and shape its future in the desired directions by bringing its integrated strategic plan to life. The University sees four elements as key to effective implementation:

1. Coordination, in order to maintain the emphasis on integrated planning which the University has adopted successfully during the planning process thus far.
2. Continued engagement of and communication with the university community as the process of implementing these significant change initiatives proceeds.

3. A strong focus on monitoring, measurement and reporting of progress to key decision-making bodies to ensure accountability for achievement of the plan’s goals and objectives.

4. A process of regular review and updating to ensure that the plan remains current and responsive to changing conditions.

Based on these principles, the University’s process for implementing its integrated strategic plan over the next five years will incorporate the following elements:

- Finalization and approval of the foundation plans, including clear timelines and performance measures, as the basis for more detailed operational planning.

- Continuation of a university-wide steering committee for the implementation process. This committee will have two key roles: to ensure communication and coordination among the key areas of the University that will be engaged in implementing major change initiatives, and to promote ongoing engagement of the broader university community in the process of strategic change.

- Development and implementation of mechanisms to assist faculty and staff in dealing with the major changes that will result from some of the University’s strategic initiatives.

- A process of distinguishing the change initiatives that can be assigned to and managed by individual departments or units from those that will require cross-institutional engagement and collaboration.

- For the cross-institutional priorities, identification of senior-level change leaders or “champions” to take responsibility for one or more of the major change initiatives at an institution-wide level.

- A series of discussion forums to address key aspects of the change initiatives being undertaken, to provide opportunities for input from and engagement of the university community in the change process. The idea that “people support what they help to create” is as important in the implementation process as it is in the generation of strategic directions and objectives.

- A focused and centralized approach to identifying and implementing key performance measures and monitoring and reporting mechanisms to ensure accountability for the outcomes identified in the strategic and foundation plans. “Dashboard” reporting of progress to key institutional bodies will help to ensure that the strategic plan remains a living document over the next five years.

- Establishment of budgets that ensure the allocation of university resources in alignment with the strategic directions and strategies outlined in the strategic plan.
Conclusion

Most of the incoming university class of 2014 will live to see the 2080s, and perhaps even the dawn of the 22nd century. There is no imaginable way for us to know now what they will need to know over the course of their lives and careers in order to succeed and contribute to their communities and the planet. If we do not teach them how to learn and do not inspire a love of learning, we risk the future of coming generations and of our society as a whole. Our students can now find information in ways not dreamed of in 1990 or even 2000. They need their university programs to show them how to turn that tsunami of information into knowledge. Further, through engagement with university faculty, staff and each other, they need to discover how, with time, patience and dedication over a lifetime, to transform their knowledge into wisdom. The creativity and innovation needed to produce a sustainable, productive world – one that our students will inherit from us to steward better than we have – lies in the willingness of those who have remained learners throughout their lives. There is a place for hard work and perspiration in the life of any university student, but far more important is the powerful need for a university to be a place of inspiration, where curiosity is a virtue and not an outlier, where errors are corrected and learned from rather than punished, and where every student can be mentored personally in the creation and communication of new knowledge that in some way matters to themselves and to the world. Our strategic plan must set an institutional cultural tone that empowers and rewards creativity and innovation, not for their own sake and on their own terms, but for the demonstrable contributions they make to the University, our community, and the world at large, and to the students who will become its next generation of leaders.