

# Planning to Flourish

Academic Plan 2017 – 2022



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*“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”  
Nelson Mandela<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://blog.usaid.gov/2013/04/education-the-most-powerful-weapon/>

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## Development of the Plan

In August 2016, the General Faculties Council (GFC) approved the creation of an Academic Plan Steering Committee (the Committee) with representation from the Mount Royal Faculty Association (MRFA), the Mount Royal Staff Association (MRSA), full-time and contract faculty, the Students' Association of Mount Royal University, department chairs and administration.

*Planning to Flourish: Academic Plan 2017 to 2022 (Academic Plan)* is based upon wide consultation with and active participation from the entire Mount Royal community. In autumn 2016, the Committee co-chairs visited each academic unit and faculty council in Academic Affairs. The Committee also reached out to divisions and departments comprising Student Affairs and Campus Life (SACL), Marketing and Communications, Information Technology Services, Human Resources and other areas, bodies and committees.

Throughout the winter of 2017, the Committee hosted several town halls, organized consultation kiosks on Main Street, revisited faculty councils and sought advice from the GFC to help guide the *Academic Plan's* ultimate shape. The consultation process clearly indicated that there was a need for a robust document to reflect the diversity of the University community.

## Institutional Context

One of the purposes for extensive consultation was to gather input about how the *Academic Plan* can support already-approved University plans, including clarifying the relationship between plans.

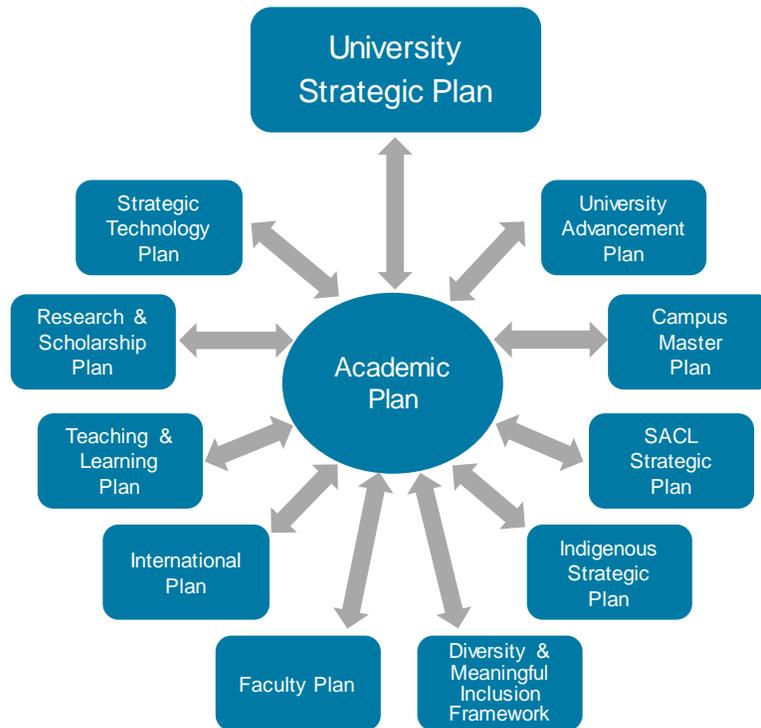
The most important of these already-approved plans is *Leading Together, Learning Together, Mount Royal's University's Strategic Plan to 2025* (the *University's Strategic Plan*). The *Academic Plan* must move Mount Royal forward to realize the mission and broader goals as outlined in the *University's Strategic Plan*.

This *Academic Plan* will create a welcoming environment where all members of the Mount Royal community (faculty, staff and students) can find space and time to flourish. The University must embrace diversity, strive for inclusivity, encourage health and work towards reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. This includes aligning with values, qualities, goals and aims articulated in the *University's Strategic Plan*, the *Code of Ethics*, the [Diversity and Meaningful Inclusion Framework](#), the *Indigenous Strategic Plan*, the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), *The Okanagan Charter: An International Charter for Health Promoting Universities and Colleges (Okanagan Charter)*<sup>2</sup>, the *SACL Strategic Plan* and the *Campus Master Plan*. Collectively, these intentions form the University's excellent reputation among students, make Mount Royal a workplace of choice and build competitive advantages to become ranked as a national leader.

<sup>2</sup> Mount Royal University is one of the six founding signatories of the Charter. At some institutions, the Charter has influenced discussions about range of policies, institutional initiatives around mental health and shape considerations about classroom and campus design. See <http://internationalhealthycampuses2015.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2016/01/Okanagan-Charter-January13v2.pdf>

Once approved, an immediate priority will be for the Academic Plan to align with resource allocation across the University and to integrate with other planning processes in Academic Affairs, including, but not limited to, the Research and Scholarship Plan, the Teaching and Learning Plan, the International Plan and faculty and department strategic plans. (See below) The *Academic Plan* will also work in concert with the other divisional plans such as the forthcoming Information Technology Plan, the Student Affairs and Campus Life Plan and the University Advancement Plan.

While these plans have different reporting lines they share a common vision: Mount Royal University as being committed to providing an exceptional undergraduate educational experience.



## Our Purpose

Mount Royal educates undergraduate students to understand the complexities and challenges that shape their worlds. What makes the University different is a history that combines liberal arts education and professional career preparation. Mount Royal is deeply proud of its record of developing students’ intellect and sense of engaged citizenship and preparing them for career success, advanced formal education and life. The University supports students from classrooms to communities — as they enter Mount Royal all the way through to their experience as alumni.

A commitment to continue to make a difference is grounded in the following three defining priorities.

1. **Face-to-Face Learning:** Mount Royal is committed to student learning founded on the principle of personalized learning. Fundamentally, this means that students who come to this University

can expect to be in a learning environment that prioritizes student-faculty interaction, often in smaller class settings, but always with a focus on knowing students as individuals. While teaching takes many forms — such as experiential, community-focused, on-line and blended — teaching excellence sets Mount Royal apart.

2. **Community Engagement:** From its inception in 1911, Mount Royal has had a history of engaging with many communities and serving their needs. Whether as a faith-based junior college, a publicly funded community college or a degree-granting baccalaureate university, Mount Royal has built and nurtured its internal communities and connections to wider communities, where staff, faculty and students make a difference.
3. **Professorial Excellence:** Mount Royal is a leader in pedagogical reflection and innovation. Teaching informed by scholarship and research exemplifies this proud tradition. A culture of experimentation, reflection and assessment is constantly fostered and improved.

## Goal

To become Western Canada's premier teaching-focused undergraduate university set apart by guaranteeing: a broad liberal education; exceptional degree, diploma and certificate programs; strong student and faculty interactions; broad intellectual inquiry; active social engagement; and promotion of more inclusive, resilient communities.

The indicators of success outlined in this *Academic Plan* have been established with a five-year period in mind; in several cases, they may be viewed as markers towards longer term aspirations, such as progressing from "Western Canada's" to "Canada's" premier undergraduate university.

## Who We Are...

Mount Royal University is honoured to be located on Treaty 7 territory on the traditional lands of the Blackfoot Confederacy — the Niitsitapi — composed of the Kainai, Piikani and Siksika Nations, and to also acknowledge the nearby lands of the Îyârhe Nakoda, and more recently, the Tsuut'ina Nation and Métis homelands, on whose land we work, live and play and on whose territory we stand today. The University acknowledges we are able to gather here on the lands as a result of agreements negotiated between these nations and non-Indigenous governments to peaceably share and care for this land, and that many of these agreements have not been honoured. We affirm the TRC's Calls to Action, most particularly the responsibilities of universities to help redress longstanding systematic discrimination against Canada's Indigenous and Métis Peoples.

Mount Royal prioritizes students and holds excellence in teaching informed by scholarship and research at its core. Grounded in a strong sense of community, the University is committed to a liberal and professional undergraduate education, transformational learning, unique undergraduate research

experiences and an outstanding student environment. Mount Royal cultivates creative problem solvers, leaders, change-makers and individuals well prepared for their future. To advance the academic mission, the University is dedicated to indigenization, internationalization, diversity, social activism, inclusion and active engagement with external communities.

Through the *Academic Plan's* consultation process, it was determined that a number of different considerations must be balanced as the University moves forward. These include:

- making Mount Royal a “first-choice” university for students and employees by delivering an exceptional, dynamic and student-focused undergraduate education;
- fostering pedagogy built upon strong student and professor interaction in a small class environment. Where principled variations exist, they will not undermine the quality of personalized student learning;
- prioritizing retention and timely degree completion and offering programs, courses and delivery options that students want and satisfy community needs;
- implementing thoughtful enrolment growth, accompanied by additional funding to ensure a high-quality education for students continues;
- ensuring that students experience breadth, depth and **interdisciplinarity** in every degree, so they are prepared with critical thinking skills to contribute, innovate and thrive in a complex, dynamic society. This will also equip students to succeed in a changing economy and in advanced studies;
- providing students with an education that inculcates them with the importance of diversity and meaningful inclusion, **social justice**, engaged citizenship and sustainability, and with the drive, awareness and confidence to become change-makers and lifelong learners;
- indigenizing our academy and fostering supporting initiatives across the University;
- increasing the international dimension of Mount Royal, namely by growing the number of properly-supported international students, providing means for students to pursue international opportunities and encouraging a global perspective across the University;
- enhancing the University’s reputation by positioning it as a cultural and intellectual hub through dynamic community engagement;
- valuing and investing in staff as they provide essential support to all academic activities;
- providing full-time and contract faculty, staff and administration with the services and resources they need to be successful in their work and to best serve students;
- supporting diverse forms of faculty research, scholarship and community engagement, including making available broad opportunities for undergraduate research; and,
- incorporating the principles of the *Okanagan Charter*.

## Teaching Excellence

Mount Royal has a rich tradition of being a teaching-focused institution. The individual student experience has been at the heart of the institution’s self-analysis and its face to the world. Students have never been

considered numbers and professors have earned a reputation for knowing and supporting them in their educational development. To highlight student-focused teaching, Mount Royal will seek opportunities for the University's teaching excellence to be recognized.

While committing to pedagogical diversity across disciplines, the evidence on the effectiveness of **high-impact practices** in undergraduate education is compelling. As such, the University wants to continue improving and expanding such approaches including, but not limited to, community service learning in both profit and not-for-profit settings, cooperative education, internships, work terms, student learning communities, undergraduate research and first-year seminars.

As noted in the *2012 to 2017 Academic Plan: Inspiring Learning*, the University needs to engage in careful enumerations and assessments of aims and outcomes for courses and programs. This *Academic Plan* reaffirms the *Statement of Aims of an Undergraduate Education at Mount Royal University* from the *2012 to 2017 Academic Plan* (See Appendix A). To this end, each academic unit will reaffirm and ensure students are meeting its program outcomes.

Furthermore, Mount Royal is committed to creating a Teaching and Learning Plan that will articulate, support and assess the achievement of the following results:

- students in all programs experience high-impact teaching practices;
- there is a culture of experimentation, innovation and evaluation, including, but not limited to, using findings from the Institute for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning;
- there is meaningful student-faculty interaction and interactive pedagogical approaches are used;
- full-time and contract faculty can access high-quality professional development and teaching support, including what is provided by the Academic Development Centre (ADC);
- faculty are inspired and effective in their use of technology and innovative learning spaces to enrich student learning;
- the expertise and new tools and technologies offered by the Riddell Library and Learning Centre (RLLC) are leveraged;
- there is ongoing support for teaching excellence through the ADC;
- there are further means of recognizing and rewarding outstanding teaching;
- data about student perceptions of learning, teaching quality and the undergraduate experience are continuously collected and analyzed to inform teaching and learning practices (e.g. the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Assessment Seminar, the National College Health Assessment (NCHA) and the Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC));
- the **Universal Design for Learning** is fostered, though not at the expense of well-funded student support services, pedagogical autonomy and the integrity of Bona Fide Academic Requirements; and,
- the innovative use, adaption and creation of open educational resources by faculty, students and staff is examined.

### Supporting the University's Strategic Plan Goals 1.1, 2.1, 3.2, 3.4, 7.1

#### Markers of Success

- Develop and implement a robust Teaching and Learning Plan
- Integrate social innovation, sustainability and change-making opportunities into the curriculum, where appropriate
- Obtain Ashoka accreditation as a change-making institution
- Disseminate information and opportunities that recognize outstanding teaching
- Receive two 3M Teaching Fellows over the life of the *Academic Plan*
- Maintain or raise Mount Royal scores on identified criteria for student success and satisfaction
- Integrate Universal Design of Learning into courses

## Personalized Learning: The Importance of Class Size

Personalized learning is at the heart of the student experience at Mount Royal. Small classes are the principle means for faculty to express their commitment to a pedagogical format that allows for the engagement of students with the instructor. Small classes enable faculty to provide meaningful assessment and give students adequate feedback. Class size is integral to the high-impact learning experiences that students have at the University.

Although small classes are the core of the Mount Royal experience, it is not the only way to organize instructional formats, depending on the program or discipline and the types of learning offered. Class size does and should vary across the University. It is believed, however, that high-quality learning environments and student success require decisions on class sizes that are principled, pedagogically sound and grounded in evidence.

Over the life of this *Academic Plan*, a GFC ad hoc committee will examine how to maintain meaningful student-faculty interaction through personalized learning and interactive pedagogical approaches.

### Supporting the University's Strategic Plan Goal 1.1

#### Markers of Success

- Articulate a new, sustainable and equitable framework for personalized learning across the disciplines, including with respect to optimal class sizes
- Maintain or increase the results on appropriate measures of personalized learning as determined by a GFC working group

## Reputation

This *Academic Plan* comes eight years after Mount Royal transitioned from a college to an undergraduate university. Over this period, the University attained an outstanding record on student satisfaction, achieving among the highest scores in Canada on the NSSE and the CUSC. Professors are winning awards for teaching. They are dramatically increasing their success in obtaining Tri-Council grants and funding from other external sources to support research and teaching-related activities, to create institutes and to pursue community-based work. Students, too, are winning awards, such as the recent success in attaining the much sought after 3M student fellowships. The new RLLC and the Taylor Centre for the Performing Arts, with the resources and programming they offer, promise to advance Mount Royal's academic mission and reputation even more.

Still, while Mount Royal's *2016 Brand Reputation Survey* indicates improvement in local community recognition, this awareness rapidly declines outside of Calgary and in surrounding communities. The University could be described as one of the best-kept secrets in the Canadian post-secondary landscape. More must be done to focus and convey achievements beyond the Mount Royal community to become recognized as a leading undergraduate university. Wider promotion and coverage will help increase the proportion of students from beyond Calgary, as well as from **traditionally underrepresented groups**.

Consultations made it clear there is broad support for Mount Royal to enter national ranking competitions. While some note the challenges associated with entering this process, confidence is widespread that the University's existing strengths and the realization of goals in this *Academic Plan* will result in Mount Royal rising to among the higher ranked "primarily undergraduate" universities.

As such, over the next five years, to raise the profile and reputation of Mount Royal, efforts will be made to:

- develop a new Academic Communications Plan in a collaborative process between Academic Affairs and Marketing and Communications. This Communications Plan should consider local and regional audiences and closely align to Academic Affairs' vision to project and position Mount Royal as a first-choice undergraduate university;
- actively communicate to external communities the accomplishments of students, faculty and staff;
- charge the *Academic Plan* Implementation Committee with reviewing national ranking instruments, including those that target particular areas like professional programs, and, on that basis, develop a strategy to achieve the goal of being recognized as Western Canada's premier undergraduate university;
- commit to the standards defined as most relevant and important to student success and satisfaction and to effective teaching, which characterize a first-class undergraduate university; and,
- move towards achieving 50 per cent of the targets in the *University's Strategic Plan* for a broader geographic student intake.

### Supporting the University's Strategic Plan Goals 1.1, 3.3

#### Markers of Success

- Develop an Academic Communications Plan that aligns with and supports the vision of the *Academic Plan*
- Define core standards of success and identify supporting metrics
- Participate in chosen national rankings and surveys
- Increase by 10 per cent the number of students from outside Calgary

## A Scholarly Community

Mount Royal has developed a vibrant scholarly culture that must be nourished in its widest possible sense to reflect and encourage the diversity of faculty expertise and pursuits. The past few years have seen remarkable progress in: obtaining major external grants, foundation funding for research institutes and centres, and a Canada Research Chair; increasing the quantity and quality of refereed books and articles; and, participating in major academic conferences, with faculty and students both organizing and presenting. The Office of Research, Scholarship and Community Engagement (ORSCE), the Library and individual **faculties** have made great progress in encouraging these trends. These initiatives must be sustained by funding research projects and supporting the dissemination of scholarship.

Mount Royal also remains dedicated to “teaching informed by scholarship.” It is understood that scholarship informs teaching through a variety of research and scholarly activities. Principles that inform how essential scholarship and research are to teaching and learning include:

- faculty research and its dissemination create models and opportunities for student research;
- faculty research activity, both pure and applied, ensures faculty members' disciplinary currency and ongoing intellectual development, which then generates a richer curricula and more stimulating educational experiences, and models strong intellectual and professional practices; and,
- faculty research and scholarship enhances the reputation of the University, which, in turn, creates opportunities for students and makes graduates more competitive in their careers and as graduate school applicants.

The centrality of scholarship to Mount Royal's vision of an exceptional undergraduate educational experience and its importance to the University's dynamic engagement within its wider communities depends on multiple research and other scholarly undertakings. Accordingly, faculty will actively engage in scholarship as a:

- service to the community;
- stimulus to curriculum renewal;
- means of improving pedagogy;

- channel to expand scientific and disciplinary knowledge;
- form of faculty professional development; and,
- way to fulfill the University's mandate to be a site of critical, creative engagement with society and culture.

Mount Royal recognizes and values the variety of aims, methods and outcomes of the research and scholarly activity arising from the diversity of its programs. In both the assessment of scholarly activity and the allocation of resources to facilitate scholarship, the University is committed to supporting the methodological and disciplinary heterodoxy represented in the work of its individual faculty members. The University is also committed to undergraduate research. There are multiple opportunities for students to engage in research. This includes working with faculty on their own research projects and participating in classes where research and scholarship are cultivated by disciplinary and interdisciplinary models of inquiry.

Mount Royal seeks to develop a distinctive scholarly culture that, while strongly engaged with wider intellectual, creative, professional, and scientific research communities, remains deeply attached to undergraduate education and the local community.

Therefore, the University is committed to:

- recognizing diversity of disciplinary research and scholarship and its role in professional development;
- promoting undergraduate research in the widest sense possible;
- supporting institutes that are sustainable, interdisciplinary sites of knowledge mobilization;
- enhancing the Library's capacity to expand support for and advance the dissemination of research, including new models such as open access;
- improving infrastructure and operational resources for scientific research;
- encouraging collaborative research, when appropriate;
- emphasizing the need for the scholarship of teaching and learning and community-based research;
- acknowledging the importance and expertise of librarians in the research and scholarly communication processes;
- providing for the diversity of dissemination;
- affirming and validating variety of impact; and,
- tasking the ORSCE with identifying and encouraging broad areas of institutional interest.

Beyond those emerging commitments, internal resources should be used to support the diversity of research at Mount Royal.

### Supporting the University's Strategic Plan Goals 3.3, 7.2, 7.3, 8.2

#### Markers of Success

- Implement a new Research and Scholarship Strategic Plan that includes identifying areas of institutional strength and defines undergraduate research for Mount Royal
- Increase the number of Canada Research Chairs in alignment with institutional priorities
- Obtain funding from the Canada Foundation for Innovation
- Increase the number of successful Tri-Council grants
- Ensure the sustainability of institutes and centres
- Encourage a rise in the number of faculty publications and conference presentations
- Expand student participation in the annual undergraduate Research and Scholarship Days by 50 per cent
- Strengthen student undergraduate research success, including dissemination

## Program Base

Mount Royal is provincially-mandated as one of two Alberta Baccalaureate and Applied Studies Institutions (BASIs), meaning that, beyond four-year baccalaureate degrees, the University is also permitted to offer certificates, diplomas, applied degrees, university transfer programs, post-diploma certificates and graduate certificates. Mount Royal is required to deliver educational programs oriented to either employment or to future academic study. It is necessary for the University to plan for a strategic mix of programs that attracts a wide array of students who will successfully complete their studies and subsequently enter the workforce or pursue post-graduate educational opportunities. This is especially important in light of provincial government projections showing almost all anticipated enrolment growth in Alberta will occur in the Calgary and Edmonton service regions over the next 10 years and that there will be overwhelming student demand for degree credentials.

The University will face enrollment challenges. Demographic projections are that the core post-secondary-attending cohort (ages 18 to 34 years of age) will remain relatively unchanged in Alberta over the next decade, but will decline significantly in almost every other region across the country. Many Albertans leave the province for university studies and Alberta has Canada's lowest post-secondary participation rate among those 18 to 34 year of age. Currently, Mount Royal attracts 78 per cent of its students from the Calgary region.

In developing an appropriate program mix for an undergraduate university, there is a considerable opportunity for Mount Royal. The percentage of Albertans with a university degree is expected to continue to rise, especially since the majority of new jobs in the province will require a post-secondary education. First, Mount Royal will focus on increasing direct from high school entrants from its current level of 50 per cent to reach 65 percent over the life of this *Academic Plan*. Then the University should explore

increasing efforts to diversify its catchment, moving towards the *University's Strategic Plan's* goal of 75 per cent by 2025.

Achieving this goal will involve implementing more robust and wide-ranging marketing and direct outreach to secondary schools, and establishing dual credit offerings, as well as other innovative initiatives. This strategy is becoming especially important in light of increasing efforts from other universities, including from outside Alberta, to recruit students in Calgary and across Alberta.

Mount Royal will target groups whose younger age cohort is rising, namely Indigenous Peoples and new Canadians, as well as address systemic barriers to their broader participation in, and success at, university. This involves enhancing financial support, indigenizing the curriculum, diversifying the faculty complement and adopting **Universal Design for Learning** to better support different learning styles.

As part of its evolution as a BASI undergraduate university, Mount Royal will revise its definition of access. In years past, the University was thought by some to be a “second chance” institution, characterized by large numbers of Open Studies seats and University Transfer students. While this served an important role as a transfer college, this configuration led to relatively low retention, reduced funding to pursue degree development and having to turn away many qualified students from the University's degree programs. Mount Royal will retain the University Entrance Option as a means of access, because these students qualify to take General Education courses and historically have higher degree transition rates. Further, in keeping with the goals established in the *University's Strategic Plan*, Mount Royal will aim to generate no more than 10 per cent of its total **full-load equivalent (FLE)** students in non-credentialed access programs. In pursuing this transition, Mount Royal must, as a BASI, retain and enhance non-degree credit options that respond to student and labour force demand, as well as serve community need. Examples of this are the certificates in Advanced Studies in Critical Care Nursing, Athletic Therapy, the Bridge to Canadian Nursing and Environmental Science, as well as the Aviation and Social Work diplomas.

A flourishing undergraduate university requires strong and dynamic degrees across professional, science, arts and social science disciplines. Mount Royal produces exceptional graduates who have professional skills, subject mastery and broad knowledge gained through robust General Education requirements. The University recognizes students benefit from an awareness of career and study pathways beyond graduation. Indeed, the Faculty of Continuing Education and Extension is responsive to the lifelong learning needs of graduates. This includes providing them with a range of professional development opportunities. These strengths are acknowledged in current program principles articulated in, among other documents, the Comprehensive Institutional Plan, which states the University will offer:

- a broad-based range of programs across professional, science and arts disciplines;
- a program mix that includes offerings considered fundamental to a mid-sized, undergraduate institution;
- programs that address student interest and demand;
- programs that respond to community need and job market demands;
- programs that are recognized and valued by external stakeholders (e.g., employers, graduate schools, professional schools, certification bodies, etc.);

- program development or expansion that represents additional access for students achieved through adequate additional funding; and,
- curriculum and programs that enhance knowledge and promote environmental sustainability.

### Supporting the University's Strategic Plan Goals 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 10.3

#### Markers of Success

- Maintain or increase certificates that respond to students and/or labour demand
- Complete a study which makes recommendations regarding the role of Academic Upgrading at Mount Royal, consistent with the University's mandate as a BASI
- Increase direct from high school enrolment to 65 per cent
- Diversify entrance pathways from high schools, colleges and other universities
- Strengthen active recruitment of underrepresented groups in credit programs to increase enrolment

## Degree Development

The information in the table below is taken from the *University's Strategic Plan* and outlines the current and projected program mix.

Program Mix Changes over Time by Percentage

Program Type	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17 Projected	2025 Targets
Baccalaureate Degree	59	67.5	71	73.3	80
Applied Degree	4.9	2.4	1.4	0.8	0
Diploma/Certificate	9.2	7.2	6.6	5.8	10
University Transfer	2.5	0.8	0.7	0.7	0
Alternative Entry/Other	12.1	12.6	11.8	11.4	5
University Entrance	2.5	1.9	2.1	2.3	5
Open Studies	9.8	7.7	6.3	5.6	0

Currently, 20 per cent of Mount Royal's projected enrolment is in non-credentialed access programs, which also use FLEs. This is an unacceptably high percentage for a BASI mandated to deliver programs that lead to employment or post-graduate study. Previous academic plans noted Mount Royal's student base has relatively low enrolment in arts and science and this remains the case.

Demand is exceptionally strong and highly competitive for many Mount Royal professional programs. As FLEs grow at Mount Royal, all areas of Academic Affairs will expand. In doing so, however, the University will need to be mindful of the proportion of offerings to meet the demands of students and the labour force balanced with the need for strong curricular outcomes as a result of diverse degree programs.

Data reveals that many students leave Mount Royal in good academic standing and despite high rates of satisfaction with their educational experience. It can be inferred, therefore, students often leave the University to pursue degree completion elsewhere, particularly those in the arts and sciences. This pattern was acceptable when Mount Royal was a college focused on upgrading, degree preparation and university transfer programs. Now, as a university, Mount Royal needs to support and encourage students to complete their degrees here. The *University's Strategic Plan* sets a goal of substantially increasing the number of majors offered at Mount Royal. There is also a need to support the goal of building on institutional strengths, including a focus on a liberal education underpinned by the General Education program.

Given that one of the *University's Strategic Plan* goals is to grow to 13,000 funded FLEs by 2025, each faculty identified potential areas for future growth (See Appendix B). Mount Royal will need to aggressively demonstrate the importance of these degrees in serving Alberta learners and in producing graduates who will enrich communities socially, culturally and economically.

The global challenges of climate change, mass migrations and environmental degradation drive the need for Mount Royal students to have knowledge about sustainability. Faculties are encouraged to explore novel degrees, institutes and research centres that foster inter-, cross- and multi-disciplinary approaches to these real-life problems. Mount Royal has made progress: activities of the Centre for Disaster Research, the Institute for Environmental Sustainability, the Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, the Institute for Community Prosperity and the Peace Studies Initiative have underscored this direction. In addition, General Education provides a foundation that can be enhanced by creating new thematic pathways. Encouraging minors to augment majors in degrees can also assist in breaking down silos and provide graduates with an added edge. Finally, Mount Royal has a long and successful history of programs in the fine arts and music. There is an opportunity to explore the pros and cons of returning to credit programing in music performance and theatre arts.

A thoughtful and sustainable process for program development should be implemented. This process will consider and prioritize, at an early stage, student demand and the need for infrastructure, resources and faculty and staff complements.

### Supporting the University's Strategic Plan Goals 3.4, 4.4

#### Markers of Success

- Increase FLEs in credit programming by introducing new baccalaureate degrees, through strategic reallocation, where appropriate
- Expand FLEs across Academic Affairs, consistent with student demand and the need for diverse degree programming
- Appreciably increase majors and post-degree diplomas or certificates
- Make innovative majors and minors available to students
- Explore the return to offering fine arts and music programs

## General Education

As stated in the *2012 to 2017 Academic Plan*, the provision of a general education is a “fundamental part of all our degree programs.” With more than 450 courses in its inventory delivered through all faculties, General Education is a signature component of all Mount Royal degrees. This *Academic Plan* builds upon this commitment. The General Education policy sets the University apart, providing more comprehensive coverage in liberal education than a typical university demands. The *University's Strategic Plan* commits to “expose our students to a liberal education and a broad interdisciplinary approach to critical thinking and problem solving.” Students explore courses in four clusters: Numeracy and Scientific Literacy; Values, Beliefs and Identity; Community and Society; and Communications. The result is graduates acquire broad knowledge and intellectual skills, develop a commitment to social responsibility, and are better equipped to thrive in an increasingly multi-disciplinary world with a rapidly changing workplace and economy. And, they flourish as thoughtful and engaged citizens.

Recognizing that a robust, high-quality, General Education component is key to ensuring an exceptional liberal education and Mount Royal's reputation as a premier undergraduate university, this *Academic Plan* commits to:

- intensify the General Education review process to ensure all of these courses strongly and clearly reflect program values and cluster goals;
- increase the percentage of General Education courses taught by full-time faculty;
- provide a dedicated student academic advisor in General Education;
- propose a University-wide interdisciplinary Centre for Liberal Education aimed at supporting and strengthening liberal education as a feature of all Mount Royal programs; and,
- develop thematic pathways to better direct students, invigorate their General Education studies and encourage their exploration of existing disciplinary minors.

### Supporting the University's Strategic Plan Goal 3.1

#### Markers of Success

- Complete revalidation of the General Education inventory to ensure all courses strongly reflect their appropriate cluster goals
- Develop and implement a model for faculties to participate in General Education as a means to increase the percentage of these courses taught by full-time faculty
- Create thematic pathways in the General Education clusters
- Create a Centre for Liberal Education with involvement from every faculty

## Program Pathways

Registration data from various sources suggests a growing number of Mount Royal students are seeking courses elsewhere in the Alberta system for credit towards the University's programs. While several areas, such as Nursing and Midwifery, have been able to match resources to demand, which also has positive impact on retention, this has not been the case across Academic Affairs. In some areas, the problem arises because students cannot access courses in a timely way or find a more convenient delivery model. At the same time, there are internal barriers to student success and to program planning. These include admission pathways that bring students into second-choice programs they would prefer not to pursue, and program mobility challenges when students have completed Mount Royal credits that do not easily transfer internally when they seek to change programs.

The University also will work with colleges and polytechnics to develop partnerships for the establishment of pathways into Mount Royal degrees. The Faculty of Continuing Education and Extension provides an excellent venue to establish pathways into credit degrees.

Over the life of this *Academic Plan*, the University will:

- evaluate and refine access pathways, including bridging for students from **traditionally underrepresented groups** or those who are not fully academically prepared;
- review, realign and further develop effective supports for students in the transition to post-secondary education from a variety of pathways, including traditionally underrepresented groups, to improve student success, retention and persistence;
- undertake an institutional discussion to arrive at an optimal mix of flexible, on-line and blended course delivery options available to students within their programs;
- study and remedy course availability for students in a broadly representative process that includes deans, chairs, directors, managers and Enrolment Services employees, with goals to:
  - balance physical capacity, faculty complement, instructional budgets, academic scheduling and supporting infrastructure;
  - adapt to support positive changes to retention and more timely program completion;

- balance intake and planning priorities at the program level;
- expand scheduling options to include weekend, evening, and (in select programs) year-round delivery; and,
- examine and address internal impediments to pathways for students to move more easily within Mount Royal and for program transferability.

**Supporting the University's Strategic Plan Goals 4.2, 10.4**

**Markers of Success**

- Increase FLEs in credit programming through strategic reallocation, where appropriate
- Expand FLEs across Academic Affairs consistent with student demand and diverse degree programming
- Appreciably increase majors and post-degree diplomas or certificates

## Institutional Responsiveness

Mount Royal's institutional growth and the complexity of its program base and internal community has enabled engagement in a broader range of activities, but has also created constraints and pressures. External expectations and internal aspirations for a nimble and responsive University are in tension with the scale and scope of Mount Royal's processes.

Over the life of this *Academic Plan*, the University will:

- identify and reduce structural, policy and process barriers to academic activities and opportunities for students and faculty;
- work with Continuing Education and Extension to explore opportunities for innovation; and,
- engage the responsiveness of Continuing Education and Extension

**Supporting the University's Strategic Plan Goal 10.1**

**Markers of Success**

- Streamline curriculum and policy development processes, ensuring the primacy of consultation
- Increase collaboration with Continuing Education and Extension to enhance innovation and institutional responsiveness

## Student Experience

Traditionally, Mount Royal served the community by providing a variety of access points into post-secondary education, including by preparing students for university studies. Following the transition to become a university and with the prioritization of degree programs competitive admission has been in tension with the broad access historically associated with Mount Royal College.

At the same time, given the social and economic environment for post-secondary education that requires a high percentage of students take paid work, timely parchment completion has become a challenge with concomitant negative effects on student success, program planning and resource allocation.

Over the life of this *Academic Plan*, Mount Royal University will:

- grow thoughtfully, predicated on receiving adequate funding, preserving program quality, protecting the value of a Mount Royal education and evaluating the infrastructure and resources (including human resources) required;
- develop an Enrolment Management Plan to support the *University's Strategic Plan* and *Academic Plan* with goals to increase applicant yields and improve both retention and time to completion;
- increase student financial supports, including awards, scholarships and bursaries in collaboration with the Development Office;
- develop a Student Success Plan in a broadly consultative process led by the Office of Student Success in collaboration with SACL and other stakeholders, such as the Library, Student Learning Services and the ADC's START program, with goals to:
  - enhance existing and develop new academic and structural supports to enable timely and successful parchment completion;
  - identify systemic barriers and target improvements to student supports that consider their demographic diversity (especially underrepresented groups), varying levels of academic preparation and holistic range of needs; and,
  - develop a comprehensive orientation program from recruitment through the first semester.
- work closely with SACL to reach the goal of Mount Royal moving to the top half in the NCHA [Survey](#) from its current level of three to reach eight of eleven categories, and;
- conduct a broadly consultative review to define the core nature of academic advising, evaluate existing models relative to student needs and implement a core competency-based training program for all new staff and program advisors.

### Supporting the University's Strategic Plan Goals 2.1, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2

#### Markers of Success

- Increase by 10 per cent the number of students who complete their degree within five years
- Enlarge student financial support to 3.5 percent of the operating budget
- Move to the top half among Canadian universities in 8 out of 11 categories on the NCHA survey
- Undertake a comprehensive review of student advising and based on the findings initiate appropriate reforms
- Establish comprehensive standardized training for all academic advisors

## Faculty Flourishing

Faculty work comprises teaching, scholarship and service, which are central to the academic accomplishments of the University. Therefore, all faculty must be properly resourced and supported as they endeavour to uphold these responsibilities and do them well. A key resource is time.

First, teaching well at Mount Royal involves the pursuit of excellence as a dedicated, scholarly teacher and is predicated on providing a personalized learning environment to students. This means faculty must be able to devote time to interacting with, learning about and mentoring their students, both within and outside of scheduled instructional contact hours. It requires the ability to spend a meaningful amount of time per student on learning and assessment activities, including in a one-on-one setting and on effective course design, redesign and preparatory activities to achieve excellent teaching.

Second, faculty must have sufficient time to engage with their research, professional and scholarly communities, as well as with the wider community. This is not only so that they can be active followers of, contributors to and recognized experts among these communities, but also because this engagement enriches their students' undergraduate experience. Teaching informed by scholarship means bringing the most up-to-date thinking about pedagogy and discipline-specific understanding into the undergraduate classroom.

Third, faculty must have sufficient time to uphold their many service responsibilities, where they are required. For example, internal responsibilities are to develop, review and revitalize program and curriculum, participate in shared academic governance and a myriad of other service activities that support the academic function of the University. Service activities also include external responsibilities and outreach, through which faculty contribute to their broader communities as experts and as public intellectuals. These are significant responsibilities fundamental to collegial governance, especially as Mount Royal continues to undergo major transformation as an institution because they promote the University as a vital academic and cultural hub.

Achieving all of the above, while maintaining a balanced and a healthy work environment, relies on carefully monitoring and planning based on Mount Royal's FLE student load, and on building a corresponding, appropriately-sized, full-time faculty complement. Contract faculty are an integral part of the University and make many contributions. Careful and deliberate development and growth of a well-supported faculty complement will be critical to achieving many of the goals and strategies articulated in the *University's Strategic Plan*. These include, but are not limited to:

- those concerning a personalized learning experience as a distinguishing feature of a Mount Royal education;
- strong access to and interactions with faculty at greater than the national average;
- the opportunity of every student to participate in undergraduate research;
- time for faculty to strive for continual improvement and to develop innovative approaches to teaching;
- growth in research output;
- growth in external collaborations; and,
- enhanced community outreach.

Finally, Mount Royal must continue to actively develop and maintain an academic and work environment in which academic freedom, independent thinking and expression, equity, diversity and inclusion are protected and fostered — one in which the University's shared, collegial governance processes are meaningful. This environment is one in which discussion and debate flourishes and a diversity of viewpoints is encouraged and accepted.

Further to the above, and as part of this *Academic Plan*, Academic Affairs will play a leadership role in:

- undertaking an institutional review of the contract-to-full-time faculty ratio, as well as the FLE-to-full-time-faculty ratio, with an aim to develop concrete recommendations concerning the composition of the faculty complement and target ratios;
- reviewing institutional resources, supports and programs for faculty professional and career development and capacity building, including those for faculty:
  - considering applying for sabbatical and promotion;
  - contemplating career progression (to chair, associate dean, etc.);
  - wanting development in teaching and research; and,
  - aspiring to roles in academic governance.
- reviewing and enhancing recognition, celebration and promotion of faculty work with respect to teaching, research, scholarship, community engagement and noteworthy internal and/or external service;
- developing enhanced international opportunities for faculty; and,
- continuing to study equity and diversity issues at Mount Royal, including identification, assessment and action to reduce potential barriers to faculty employment equity, through the Joint Diversity and Equity Committee established pursuant to Article 24.3 of the MRFA Collective Agreement.

### Supporting the University's Strategic Plan Goals 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 7.3

#### Markers of Success

- Align healthy campus initiatives with the *Okanagan Charter*
- Create a Statement of Principled Treatment for Contract Faculty
- Put into effect recommendations from the institutional review of the contract- and full-time faculty complement
- Implement recommendations of the Joint Diversity and Equity Committee
- Recognize faculty with ongoing awards for outstanding scholarship and research, regardless of contract status
- Establish an enhanced GFC Councillor orientation and mentoring program

## Staff Flourishing

Mount Royal's highly dedicated and expert staff play a vital role outside of the classroom in ensuring students are navigating their academic journey in the most successful manner. They are critical to the University's mission. They work directly with students and support faculty to ensure an exceptional undergraduate educational experience at Mount Royal. Students benefit from and are more satisfied in settings that cultivate positive relationships between themselves, faculty and staff.

Over the course of this *Academic Plan*, Academic Affairs will:

- ensure staff have the necessary knowledge and training to be successful in their roles and are aware of Mount Royal supports and processes, including those with respect to diversity and meaningful inclusion;
- foster a healthy workplace, which emphasizes the principles of the *Okanagan Charter*;
- ensure staff are given opportunities and support — including within regular work hours — to attend sessions on professional and career development and personal wellness; and,
- recognize staff have a unique perspective and play an essential role in facilitating the successful implementation of University initiatives.

### Supporting the University's Strategic Plan Goal 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 7.3

#### Markers of Success

- Align healthy campus initiatives with the *Okanagan Charter*
- Ensure all new staff participate in a robust, consistent orientation program
- Include staff and MRSA representation at all levels and in all processes where major proposals and/or /decisions impact their roles, with a report-back mechanism
- Support staff having more opportunities for intentional, continuous learning and professional development centered on core competencies
- Create an ongoing award that recognizes and celebrates outstanding staff contributions to student success and satisfaction

## Indigenization

The approved [Indigenous Strategic Plan](#) sets out a broad range of goals to guide indigenization at Mount Royal. Consultations with the campus community demonstrated broad support for this initiative, with many being eager to be involved in this important process. As outlined in the table below, Mount Royal has experienced some success with Indigenous learners, as their retention rates are comparable to that of the student body as a whole.

Persistence Rate from Years 1 to 2, 2015

Aboriginal self-declared	Registrants	2nd year
No	11,124	80.7 %
Yes	435	79.3 %
Total	11,559	80.7 %

Source: Mount Royal University Office of Student Success

This *Academic Plan* fully supports the *Indigenous Strategic Plan* and its goals. Specifically, there is a need to support Goal 5, which speaks to respectful and inclusive curricula, namely by increasing the integration of Indigenous content, resources and pedagogies across Mount Royal, including in field and work experiences, service learning, practica and clinicals.

In aligning the *Indigenous Strategic Plan* with this *Academic Plan*, Academic Affairs will:

- put in place adequate resources to support indigenization, including for Library acquisitions, programming and outreach;

- deliver credit courses in Indigenous languages in the Treaty 7 territory and Alberta more broadly;
- enable all departments to examine Indigenous ways of knowing and practices and adjusting, where appropriate, to facilitate alternative teaching and learning arrangements;
- support the Academic Indigenous Advisory Committee as it develops a curricular framework to understand approaches to indigenization, with a goal of establishing an Indigenous-related graduation requirement as stated in the *University's Strategic Plan*;
- employ field schools and other forms of delivery, such as clinical courses to address the TRC's Calls to Action; and,
- support professional development, such as learning communities that foster faculty and staff understanding of our responsibilities as treaty people.

Community consultations made clear that there still exists the need to create bridging initiatives for Indigenous students. As such, over the life of this *Academic Plan*, Academic Affairs will:

- continue to assist faculty and staff in becoming knowledgeable about indigeneity;
- launch a study to re-invigorate the Aboriginal Education Program that has a long history of ties to Calgary's Indigenous communities; and,
- create a cohort-based transition program that allows for multiple access points (e.g. University Entrance Option or degree entry).

### Supporting the University's Strategic Plan Goal 9.1 and the *Indigenous Strategic Plan*

#### Markers of Success

- Implement the *Indigenous Strategic Plan*
- Reach 6 per cent of self-identified declared Indigenous students as a proportion of all students in ministry-approved programs
- Establish a position responsible for indigenization within Academic Affairs
- Develop Indigenous content and prepare faculty to teach it
- Introduce transition programs that allow for multiple access points
- Increase Indigenous outreach and engagement programming across Academic Affairs

## Internationalization

The *University's Strategic Plan* emphasizes increasing Mount Royal's international focus. While these students pay higher fees, there must be extensive support provided to international students to ensure their success. Most important is that international students enhance the University's diversity, perspectives and reputation, and reflect a commitment to multiculturalism and pluralism.

The goal is to increase the number of international students in Mount Royal credit programs as a proportion of all credit students from 1.8 per cent (2013/14) to five per cent (2024/25), and, with this, the provision of additional student supports dedicated to this population. This change in student demographic is reinforced in Mount Royal's *Diversity and Meaningful Inclusion Framework* and requires a shift from a college "commuter campus" to one that focuses on an open and welcoming campus community, including to developments at Currie Barracks and Garrison Green.

Additionally, the *University's Strategic Plan* strives to increase the number of students studying abroad, as well as participating in international field schools and faculty exchanges. To reach these goals, it is important to build the international reputation of the University.

Further, an International Strategic Plan will be developed to articulate, support and measure progress to:

- develop a comprehensive strategy that intentionally directs international activities for students, faculty and staff;
- establish transition pathways, including in collaboration with the Languages Institute's credential programs that provide continuous support throughout the academic experience to ensure degree completion and graduation success;
- create infrastructure to support international students (primarily study permit students), including language support, academic and financial advising, immigration advising, specialized academic support, social and cultural support, and overall health and wellbeing assistance;
- provide appropriate professional development for staff and faculty to better understand and support a growing international student population;
- build and enhance international partnerships to facilitate opportunities for all students, faculty and staff;
- encourage revenue-generating international initiatives through Continuing Education and Extension, such as corporate training and professional development; and,
- use faculty expertise to attain accreditation from appropriate external bodies (e.g. Middle States Commission on Higher Education) to advance Mount Royal's reputation as a destination for international students and to build partnerships.

### Supporting the University's Strategic Plan Goals 9.3, 9.4, 9.5

#### Markers of Success

- Increase the proportion of credential-program students studying on a visa to 3.5 per cent
- Reach the half way mark for the goals in the *University's Strategic Plan* related to students participating in field schools and studying abroad
- Incorporate a global component into the curriculum that may include, but is not limited to, international field schools and international exchange programs
- Increase the number and diversity of international partnerships in line with the *University's Strategic Plan*

- Increase academic success, including graduation rates among international visa students

## Alumni

It is essential that Mount Royal cultivate, connect with and engage alumni. Alumni are ambassadors who help promote and improve the University's reputation. They mentor and create career opportunities, and are important in enhancing fundraising. It is essential Academic Affairs cultivates relationships with alumni, especially since increasingly they will graduate with baccalaureates and have developed a stronger affinity to the institution.

Mount Royal's Alumni Office has set ambitious goals in its *2015/18 Strategic Plan*. To support these, Academic Affairs will use the talents of faculty and staff to establish bold initiatives targeted to graduates, namely to:

- work with the Alumni Office to support their plans, as resources permit;
- engage more fully with alumni through alumni-focused programming;
- connect with alumni as a means to increase the University's profile and reputation; and;
- encourage lifelong learning through the return of graduates to MRU for continuing education and skill development.

### Supporting the University's Strategic Plan Goals 2.1, 8.4

#### Markers of Success

- Hold an annual weekend of learning, at which alumni can relive the academic experience with talks and interactive workshops across academic disciplines
- Establish a high-profile Lecture of a Lifetime
- Initiate more department- and discipline-based alumni chapters
- Build RLLC outreach programming to bridge to the broader community and academy

## Continuing Education

With some 22,000 distinct clients and 50,000 course registrants annually, Continuing Education and Extension is a key area of Academic Affairs. Utilizing a program management and delivery team structure, it creates unique programs, credentials and pathways into degrees, pursues different modes of delivery, connects Mount Royal to a wider demographic base and generates revenue. In pursuing such aims and innovative approaches, high-quality student experiences must be maintained, while increasing

accessibility through proven pathways to higher education. Committed to these values, though recognizing that the best adult learning practices vary according to program and student clientele, Academic Affairs, through Continuing Education and Extension, will:

- collaborate with industry to provide leading-edge skill development in an ever-changing professional climate;
- provide customized training through the corporate training area, with the intent to strengthen relationships between the community and Mount Royal;
- increase the University’s community connection through professional partnerships, events and sponsorships;
- reinforce the importance of diversity, meaningful inclusion and social justice, via offerings such as the Transitional Vocational Program (TVP) and the Inclusive Post-Secondary Education (ISPE) program;
- develop pathways that support English as an Additional Language (EAL) students and work with partner areas to ensure these students are fully supported in their studies;
- analyze and assess Continuing Education and Extension’s delivery of select non-credit programs in relation to the *University’s Strategic Plan*;
- expand collaboration between the Centre for Credit Extension and the credit side of Academic Affairs to enhance opportunities for students, namely by establishing post-graduate diplomas and certificates;
- develop credit programming through the Conservatory in consultation with internal stakeholders and faculties;
- work to have graduates of diploma and certificate programs recognized as University alumni; and,
- provide opportunities for employee professional development through complimentary Continuing Education and Extension courses.

**Supporting the University’s Strategic Plan Goals 4.1, 4.4, 6.4, 7.3, 8.2, 8.4 9.2, 9.5, 10.4**

**Markers of Success**

- Make complimentary Continuing Education and Extension courses more accessible for employees
- Encourage additional community connections through partnerships and collaborative projects
- Increase the number of students in EAL programs by five per cent
- Establish at least five post-graduate diplomas and certificates through the Centre for Extension Credit
- Recognize graduates of Continuing Education and Extension diploma and certificate programs as alumni

- Provide students in the TVP and the IPSE program with a meaningful and participatory experience

## Community

Universities, at their core, educate, discover and share to enrich people's lives, to gain insight into human nature and experience, and to improve the world. They engage the community in a mutual quest to understand societies and ourselves.

Mount Royal wants to inspire students to be change-makers and to have a reputation as an institution deeply immersed in promoting social responsibility and more resilient, inclusive communities. To do this, the University requires strong external connections, ranging from locally to internationally. Moreover, Mount Royal's reputation is based upon the broader recognition that it excels at higher learning and is a hub of intellectual, cultural and social activities.

The University has a long history of community engagement and outreach. The new RLCC facility offers exciting new opportunities to play a more prominent role in welcoming the community to campus to discover, learn, create and gather together with students, faculty, staff and external partners. Together with the Taylor Centre for the Performing Arts, the RLLC plays an important role in highlighting the University's contributions to the intellectual and cultural life of Calgary.

In pursuing stronger links to external communities, Academic Affairs will endeavour to:

- ensure the RLLC and the Taylor Centre for the Performing Arts engage surrounding communities, advance learning, cultural and community exchange, and the University's reputation;
- engage broader communities through thoughtful business, cultural and social outreach initiatives;
- increase engagement of alumni and key community members through participation on program advisory groups;
- pursue an annual academic fair to engage external audiences (including alumni, donors and community stakeholders) in hands-on interaction to experience the innovative, scientific, cultural and professional dimensions of Mount Royal disciplines;
- work with Marketing and Communications to foster community outreach by Academic Affairs, including partnering with community groups and sharing stories of success;
- create a Co-Curricular [Record](#) for students to record community-based activities;
- foster opportunities to bring community-engaged projects onto the campus and into the classroom, and;
- explore opportunities for faculty to deliver courses off campus to reach a more diverse population.

### Supporting the University's Strategic Plan Goals 8.1, 8.2, 9.3, 9.6

#### Markers of Success

- Establish stronger working relationships between Marketing and Communications and Academic Affairs
- Create subscription lists to attract people to Academic Affairs activities
- Create University awards for Service to the Community to increase Mount Royal's profile, including through involvement with media
- Hold more events on and off campus, including to raise Mount Royal's profile among underrepresented groups in higher education
- Collaborate with University Advancement to identify, grow and maximize relationships and funding opportunities with community stakeholders

## Use of Space

The *Campus Master Plan Phase 2* provides an overarching perspective of the campus' planned evolution. Although the *Campus Master Plan* addresses the broad elements of space use at Mount Royal, it is largely silent on the specifics of how academic space will be used over time. It is important the *Campus Master Plan* serves the University's academic mission.

The *Academic Plan* recognizes that a flourishing university requires attention to creating dynamic and engaging learning spaces that are socially and environmentally sustainable. There is also the need to be mindful of the factors that contribute to a healthy workplace for staff and faculty, and the elements of a campus that support all aspects of wellness, including mental health.

Excellent teaching and learning environments require appropriate lighting, technology and seating, taking into account the *Okanagan Charter's* calls to action.

As the number of students on campus increases and Mount Royal looks to become a place that connects with developing areas adjacent to the campus, there is a need to consider how to shift from being a commuter campus to building a community. As this occurs, there will be changes in student demographics. Academic Affairs will work to:

- take a more intentional and planned approach to space management;
- support the expansion and appropriate support of innovative learning spaces, such as those that emphasize collaboration, active learning and undergraduate research;
- encourage the development of instructional spaces that align with Mount Royal's vision of providing an exceptional undergraduate educational experience;
- ensure there is proper research space, including dedicated labs and other infrastructure to support Science and Technology degrees;

- leverage the innovative teaching, learning and research spaces, as well as the technologies and tools provided in the new RLLC;
- develop the resources required to ensure spaces are optimized and operated in a socially and environmentally responsible way;
- reconstitute the Classroom Technology Taskforce to review current and future classroom configurations and technology needs, with an eye to ensure the best alignment of space, technology and pedagogy and to support the goals of the *Okanagan Charter*;
- ensure classroom spaces continue to be inclusive for people who experience ability-related barriers;
- explore the establishment of a centralized testing centre to better support Access Services and as a potential source of revenue, such as for GMAT, MCAT and LSAT testing;
- support the *Campus Master Plan's* Cultural Precinct initiative; and,
- collaborate on creating naming opportunities for donors, including for the Residences, to promote a sense of identity.

### Supporting the University's Strategic Plan Goals 7.1, 7.3

#### Markers of Success

- Establish a Space Allocation Plan that serves the aims of the *Academic Plan*, especially with spaces vacated as a result of the opening of the RLLC
- Ensure long-term support for the new teaching, learning and research programming, tools, technology and spaces provided through the RLLC, and engage in systematic assessment of its impact on student learning and faculty teaching and research to inform Academic Affairs planning
- Create a centralized Welcome Centre for enrolment and related services that is dedicated to ongoing development of the student experience (academic and co-curricular)
- Support Facilities Management and the Institute for Environmental Sustainability in achieving a Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System rating for the University from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education
- Confirm that Science and Technology has appropriate infrastructure to support research and teaching

## Technology

Technology must prioritize the academic mission of the University. This is essential to ensure students receive the best possible education, including exposure to cutting-edge pedagogy and learning environments.

To this end, Academic Affairs, through expert stakeholders in the Library, ADC and the ORSCE, will coordinate with Information Technology Services and the Technology Strategic Council, to:

- ensure the information technology governance structures support the priorities of this *Academic Plan*;
- create a mechanism to enable dialogue between faculty, staff and students to better identify ways of using technology to align with pedagogy and student needs;
- identify technology requirements, objectives and opportunities to enhance personalized learning, research and scholarship;
- ensure there is the requisite infrastructure, including bandwidth and personnel, to support current and future teaching, learning and research needs;
- confirm a commitment to faculty members for ongoing support for the development of online and blended courses, especially as faculty experiment with new pedagogical practices or pursue SOTL studies around flexible delivery; and,
- work towards, as appropriate, a University cross-divisional approach to technology decisions that recognizes diverse academic needs.

### Supporting the University's Strategic Plan Goals 7.1, 7.3, 8.1

#### Markers of Success

- Complete a Strategic Technology Plan that supports the *Academic Plan*
- Make a measurable impact on RLLC programming
- Establish an ongoing forum, led by Academic Affairs, to advance discussions around the use of technology in teaching, pedagogy, research and student learning
- Assure appropriate infrastructure is in place to support teaching, learning and scholarly needs

## Moving Forward

This *Academic Plan* emerges from a collective sense that now is the time to focus on our strengths, which will move us towards the goal of becoming Canada's leading undergraduate university. It will also create

the conditions for a flourishing university, linked to vibrant communities and offering students a learning experience that will meet their goals long into the future.

It is an unpredictable world. To ensure this *Academic Plan* remains vibrant and responsive to changing circumstances, even as its many recommendations are implemented, Academic Affairs will:

- request that GFC establish an *Academic Plan* Implementation Committee in September 2017;
  - The Provost and Vice-President Academic should be the Implementation Committee Chair and to ensure alignment with the *Academic Plan* its membership should include representation or resource members from each of the strategic planning committees (Indigenization, Teaching and Learning, Research, International and SACL). The Implementation Committee should have representation from staff, faculty and students and ensure that all faculties, including Continuing Education and Extension, the Library and the ADC are represented.
  - The terms of reference for the Implementation Committee will be to:
    - review the *Academic Plan* and establish priorities and markers of success, including in relation to comparator institutions against whom Mount Royal wants to benchmark success (e.g. MacEwan, University of Regina, Thompson Rivers University, University of Winnipeg etc.);
    - work with the President's Executive Committee and other relevant groups to align resources with the *Academic Plan* priorities;
    - establish an annual report card for submission to GFC each fall beginning in 2018; and
    - reassess and, if necessary, adjust the *Academic Plan* after two years.
  - determine in conjunction with the *Academic Plan* Implementation Committee markers of success in the national ranking systems Mount Royal will pursue, and initiate appropriate working groups to advance goals in these domains; and
  - align academic planning priorities with strategic resource planning across the University.

## Glossary

**Faculty:** This term denotes both full-time and contract employees at Mount Royal. Contract faculty are integral to the work done at the University and their multiple contributions are acknowledged.

**Faculties:** This term refers to the following areas represented within Academic Affairs and at GFC: the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Business and Communications Studies, the Faculty of Teaching and Learning, the Faculty of Health, Community and Education, the Faculty of Science and Technology, the Faculty of Continuing Education and Extension, and the University Library.

**Full-Load Equivalent (FLE):** The FLE is measured by taking the load of the student enrolled (instructional hours plus practicum hours) and dividing by the full load of that program. This results in a comparable metric that can be used across the system.

**High-impact Practices:** Curricular and pedagogical practices with empirically demonstrated beneficial effects on student retention and completion, engagement and learning outcomes.

**Interdisciplinarity:** This term involves the combining of two or more academic disciplines into one activity.

**Social Justice:** A reference to committing to integrity, fairness, mutual respect, consistency in process, transparency at all levels, and meaningful collaboration between students, faculty, staff and administration.

**Traditionally Underrepresented Groups:** These are populations that are historically underrepresented in higher education relative to their numbers in the general population. These include Indigenous Peoples, low-income students, students with disabilities, first generation learners and immigrants, and minority groups.

**Universal Design for Learning:** This term refers to developing instructional modalities that guide the development of flexible learning environments that can accommodate individual learning differences.

## Appendices

### Appendix A – Aims of an Undergraduate Education at Mount Royal University

Through all learning experiences and continuing at successively higher levels across their university studies, students at Mount Royal receive opportunities to learn and develop.

The four aims listed below inform the development of program learning outcomes across the University. Program learning outcomes will be used to construct course learning outcomes for assessment of student learning. Program changes will be judged on their merits, including how they serve the full range of needs of both current students and those Mount Royal seeks to recruit, what labour force demand is expected to be, and how they fit with the *University's Strategic Plan*.

#### A. Intellectual and Practical Skills

Practiced extensively, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects and standards for performance. This includes:

- inquiry and analysis;
- critical and creative thinking and problem solving;
- teamwork and independent learning;
- quantitative reasoning;
- technological competence;
- written and oral communication;
- information literacy; and
- critical reading.

#### B. Integrative and Applied Learning

Demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems. This includes synthesized and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies.

#### C. Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical, Natural and Technological World

Focused by engagement with relevant questions

General Education program-specific knowledge

#### D. Personal and Social Responsibility

Anchored through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges. This includes:

- integrity;
- ethical reasoning;
- community engagement;
- awareness of and respect for diversity; and
- foundational skills for self-understanding and wellness.

## Appendix B – Proposed Future Programs

These initiatives reflect current intentions and may change over the course of the *Academic Plan*. Program changes will be judged on their merits, including how they serve the full range of needs of both current students and those Mount Royal seeks to recruit, what labour force demand is expected to be, and how they fit with the *University's Strategic Plan*.

Faculty	Potential New Programs
<b>Faculty of Arts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BA Business-Economics</li> <li>• BA Environmental Humanities</li> <li>• BA Indigenous Studies</li> <li>• BA Philosophy</li> <li>• BA Religious Studies</li> <li>• Joint BA (with U of Calgary) Women and Gender Studies</li> </ul>
<b>Faculty of Business and Communication Studies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BBA Entrepreneurship</li> <li>• BBA Financial Services</li> <li>• BBA Financial Analysis</li> <li>• BBA International Business</li> <li>• BBA Social Innovation</li> <li>• BBA Supply Chain Management</li> </ul>
<b>Faculty of Continuing Education and Extension</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human Resources Certificate</li> <li>• Security Studies Certificate and Diploma</li> <li>• Inclusive Education Certificate</li> <li>• Undergraduate Studies Certificate Mentorship Program</li> <li>• Community Paramedic Program</li> <li>• Universal Design Program</li> <li>• Adult Mental Health Program</li> <li>• Online Learning Facilitation Program</li> <li>• Academy for Young Artists Program</li> <li>• Advanced Performance Program</li> </ul>
<b>Faculty of Health, Community and Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BSW Bachelor of Social Work</li> <li>• BHPE/BEd Bachelor of Health and Physical Education and Bachelor of Education combined degree</li> </ul>
<b>Faculty of Science and Technology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BSc Biology</li> <li>• BSc Chemistry</li> <li>• BSc Computer Science</li> <li>• BSc Geography</li> <li>• BSc Mathematics</li> <li>• BEd/BSc Mathematics and Physical Sciences</li> <li>• BSc Physics</li> <li>• BSc Psychology (joint with Arts)</li> </ul>

**Appendix C – Steering Committee Members**

David Clemis – *Faculty representative*

Karim Dharasmi – *Chair representative*

Allison Dube – *GFC representative*

Lee Easton – *Co-Chair*

Kim Halvorson – *Resource person*

David Hyttenrauch – *Chair representative*

Mohammed El Hazzouri – *GFC representative*

Jeff Keshen – *Co-Chair*

Allison MacKenzie – *MRFA representative*

Cheryl Melatdoost – *MRSA representative*

Robbie Nelson – *SAMRU representative*

Christina White Prosser – *Continuing Education and Extension representative*

Maggie Quance – *Faculty representative*

Sarah Rude – *MRSA representative*

Marc Schroeder – *MRFA representative*

Carol Shepstone – *Dean's Council representative*

Cordelia Snowdon – *SAMRU representative*

Gabriela True – *GFC representative*

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