The objective of the new strategic plan

Our new strategic plan will serve as a framework to help us articulate our priorities and actions, based on our ongoing commitments to dynamic learning, vital impact and an extraordinary academic environment. It will form an ambitious framework of commitments and aspirations that provides a compass for the next five years, that answers what “being the best” looks like, and how we can get there.

Changes and challenges: environmental scan

We need to consider the themes and trends affecting post-secondary education (PSE):

Explosive growth – has affected both the number of universities and student participation rates in BC, Canada and worldwide over several decades; increased demand for PSE; and led to recognition that universities are essential engines of individual and social prosperity. The growth in the number of institutions has increased competition and the need to focus on and communicate our differentiating strengths.

Globalization – has changed what we teach and research, where we study and learn, and what students need to flourish in the modern world. Economies and institutions are increasingly interconnected and interdependent, and our world’s greatest problems today are international in character.

Technology – has transformed the world and our daily lives—how we communicate, what and how we teach, research and learn, how we collaborate and organize our institutions and ourselves; and is in fact challenging the very ideas of “teaching,” “the degree” and place-based education.

A widened research mandate – has reshaped the university, the scope and level of activity, organizational focus and culture, and governmental and public expectations. Universities are expected to conduct fundamental research, along with research that responds to immediate challenges, drives innovation, creates partnerships across business, industry and civil society, and nurtures the next generation of talent. The pursuit of research funding is increasingly competitive and demands that we demonstrate world-class quality and impact.

Rising expectations and the evolving social contract – have increased the importance of post-secondary education and research, leading to heightened concern for transparency and accountability. Governments and employers often hold universities accountable for job preparation, labour supply shortages or surpluses and skills mismatches. Universities continue to stress the importance of autonomy and the fundamental value of freedom of inquiry. Our social contract will continue to evolve.

Quality and resources – are increasingly important factors as inflation-adjusted and per-student public financial support for universities has declined since 2008, while costs have increased. This creates increased reliance on non-traditional sources such as partnerships, domestic and international student tuition, and entrepreneurial and philanthropic strategies. The challenge of financial sustainability and investing for quality is also becoming more acute due to demographic and strategic considerations.
Opportunities and assets

To meet the challenges of today it is critical for our university to continue focusing on excellence, building on its differentiating strengths, mobilizing those strengths for the benefit of our students and communities, and communicating the advantages offered by UVic:

Inclusive excellence: Our talented people, longstanding commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, and an institutional culture of collaboration, collegiality and mutual respect are the conditions that support excellence and our claim to an extraordinary academic environment.

Place: UVic is located on the traditional territory of the Lkwungen-speaking peoples, shaping both our history and our future; it is surrounded by ocean and an extraordinary natural environment that inspires many of our programs, an ethic of sustainability, strong relationships in the Asia-Pacific region, and an international outlook.

Research excellence and impact: UVic is a research-intensive university and has a wealth of world-class researchers and talented graduate students who rank highly on collaboration, international partnerships and research output. By almost any research metric, we rank in the top 15 of Canadian universities. UVic is committed to research and creative activity that benefits external communities, promotes civic engagement and global citizenship, and has a strong focus on work that contributes to social and environmental well-being—all captured by our dedication to “vital impact.”

Research intensive and student-centred: UVic is dedicated to providing the highest quality student experience. This results in a deep commitment to excellence in teaching, superior student services, and student success in terms of learning and development. We value teaching and teachers, and student engagement, with a strong cohort of teaching-stream faculty and superb teachers within every academic domain and rank. Outside the classroom, non-teaching staff provide outstanding leadership and support for student success and the overall student experience.

Dynamic learning: UVic offers an enriched and engaged educational experience. Our strategy is to focus on the integration of research and education, providing substantial research opportunities to graduate and undergraduate students so that every student benefits from the research activity and culture of the university. Additionally, UVic is a leader in Canada in experiential and hands-on learning. We have the second largest co-operative education program in Canada per capita and experiential learning is available to almost 100 per cent of our students through clinical courses, practica, field schools, community-engaged learning and other hands-on opportunities.

Indigenous commitments: UVic has a longstanding and recently reaffirmed commitment to working towards reconciliation with the Indigenous peoples of Canada. We have attracted one of the strongest cohorts of Indigenous scholars in the country, substantially increased the enrolment of Indigenous students to more than 1000 and enhanced their prospects for success. We have built strong relationships with First Nations communities, organizations and governments and are committed to further contributing to reconciliation and equality of opportunity for Indigenous people.

Community engagement: UVic is highly engaged with its regional, national and international communities. With a focus on partnerships, reciprocity and positive impact, UVic students and researchers are notably involved in community outreach and collaboration that advance community, cultural, social, technological, economic and environmental benefits.