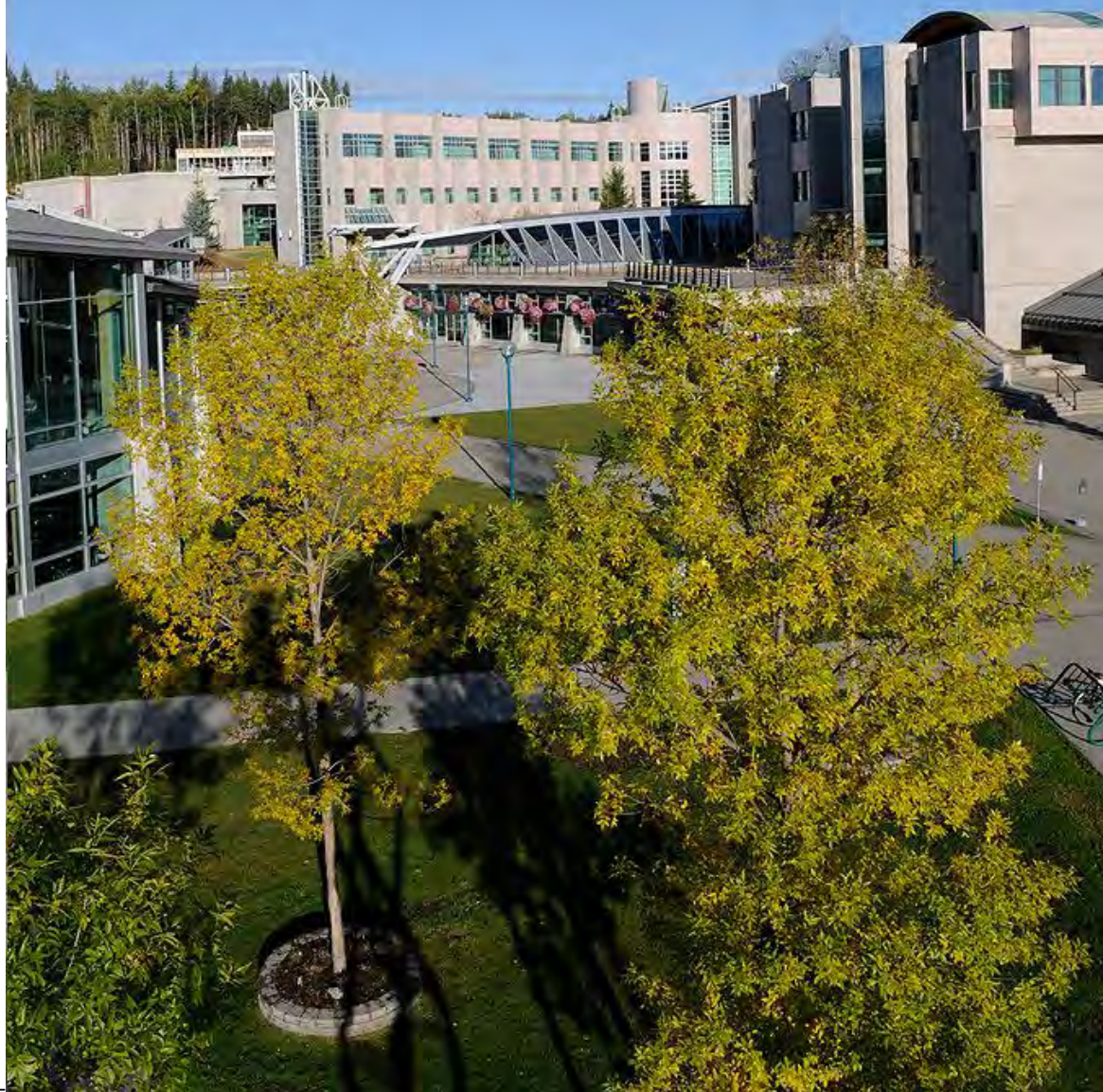


# ACADEMIC ACTION PLAN – DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

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Secondly, we acknowledge the cooperation and commitment of the individual teams as they worked to develop their own sections, then again to combine them into a cohesive document. The University of Northern British Columbia is a dynamic and complex institution with a unique origin and past that, combined with demographic and political realities, have shaped what it is today. The collaborative teams embraced the notion of looking to the future while honouring the past, dove headfirst into the mountains of past reports, consultation sessions and other information, listened respectfully to each other, and never failed to put the success of the institution and its students as their top priority.

Finally, we acknowledge the work of the Phase 1 Academic Planning Group, the critical involvement at many scales of staff, faculty and students at UNBC, and the desire of senior administration to engage in, support, and implement UNBC's Academic Action Plan.

## Introduction

In the relatively short number of years since its founding, the University of Northern British Columbia has grown to become one of Canada's premier small, research-intensive universities, uniquely situated on the traditional territories of several First Nations. Born "against all odds" through the foresight, vision, and will of the residents of northern British Columbia, the University has established a reputation for excellence in teaching, research, and service that is truly remarkable. Its connections within northern British Columbia are as deep as its linkages to researchers and universities around the world are wide. In consultation after consultation, faculty, staff, and students alike reflect a sincere connection to, and love for, the institution and its mission. Starting from scratch, people have put their hearts and minds into the long process of creating a very special place – one whose founding vision was at the leading edge of post-secondary and university creativity in its day.

Against the backdrop of this legacy of success, the current Academic Action Planning process provides a critical moment in time for UNBC's many communities to come together to refresh and to renew that vision as a foundation for our next quarter-century. It provides an opportunity to address the unfinished tasks of the first 25 years of university building to ensure that all of our constituent units and members feel part of an efficient and whole university. It provides an opportunity to refresh our structures and our approaches to address the opportunities and challenges that have arisen within the world of research and post-secondary education more generally over the past few decades. It also provides an opportunity for UNBC to reaffirm its claim as a regionally, nationally, and globally significant university and house of learning. To accomplish these tasks, we will need to be as visionary and leading edge as were the University's founders and early planners.

At the beginning of Phase 2 of the Academic Action Planning process, a series of discrete collaborative teams were established (see Appendix A) to explore topic areas identified within the initial planning conversations. These collaborative teams focused on the following subject matter areas:

- Academic Structure;
- Academic Administrative Organizational Structure;
- Student Experience and Pedagogy;
- Enrollment Initiatives; and
- Faculty Renewal and Development.

The **Academic Structure Collaborative Team** (ASCT) was tasked with looking at the current structure of academic units within the University and considering strategies for next steps if changes to that structure are warranted. Through its work, the ASCT identified that there was much more to the scope of "academic structure" than simply the alignment of academic units within colleges. As a result, it undertook consultations with many units across UNBC and added these into recommendations directed towards a stronger and more integrated pan-university academic structure.

The **Academic Administrative Organizational Structure Collaborative Team** (AAOSCT) was guided in its work by the need to ensure that an integrated approach to the renewal of UNBC's academic administrative structures be set in place. To inform that work, the AAOSCT held many discussions with individuals from academic administrative units, focusing especially on front-line employees, other academic planning groups, team leaders, and others. Building on feedback, the collaborative team recognized that organizational realignment must include attention to respect, open communication and

awareness, transparency, flexibility, and recognition of the critical value of the University's front-line resources.

The ***Student Experience and Pedagogy Collaborative Team*** (SEPCT) built their contributions around a recognition that we need to fulfill our fundamental obligation to the success and well-being of our students, and that as a collective we must ensure that operational, process, and pedagogical barriers to their success are removed. This means, among other things, ensuring that campus life and student engagement are integral to our understanding of the life of students, and that all must feel safe, secure, and included. Moving UNBC's student experience and pedagogy forward also means greater attention to Indigenization, interculturalization, experiential learning, and to our regions.

The ***Enrolment Initiatives Collaborative Team*** (EICT) organized their work around three topics. The first included the identification of enrolment priorities and barriers. The second coalesced around the process of strategic enrolment management and adopting a more holistic understanding of the student experience at UNBC; one focused on retention, completion, and recruitment, as well as strong relationships with alumni and many young, but aspiring UNBC students. The third topic addressed the need to augment the aspirational statement of UNBC as a destination university through a roadmap that highlights UNBC's academic excellence, and ensures the world is aware of the immense value of a UNBC education.

The ***Faculty Renewal and Development Collaborative Team*** (FRDCT) spent considerable time canvassing the University community. These consultations identified a remarkable dedication and commitment to the UNBC and to its research, teaching, and service roles. The language used by faculty was powerful and inspirational. People spoke at length, and with passion, about how they "love this institution," are "dedicated to the institution," how they valued the "friendliness of colleagues," and how a small class model lets them really "get to know their students." They spoke about colleagues who are "friends rather than acquaintances," and how this helps build "collegial relationships that are stronger and longer lasting than at other institutions." They also spoke about how they are carried by "the sense of optimism and potential" of UNBC, and how they were honoured to "truly and sincerely deliver courses in Aboriginal culture." These voices were also instructive, for no matter whether newly hired or long experienced, faculty readily identified opportunities for addressing key challenges in faculty renewal and development that could be addressed via recommendations in this Academic Action Planning process.

Through their work each of the collaborative teams found that their new conversations, consultations, and collaborations (see Appendix B) were taking them on a pathway of discovery about what UNBC is and what it could become. The extent of discovery within each team resulted in a collective rejection of the plan for submitting five discrete sets of recommendations and instead led to this – a single report that has woven together a comprehensive set of recommendations designed to help UNBC address its challenges and be ready with the direction, flexibility, and responsiveness that post-secondary organizations will need to be successful in the decades to come. This report is organized under three headings: Respect, Restructure, and Innovate.

**Respect** is about being true to our university motto, "En cha huná" and respecting all of those who work for the betterment of life, learning, and research at UNBC. It is about recognizing and respecting the many communities of place and interest who support us and our work. Such respect is demonstrated through action towards achieving our collective potential.

**Restructure** is about realizing those organizational opportunities that have been created over time in order to reposition and realign each unit, and the university as a whole, in more effective ways as a platform for the next generation of success.

**Innovate** is about taking the lead in post-secondary creativity and responsiveness. It is about letting go of the past rigidities, walls, and silos, and about being open and welcoming to the new questions, issues, and insights emerging in the world around us.

Taken as a whole, the five collaborative teams that came together in this second phase of the Academic Action Planning process submit this joint report for discussion, debate, critique, and improvement. The opportunity that this moment in time presents is one that demands attention to implementation. As an Academic Action Plan created by and with our constituent communities, leadership and responsibility for the implementation of this document is a “whole-of-university” responsibility that must involve faculty, staff, students, senior administration, and alumni; we are all part of the constitution of UNBC and together we must be institutionally enabled to achieve our collective vision for the future of the University.

## Executive Summary of Priorities

### **Definitions**

For the purposes of clarity and consistency, the following definitions were developed to guide readers through this document and to help inform further discussion on this Academic Action Plan.

**Goal** – this describes the anticipated result or desired end point. These statements can be more aspirational in nature.

**Rationale** – these are descriptions that support the necessity and practicality of the recommendations. These are the facts that describe the problem that needs to be solved to achieve the goals articulated in the plan. These facts may also be related to the efficiency, and effectiveness, or mandate achievement related to vision, mission and values. Facts can include opportunities, strengths, and barriers to achieving the overarching goals.

**Recommendations** – these are the means statements that would be applied to achieve the outcomes. These statements focus on critical actions that would be most important in achieving the outcomes. They infer strategic intent.

### **Opening recommendation**

Each of the member collaborative teams engaged with Phase 2 of the Academic Action Planning process agree strongly that the time and effort invested by the University community in the recommendations contained in this report need careful and purposeful stewardship towards implementation. Each of the member collaborative teams also recognize that implementation of these recommendations is complex. At times, implementation of some recommendations may fall to individual units or programs with little impact beyond those units/programs. At other times, implementation may involve the need for cross-university dialogue and transformation.

The member collaborative teams also wish to have the Director, and Office, of Integrated Planning supported in providing oversight and monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations in this report. This includes attention to the recommendations themselves, and also to our suggested prioritization of these recommendations, as implementation unfolds.

### **Recommendation**

- *Following approval by Senate, it is the recommendation of the member collaborative teams engaged in Phase 2 of the Academic Action Planning process that an Academic Action Plan Implementation Advisory Committee be created with the following mandate and characteristics:*
  - a. *Provide oversight and monitoring of the implementation of recommendations contained in the three sections of this report and organized under the priorities identified herein;*
  - b. *Support the Director, and Office, of Integrated Planning in the work of stewarding the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report;*
  - c. *Where needed, provide additional strategic direction for prioritizing implementation around the recommendations contained in this report;*



- d. *Where needed, advise, guide, organize, or support collaborative processes to assist individual units or cross-university activities in their work towards implementation of the recommendations contained in this report;*
- e. *That membership be limited to approximately eight individuals comprised equally with representation from faculty, staff, and students;*
- f. *That faculty representatives be suggested by Senate, that one staff representative be suggested by CUPE local 3799 with the other staff representative to be suggested by the President, and that student representatives to be suggested by their respective undergraduate and graduate student societies;*
- g. *That the committee Chair be determined by its membership;*
- h. *That committee quorum be a simple majority; and*
- i. *That the Academic Action Plan Implementation Advisory Committee be advised in its work through creation of a support circle comprised of volunteer members from the collaborative teams contributing to this report.*

### **Prioritizing for Implementation**

The suite of goals and recommendations comprising the Academic Action Plan work together to advance and accomplish our collective mission and vision for UNBC. Prioritizing these goals and recommendations into broad sets is meant to maintain their integration while enabling their fulsome implementation over time. The priority is not given so as to rank their relative importance for selecting one or another for action, nor is it meant to be a strict linear sequencing. Action can happen on multiple fronts and in many cases concurrently. In other cases, and for efficiency, certain steps are needed before others. Therefore, this priority provides guidance for a coordinated and full implementation that reflects the internal logic of the Academic Action Plan.

Priority sets I, II, and VI (Decolonization and Indigenization, Strategic Enrolment, and Experiential Education, Teaching and Learning) can start immediately, run concurrently, and integrate with progress being made on priority sets III, IV, and V (Academic Structure; Curriculum Reviews; Faculty Complement), progress on which can also begin now.

While all sets are related, there are particularly strong reciprocal links between priorities III and IV (Academic Structure and Curriculum Reviews) and between V & VI (Faculty Complement and Experiential Education, Teaching and Learning).

### **I. Decolonization and Indigenization**

This priority set is distributed throughout the Academic Action Plan. Decolonization and Indigenization at UNBC is a priority and ongoing process that informs action within all priority sets. Some Indigenous-related elements can begin independently, others are integrated into broader goals and recommendations, and still others are yet to be determined and will arise out of ongoing conversations.

### **II. Strategic Enrolment**

This issue is urgent. The implementation and integration of a strategic, holistic, effective, and sustainable approach to enrolment at UNBC is imperative. Achieving this priority set is critical to the immediate and long-term success and survival of the University. Short-term decisions and tactics should fit within, and not jeopardize, long-term strategy for (a) building capacity across the enrolment continuum, from pre-recruitment through to alumni relations, and (b) achieving an ideal student body



for UNBC as a destination university for experiential education. We need to also invest in frontline service staff and systems; presently, we cannot properly serve our applicants or our enrolled students. Until fixed, this will continue to constrain the success of student recruitment, the delivery of academic programs, and the satisfaction of our students and alumni. Action towards some goals and on some recommendations can begin independently, while others need to be integrated with changes suggested in other priority sets.

### **III. Academic Structure**

Achieving the goal of a new college structure is likely the most visible and anticipated change suggested in the Academic Action Plan. Importantly, doing so will bring stability to programs and clarify leadership responsibilities (see Responsibility and Authority, Primary Units, and Unit Changes), which are needed for efficient progress to be made on other contingent goals and recommendations. However, the visibility of reorganizing units should not overshadow the more fundamental goals and recommendations related to enacting the guiding philosophy that clarifies and coordinates roles, responsibilities, and the appropriate sharing of power for success. Putting the Guiding Philosophy (see 2.1) into practice sets the critical foundation needed to both achieve and thrive within a new academic structure.

### **IV. Curriculum Reviews**

Accomplishing the various goals and recommendations related to curriculum reviews for degrees, programs, and other units will help achieve the specific content and look of a reorganized academic structure.

### **V. Faculty Complement**

This issue is urgent. Faculty complement has far-reaching implications for success across the University, and our ability to deliver our core functions is currently debilitated. Achieving these goals and recommendations is crucial for student experience, teaching and learning, service, and research. It makes strategic sense that the faculty complement responds to and supports both the new academic structure and the results of curriculum reviews within and across similar programs. Faculty complement must also correspond with goals and recommendations regarding experiential education, teaching and learning, and curriculum flexibility.

### **VI. Experiential Education, Teaching and Learning**

Solidifying the faculty complement will help advance our goals and recommendations for teaching and learning, as well as curriculum flexibility, but these must be done in such a way as to support becoming a destination university for experiential education within and beyond our signature areas.

## Vision, Mission, and Values

### **Our Motto**

*En Cha Huna - Translated from the Lheidli dialect of the Dakelh language is: "En (that person) Cha (also) Huná (lives)"*

Expressed in the Dakelh language, with permission, our motto provides insight into the spirit of UNBC. Rooted in our community, En Cha Huná captures the soul of our institution – respect for our community, ourselves, and the world around us. This spirit guides us in our partnerships and relationships with Aboriginal peoples, and our pursuit of knowledge and discovery.

### **Our Mission**

*To prepare leaders for tomorrow by influencing the world today.*

UNBC strives to provide a safe and challenging learning environment where students gain leadership skills and stretch their boundaries, not only through academic discussion and debate, but also through opportunities to work closely with faculty and staff on research projects and a wide range of initiatives that improve student life or contribute to a need in the community, the region or far beyond.

### **Our Vision**

*A destination university, personal in character, that transforms lives and communities in the North and around the world.*

Our founders established a university "in the North - for the North." They envisioned and built an institution where all are welcomed, learn, live, work closely with our faculty and staff, and transform the quality of life in northern British Columbia, the province, and beyond.

### **Our Values**

*In our workplaces, relationships and communications, we are committed to positive and productive work and learning environments.*

Our values inform our lives, our decisions, and our choices. At UNBC our values include:

- **Experiential learning, exploration, and discovery** - Our community celebrates and strives to provide an unparalleled learning experience that ensures that our students are prepared to meet the challenges of a fast-paced modern world, while stepping up and making a difference. UNBC is a champion of intellectual freedom, academic inquiry, learning for its own sake, access to information, learning through applied and best practices in experiential initiatives and the development and mobilization of new knowledge.
- **Inclusiveness and diversity** - Social and cultural diversity is core to enriching the learning environment of a modern university. The confluence of diversity and respectful discussion stimulates creative thoughts, new ways of thinking, and new pathways of inquiry. This ensures that our research questions address society as a whole, and enables us to train leaders who understand our local and global communities.
- **Community** - UNBC is a place where community thrives and where we strive to understand and care for other members of our University. It is a place all are welcome and where we commit to being respectful, innovative, resourceful, and responsive in our interactions with others.

- **Integrity** - To succeed we must be true to who we are, and focus on where we are now and what we want to be in the future. We are honest, supportive, and forthright in all our interactions, confronting problems and issues openly and constructively.

## **Our Signature Areas**

We are a university that strives to be relevant to the North and beyond. The following areas of strength were first identified by our founding members:

- Environmental and Natural Resources
- First Nations and Indigenous Priorities
- Health and Quality of Life
- Northern Community Sustainability and Development
- Innovative and Quality Distributed Delivery of Programs

## **Our Aspirations for Students and Community**

A relationship with UNBC starts with students' K-12 schooling, focuses on completion of undergraduate and/or graduate school, and extends into life-long learning. In their first year, students are welcomed into the school's unique culture and community; they foster the knowledge, skills, relationships, and resources needed to succeed in their program, and are endeared to the places, communities, and issues of northern British Columbia.

The long road of decolonization is of paramount importance for our community. Becoming familiar with Indigenous histories, ways of knowing, research, and pedagogies is an important process that continues throughout students' education and beyond their time at UNBC.

UNBC undergraduate programs prepare students to make contributions to their communities broadly, as well as in their chosen fields and careers specifically. The degrees draw on the unique location and perspective of UNBC to inform and work within national and international contexts.

Programs, departments, and schools clearly identify, understand, and monitor learning outcomes for their curricula. These groups take advantage of, and benefit from, expertise available in well-supported academic departments across the University, including graduate studies, and regional programs. Instructional technologies enable innovative teaching, and aid in accessibility, integration, and outreach. Undergraduate research experiences are supported and valued. Students with undergraduate degrees from UNBC are known for their critical and creative thought, practical expertise and experience, and sound ethical contributions to their sociocultural and ecological communities.

UNBC graduate programs are well integrated into the structure and ethos of the university, and are well supported. These programs attract and retain students nationally and internationally based on faculty reputation, research opportunities, financial support, and innovative curriculum design and delivery. The graduate degrees draw on the unique location and perspective of UNBC to inform and work within international and global issues and contexts. At the Master's level they provide the philosophical and practical training in the foundations of high-quality research and professional qualifications. Doctoral

degree programs at UNBC focus on training researchers and future scholars to generate new knowledge, and equip them with the skills to succeed in academia and other career paths that require the highest level of scientific and scholarly training. Graduate students contribute to and learn from mutually beneficial engagement with undergraduate programs at UNBC via teaching and research opportunities. Regional campuses and instructional technologies aid in facilitating high-quality research and accessible graduate-level education.

Life for the UNBC community is fulfilling beyond work and study. Campus life is exciting, engaged with the pressing issues of our time and world, and reflecting the University's northern places and peoples, as well as its diverse international population. Campus life relies on and contributes to building and promoting the well-being of communities (human and non-human) in northern British Columbia. The support and expression of community members' well-being is essential and clearly evident through accessible and high-quality health, food, leisure, recreation, sport, cultural, and social services and opportunities. Upon completion, students from UNBC have the skills and passion needed for lifelong learning. UNBC continues to support such learning throughout northern British Columbia, through strong alumni programs, robust academic support units, and ancillary services, as well as through regional campuses, research centres, and facilities.

## Part 1: Respect

### 1.1. University Direction – Strengths, Enrolment, Research

#### **Goal 1.1.1**

UNBC should aspire to have a strong and innovative community and culture of teaching, learning, research, and service in which all people feel secure, welcomed, and challenged in the pursuit of knowledge, and in which student voices and responsibilities are central. Faculty are free, able, and supported in generating and sharing knowledge and experimenting with approaches to teaching, research, and service. Students and faculty benefit from and rely on staff, who are essential to (and recognized for) maintaining the functioning of this community and culture.

#### **Rationale 1.1.1a**

In meetings with Chairs and leaders of units across the University, and in reviewing all past university planning reports and input to Phase 1 of the current Academic Action Plan, we identified a concern with the degree to which there was clear direction for the future development of the University and associated university programming. These comments were raised in a context where individual initiatives had been and were being identified, but where it was not always readily apparent how they fit into our existing areas of strength or how they might be part of a larger strategy to build a new area of strength. While recognizing the temptation to seize upon new initiatives to help attract potential student numbers, income, or investment, we feel strongly that UNBC has very clearly identified over its many years and academic planning activities a series of strengths that permeate the teaching, research, and wider UNBC “brand.”

We identified the importance of using the existing identified strengths as a metric for evaluating new opportunities as they arise. Such a metric could help identify opportunities relative to:

- Overall versus incremental costs;
- Fit with existing areas of strength;
- Fit with existing faculty, degree, and course availability;
- Fit with the general need to be responsive to changing topics and demands for knowledge;
- Fit with a clear potential to connect with student demands and enrolment opportunities; and
- Fit with a potential to strengthen the UNBC brand in the region, across the province, nationally, and internationally.

### **Recommendation 1.1.1a**

- *The identified hallmark strengths of UNBC should be affirmed in their role to guide the development of new opportunities, with recognition that where opportunities outside of those strengths are identified they must be accompanied by a comprehensive plan for developing that opportunity as a new area of strength that can continue to support the UNBC brand.*

### **Rationale 1.1.1b**

UNBC's vision statement identifies it as "a destination university, personal in character that transforms lives and communities in the North and around the world." We reviewed the destination university concept by examining its use, definition, and operationalization within a sample of Canadian universities. This review examined academic and strategic plans from British Columbia's research universities and other comparator universities, some of which use the destination university concept (for example, Thompson Rivers University, University of Lethbridge, and University of Victoria). Where the concept is used it tends to be weakly defined and operationalized. Through a more detailed review of the concept's use, we identified five dimensions that are often implicitly associated with a destination university, including:

1. Recognized excellence in teaching and research
2. A vibrant campus
3. Unique and flexible programs
4. Deep engagement with community and region
5. An authentic place brand

### **Recommendations 1.1.1b**

- *Adopt academic excellence as a fifth core-value, as excellence in teaching and research is a central dimension of a destination university.*
- *Rather than "a destination university", take advantage of UNBC's recent Maclean's rankings to position UNBC as "Canada's leading destination university."*
- *Demonstrate UNBC's leadership as a destination university by developing and including in the Academic Action Plan a clear definition of the concept.*
- *Using dimensions outlined below (or developed otherwise), clearly outline what core dimensions constitute UNBC as "Canada's leading destination university," in order to provide clear guidance on how goals, outcomes, and policies identified in the Academic Action Plan and other unit plans can operationalize the concept.*
- *Demonstrate leadership as "Canada's leading destination university," by including a clear definition of the concept and its core dimensions in communications and marketing internal and external to the University.*

### **Goals 1.1.2**

Build an ongoing culture of enrolment planning by adopting Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) in principle and approach. The University will transform lives and communities by transforming itself, and asking how the University can fit the student rather than how the student fits the University.

Reflect and focus on student success throughout the SEM continuum by developing and implementing comprehensive pre-recruitment, recruitment, retention, completion and alumni relation strategies that showcase our values and promote UNBC in a manner consistent with the notion of “Destination YOUNbc.”

Promote inclusiveness and diversity in UNBC enrolment by embedding the principles of universal design in the development of pedagogy, physical spaces and buildings, enrolment processes, and governance.

### **Rationale 1.1.2a**

Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) is a comprehensive and coordinated process that enables a university to identify enrolment goals that are aligned with its mission, its strategic plan, its environment, and its resources, and to reach those goals through the effective integration of administrative processes, student services, curriculum planning, and relevant data analysis<sup>1</sup>. It is an institution-wide process that embraces virtually every aspect of an institution’s function and culture to achieve and maintain the optimum recruitment, retention, and graduation rates of students, where “optimum” is defined within the academic context of the institution<sup>2</sup>.

Enrolment success requires a blending of the four faces of SEM:

1. Enrolment Management as a structural/managerial focus  
The structural/managerial face of SEM focuses on the structure and management of those departments and functions formally charged with achieving the institution’s enrolment goals. SEM decisions focus on optimal resource allocation to achieve enrolment goals, marketing and recruitment priorities, course offerings and scheduling, service efficiency, processing of academic policy, and student intervention initiatives.
2. Enrolment Management as a planning process focus  
The planning face of SEM focuses on the outward- and forward-looking activities that guide the institution’s pursuit of its preferred future in a constantly changing and competitive environment. SEM decisions focus on long-range planning and institution-wide strategy development, new curricula and academic programs, facilities development and renovation, marketing and image campaigns, investments in technology, pricing decisions and retention planning programs (early alert interventions, first-year seminar, learning communities, support services, academic advising, etc.).
3. Enrolment Management as a leadership effort focus  
The leadership face of SEM focuses on leadership as a shared responsibility, occurring at all levels and deeply embedded in the way the institution works as an organization on a day-to-day basis. SEM decisions focus on eliminating silos, enabling leadership at multiple levels, enabling staff leadership, engendering trust, communicating purpose,

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<sup>1</sup> (Kerlin, C., 2008, pp. 10-14)

<sup>2</sup> (Dolence, M.G., 1993)



and motivating people.

4. Enrolment Management as relationship development focus

The human and community face of SEM is about building relationships. Understanding how to create, nurture, and appreciate relationships will help to structure, plan, and lead SEM<sup>3</sup>.

**Recommendations 1.1.2b**

- *Create a five-year enrolment plan that adopts a Strategic Enrolment Management approach to identify optimal pre-recruitment, recruitment, retention, completion and alumni relation actions, beyond those identified as outcomes in this Academic Action Plan.*
- *Develop actions within a five-year enrolment plan that recognize the diversity of potential UNBC students, current UNBC students, and UNBC alumni, including but not limited to the needs, expectations, and experiences of domestic students, Indigenous students, international students, mature students, and first-generation university students.*
- *Develop a five-year enrolment implementation plan that identifies the time horizon within which each action will be completed, and the individual or group that is responsible for implementing that action.*

**Goal 1.1.3**

UNBC provides outstanding undergraduate and graduate learning opportunities that explore cultures, health, economies, and the environment. As one of British Columbia's research-intensive universities, we bring the excitement of new knowledge to all of our students, and the outcomes of our teaching and research to the world. In addition to fostering and celebrating academic excellence, UNBC is a welcoming place, with a learning environment that is friendly, inclusive, and supportive.

**Rationale 1.1.3a**

The research mission is to grow capacity and opportunities for research and creative activities at UNBC by engaging our people and partners, leading to the discovery of new knowledge that has transformative academic, economic or social benefit for the region, province, nation, and beyond. The mission is accomplished by the vision of building a flourishing research culture facilitated by state-of-the-art infrastructure and efficient support services, enabling UNBC scholars to undertake leading-edge local, national, and international research with respect for humanity and nature.

The University has developed a Strategic Research Action Plan and it is in the final stages of receiving input from Senate (see Appendix C).

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<sup>3</sup> (Henderson, S. E., 2017)

## 1.2. University Life

### Goal 1.2.1

We aspire to a life for the entire UNBC community that is fulfilling within and beyond work and study. Life on all of our campuses should be exciting, be engaged with the pressing issues of our time and world, and reflect the University's northern places and peoples, as well as its diverse international population.

#### Rationale 1.2.1a

The mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of students is of paramount importance at their "home-away-from-home"; we aspire to create a campus community that supports their journey toward success from day one until graduation. University culture must also prioritize the health and wellness of faculty and staff, recognizing that adequate time, support, and safe spaces will allow them to contribute to a high functioning, innovative, and welcoming university community that contributes to building and promoting the well-being of communities and ecosystems in northern British Columbia and beyond.

The support and expression of community members' well-being must be clearly evident through accessible and high-quality academic and non-academic services. A vibrant community life supports a vibrant campus life.

#### Recommendations 1.2.1a

- *Commit to a healthy and vibrant university community that:*
  - a. *Cares for the physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual well-being of the UNBC community, which may often involve family responsibilities; and*
  - b. *Fosters and supports work/life balance for students, staff, and faculty.*
- *Affirm and support the important function of our University as a venue for free and informed expression and debate.*
- *Increase access to healthy, affordable, and sustainable food options and food vendors on all UNBC campuses.*
- *Increase programmed opportunities inside and outside the class that encourage students, faculty, and staff to connect to nature, social, and civic responsibilities, and volunteering on UNBC campuses.*
- *Create an Office of Diversity, Human Rights and Prevention of Discrimination that reports directly to the President. This office would be responsible for the following:*
  - *Human Rights and Workplace Respect related activities;*
  - *Truth and Reconciliation activities;*
  - *Would serve students, staff, and faculty, and therefore cannot report to Human Resources; and*
  - *Sexual violence and misconduct<sup>4</sup> protocols, trauma-informed training and education, and disclosures.*

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.unbc.ca/sexual-violence/consultation>

### **Rationale 1.2.1b**

Student life and student experience, broadly-conceived, are central and integral to the success of the university as a whole. In support of this we agree with the Canadian Association of College and University Student Services (CACUSS) which states;

“The primary purpose of Student Services is to develop programs and provide services which support and promote student-centered education. Student Services professionals have expertise in assessing and identifying the factors, which can enhance the development of students. Student Services personnel act as informed partners in the shared tasks of shaping and maintaining a campus community where students can learn inside and outside the classroom.”<sup>5</sup>

While individual student services units are working as well as possible with resources at hand, the delivery of student services appears at times piecemeal and subject to significant upheaval with changes in personnel, leadership, location, and resources. This is particularly true for students in the regions, who have limited access to services and support. The potential for instability would be lessened with more holistic support for students and the student experience, through ensuring that the oversight, structure, and delivery of services related to student life (e.g. orientation, residence life, wellness, athletics, and recreation) be cohesive and positioned administratively and physically within the institution to best serve the needs of students.

### **Recommendations 1.2.1b**

- *The delivery of student affairs as well as teaching and learning services be recognized as comprising established professional and theoretically-informed domains as well as specific cultural competencies, in which UNBC must achieve best practices that are tailored to our unique communities.*
- *Regional delivery of activities, services, and space needed to support student life and a “UNBC experience” be made a priority, facilitated through cross-communication among units responsible for student services and regional delivery of academic programs.*
- *Front-line staff have necessary training and support to enable them to provide services that are responsive to the ebb and flow of student life, and that these staff have a role in the identification of training and support requirements (this may require clarification and negotiation with employees’ unions).*
- *A portfolio encompassing the above goals and recommendations be created and placed under the purview of an administrative leader (e.g. Dean) of the Student Affairs, Teaching and Learning Division to ensure coordination and sustainability. The mandate for this position should include a strong statement that decisions must be informed by students and front-line staff, and that actions taken within the portfolio be guided foremost by a strong ethic of service to students.*

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.uregina.ca/strategic-plan/assets/docs/pdf/sp-2015-20-together-we-are-stronger.pdf>

### **Rationale 1.2.1c**

The orientation program at UNBC has evolved over time and is now a well-organized event that has as its goal the welcoming and integration of students into the place, culture, and life at UNBC. A robust orientation program is critical to set students on a path of academic success, and it should recognize and honour UNBC's connections with Indigenous groups.

### **Recommendations 1.2.1c**

- *Orientation be expanded with the intent of fostering students' connections to, and identification with, the social, cultural, and ecological communities in which UNBC is situated, the university itself, and a student's chosen program of study;*
- *Orientation provide programming that provides an understanding of:*
  - a. *The significance, protocols, and relationships that should be honoured and respected when welcoming students onto the traditional territory of First Nations and Indigenous groups;*
  - b. *Opportunities to begin and continue the processes of decolonization, particularly, as well as prepare students, faculty, and staff for intercultural encounters, including combating racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination in order to foster respect for the full humanity of all members of the UNBC community;*
  - c. *Respectful and appropriate celebration and engagement with the traditions, ceremonies, and practices of the communities in which our campuses are located; and*
  - d. *Opportunities for students to integrate and experience the diversity of UNBC through our regional structure.*
- *Develop plans to best serve students who do not begin their programs at the usual September date, and students who transfer from other institutions or who are returning mature students.*

### **Goals 1.2.2**

Through rich student engagement, develop transition and retention strategies that promote community, student success, and academic excellence as core values of UNBC, and completion strategies to mitigate attrition within at-risk student groups.

Make student experience personalized and central to UNBC's values and its commitment to being "Canada's leading destination university."

Ensure conditions for student success are in place by increasing awareness of the benefits of existing student support services among students, faculty, and staff.

### **Rationale 1.2.2a**

Optimal retention and completion can only be achieved when all students have a quality student experience and are connected to faculty, staff, alumni, and the community both within and outside the classroom. To achieve this vision, enrolment should be directed out of a single

office, but should be built into every aspect of university life.

### **Recommendations 1.2.2a**

- *Improve students' advising experience by investing in, or enabling through technology improvements or efficiencies, more advising capacity, and ensure that students can readily access advisors, especially around peak times.*
- *Keep in contact with students who leave UNBC prior to completion, update them with what is happening at UNBC, and develop a re-entrance strategy for students who may become motivated or better prepared to return to studies at UNBC.*
- *Create an "invite us" calendar that lets councilors plan for their students to visit or for recruiters/advisors to meet at the school.*
- *Ensure advisors are experts in their areas, but with cross-training in case of absence.*
- *Support advisor – program links to ensure that advisors are aware of program changes and for advisors to provide programs with advice regarding proposed changes.*
- *Maintain a hybrid model of advisors centrally located together, but with program-specific portfolios.*
- *Maintain the co-location of Advising, Recruitment, and Admissions – these units need to be in close physical and organizational proximity to best serve students.*
- *Investigate the opportunity to bring together Health/Counseling, Access Resource Centre (ARC), and the proposed Office of Diversity, Human Rights and Prevention of Discrimination in neighboring locations, while retaining their function as independent units (due to confidentiality).*
- *Consider development of a neighbourhood of learning centres where appropriate, to improve student access and reduce redundancy (e.g. The Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology (CTLT)/Academic Success Centre (ASC)/Mathematical Academic Centre for Excellence (MACE)).*
- *Enable and support opportunities for cultural expression on UNBC campuses and in our host communities, and broaden and invest in outdoor recreation, outdoor leisure, and outdoor sport activities and opportunities that reflect and embrace the northern setting and seasonality of our campuses. The approach to doing so should:*
  - a. *Ensure adequate resources and funding to provide spaces for diverse cultural practices and engagement at all of our campuses; ensuring there are safe (i.e. trauma-informed) spaces is important;*
  - b. *Review the status of, and provide where needed, permanent facilities that reflect, celebrate, and enable local Indigenous ceremonial, spiritual, and cultural practices to live; this should be part of the Aboriginal Strategic Action Plan recommended in 1.5.1c;*
  - c. *Prioritize leisure and recreation opportunities that emphasize northern places, peoples, issues, and experiences;*
  - d. *Through the Student Affairs, Teaching and Learning Division (recommendation 1.2.1b) develop a plan to foster collaborations between academic and non-academic units so as to provide opportunities both for leisure and learning within the UNBC community;*

- e. *Encourage the development of partnerships with local communities, groups, clubs, associations, organizations, and businesses that bring opportunities for students and other University members to connect with each other and internal and external communities. Ensure the resulting opportunities for the UNBC community are not-for-profit and accessible;*
  - f. *Cultural and recreational activities at UNBC should benefit local communities whenever possible;*
  - g. *As part of the Strategic Enrolment Plan (1.1.2b), assess mobility barriers that students face in accessing community and natural amenities, and develop and implement a plan to reduce or eliminate these barriers (e.g. by operating a UNBC shuttle); and*
  - h. *Task a representative from Student Affairs to work with the Northern Undergraduate Student Society (NUGSS) and the Northern British Columbia Graduate Student Society (NBCGSS) to find ways to better establish and support student clubs and chapters on all UNBC campuses to provide accessible events and activities that contribute to campus life.*
- *Monitor retention and completion efforts among UNBC's diverse student groups, including but not limited to domestic students, Indigenous students, international students, mature students, and first-generation university students, by tracking attrition rates, recognizing that any one student may belong to several groups.*
  - *Conduct a student housing study to identify existing UNBC student housing patterns, current student housing needs and demand, and gaps between these.*
  - *Collaborate with local governments to identify opportunities to provide off-campus student housing in amenity rich areas (e.g. downtown Prince George).*
  - *Collaborate with the City of Prince George and British Columbia Transit to explore opportunities to connect the UNBC Prince George Campus and Downtown Prince George via an express bus route.*

### 1.3. Empowerment and Collaboration

#### Goals 1.3.1

University operations will become more efficient and effective when front-line employees are empowered to make decisions without having to wait for permission from their “one-up” or higher to approve and then for the approval to work its way back down the ladder. Better decisions and more efficient use of resources will result from enhanced communication and collaboration among academic and administrative units, and involvement of employees in decision-making processes will support employee commitment and productivity.

#### Rationale 1.3.1a

Engagement feedback strongly indicated that employees were feeling a lack of empowerment and an increase in workload (more work with fewer people) so that burnout was a very significant theme throughout. Faculty and staff feel that their role in decision-making and the overall mission of the University is not understood and respected, and they seek a greater input into university decision-making.

Many employees at UNBC are never, or are infrequently, evaluated. This is a lost opportunity for two-way communication that can lead to increases in performance and productivity.

#### **Recommendations 1.3.1a**

- *The implementation phase of the Academic Action Plan look for opportunities by which UNBC employees can be empowered to make responsible decisions whenever possible. Decision-making authority should be distributed, with particular focus on front-line employees, so that meaningful information can be provided quickly and accurately at the point of first contact.*
- *Develop a collaborative process, which engages unit members, to review organizational units with an eye to redistribute resources toward front-line services, with less emphasis on management.*
- *Integrate student leadership into all aspects of decision-making with respect to academic administrative units.*
- *Ensure that institutional priorities, as articulated in this and other University plans, are clear.*
- *Encourage individual units to create internal strategic plans flowing from the University Integrated Plan to help guide unit direction and provide buy-in and clarity for unit personnel.*
- *Ensure that all policies and procedures are up-to-date, to reflect laws, regulations and mandates; ensure that these are posted so that the external community as well as UNBC employees can access them (transparency), and that old policies and procedures are cleared from the system.*
- *As a component of Chair training and mentoring (Recommendation 2.2.1a), and supervisor and employee training and mentoring, ensure that relevant policies and procedures are included as part of the training, and subsequently interpreted consistently and implemented.*
- *Unit heads should review training needs for members of the unit, and ensure appropriate training is provided. Unit heads should be trained in mentorship, and able to provide mentorship to all positions, with clear, articulated expectations for performance.*
- *Provide for upward evaluation as well as downward evaluation.*
- *Provide for evaluation of all positions.*
- *Reduce redundancies in databases and enable information sharing. Deans should be tasked with a review of allocation of administrative support (administrative assistants) by workload (e.g. numbers of students, numbers of faculty, activities of unit) to ensure equity among both administrative assistant workload and support available to faculty.*
- *Improve communication between structural layers of UNBC by providing opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to talk directly with senior administration informally, and for regular senior administration visits to program, staff and student meetings.*

#### **Rationale 1.3.1b**

As noted elsewhere in this report, the Senate committee structure needs to be re-evaluated for a number of reasons, the most relevant in this section is to enhance and support the role of



students, faculty, and staff on Senate and Senate committees, and to ensure decision-making is efficient and well-informed by those on the front-line.

#### **Recommendation 1.3.1b**

- *That Senate be tasked with reviewing Senate committee structure and membership in consideration of: the number of committees, member ratios (student and faculty representation should be prioritized), and workload associated with motion forms, and non-substantive changes (e.g. faculty listings in the calendar).*

#### **Rationale 1.3.1c**

As with several recommendations in this report, we are concerned with the use of Senate committees and sub-committees to address topics critical to the future development of the University. While these serve a vital and important function, that function too often seems limited to reviewing already developed curriculum plans as part of a linear approval process. We have identified the need for several new “platforms for dialogue” on critical issues where such platforms are not siloed within singular university governance structures. The topics include Aboriginal and Indigenous priorities, strategic undergraduate curriculum directions, international relations opportunities, and others. How such committees might look, and where they might fit into the University structure, is a task for the next phase of dialogue.

#### **Recommendation 1.3.1c**

- *Create a new series of university-wide committees (starting with those identified in various sections of this report) tasked with taking up more creative, flexible, and strategic dialogue on topics central to UNBC’s mission and mandate over the next decades.*

#### **Goal 1.3.2**

Students, faculty, and staff develop relationships with various functions, groups, and individuals during their time at UNBC, that are an important component of productivity and job satisfaction. Our goal is to ensure that these relationships are maintained when individuals leave, by having a robust and effective renewal and retention plan.

#### **Rationale 1.3.2a**

Rapid employee turnover, inefficiencies in process, poor employee morale, errors in process, and other problems can arise when employee renewal and retention are not adequately prioritized and addressed. These can have profound negative impacts on enrolment, scholarly activity, and reputation. It is critical to the mission of UNBC, that succession plans be developed to facilitate smooth transitions resulting from retirements, and retention plans be implemented to ensure faculty and staff are satisfied with their work and productive.

### **Recommendation 1.3.2a**

- *That senior administration ensure that comprehensive employee renewal and retention plans are developed for all employee groups.*

## **1.4. Faculty Renewal and Development**

### **Rationale 1.4.1a**

The Academic Action Plan must require clarity, stability, equity, and predictability in the process and criteria used to make decisions about faculty positions, hiring, and program complements, and that the process and criteria directly reflect and support enacting the plan.

Student learning experience and instructor/faculty teaching are being affected by inadequate, incomplete, and unpredictable complements of faculty in units or programs. The loss of a faculty member jeopardizes delivery of the curricula, reduces ability for a program to personally connect with students, and augments the service load for the remaining faculty, further degrading the quality of teaching. Putting a hold on hiring is not neutral - the longer positions remain unfilled, the worse the situation becomes. Sessional or short-term positions do not adequately or predictably contribute to service, are highly likely to simply re-present courses as they had been delivered, and do not have the security or predictability that would encourage people towards professional development or dedication to our degree programs. Furthermore, the reputation and perception of programs, and therefore their marketability to potential students and faculty, is diminished. Finally, there is little sense of control, security, or stability as to whether or when positions will “be allowed” to be filled, adding to an inability to properly plan teaching assignments, make curriculum changes, and innovate programs.

The success of a university in teaching, research, and service is heavily contingent on staff. Unfilled and unsupported staff positions at UNBC make the ability to do good work and attract and support students extremely difficult. When staff positions remain unfilled, teaching, research and service at the institution is negatively impacted.

### **Recommendations 1.4.1a**

- *Vacant positions should be filled.*
- *Faculty Renewal and Retention Action Plan should be developed within the limits of the Faculty Agreement.*

*(\*\*Note: Please note that this section will be updated and informed by the Faculty Renewal and Development Survey that is in progress.)*

## **1.5. Decolonization and Indigenization**

Decolonization and Indigenization, as an extension of UNBC’s signature area of First Nations and Indigenous priorities and the university motto, is woven throughout the Academic Action Plan. Recommendations by the collaborative teams regarding decolonization and Indigenization

emerged from dialogue and research. These recommendations, the direction, and decisions to be taken need to be properly and respectfully informed by the Aboriginal and Indigenous peoples and knowledge holders of our campuses and the larger UNBC region. It is important such recommendations move forward in a way that is guided by Indigenous intellectual principles and knowledge so they are respectfully enduring and meaningful.

### **Goal 1.5.1**

Decolonization and Indigenization are inextricably linked, and in keeping with its strategic priorities and its founding intentions for Indigenous students and communities, UNBC commits to decolonization and Indigenization of the institution.

#### **Rationale 1.5.1a**

From its founding, Aboriginal and Indigenous students, communities, priorities, and concerns have been a defining characteristic of UNBC. This is celebrated and included in many ways and means in the University, its academic and service programming, and general conduct of business. UNBC aspires to honor this distinction and uphold the voice and contribution of the Indigenous community to UNBC's reputation and character.

First Nations of northern British Columbia are key communities that have strong expectations of UNBC and should be served by the University. UNBC needs to better meet these expectations; to do so involves establishing long-term, positive relationships with the communities. While often done at an individual level, these relationships need to also be fostered and celebrated at a larger institutional level.

It is not the sole responsibility of our Aboriginal and Indigenous students, staff, faculty and alumni to decolonize the institution. The expectations on Aboriginal and Indigenous community members at UNBC are often too high and inappropriate. The responsibility for decolonizing UNBC needs to be an institutional priority for action, taken-up by informed, educated, compassionate settler allies in consultation and consort with Aboriginal advisors, leaders, Elders, scholars, and community members.

Decolonization and Indigenization involves long-term commitment taken up by students, faculty, staff, and alumni at UNBC. All members of our community should be encouraged and given opportunities to begin and continue this journey, weaving it into the fabric of university life.

Indigenization is place-based, unique, and should be shaped and informed by the local communities, realities, and traditional territories at each of our campuses and the UNBC region at large. It is inextricably linked to respect for and connection with the land. Environmental awareness and sustainability must be authentically grounded in holistic, place-based principles of ecological integrity that honour our connections to the land, water, and non-human species with which we share space and place. UNBC's branding as "Canada's Green University" should be revisited within this context.

The institutional and pedagogical practices recommended to move toward decolonization and Indigenization are best practices intended to enhance the university experience for everyone.

Moving toward these practices will likely push up against – and require honesty and clarity about – the limits and possible avenues to decolonization within an institution founded in Western epistemological, ontological, and governance structures. As such, we also recognize that the following recommendations under this section are not divisible.

Based on the First Peoples Principles of Learning, and the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, including the call to “integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms” and “build student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect,” that UNBC identify decolonization and Indigenization as a main and on-going area of emphasis for the institution. The First Peoples Principles of Learning state that:

“Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors. Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place). Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one’s actions. Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities. Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge. Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story. Learning involves patience and time. Learning requires exploration of one’s identity. Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.”

#### **Recommendations 1.5.1a**

- *A clear statement should be developed from Senate and the Board of Governors reaffirming UNBC’s commitment to Aboriginal and Indigenous priorities, students, and communities.*
- *Working with Aboriginal communities, UNBC should seek to understand and resolve ways in which the institution participates or has participated in a harmful, colonial system. Further, racial biases on our campuses must be immediately addressed.*
- *UNBC must open opportunities and explore avenues to actively decolonize our governance structures, including Senate and the Board of Governors. This includes both physical spaces and process, and will be a challenging exercise of decolonization within an institution founded in Western epistemological, ontological, and governance structures.*

#### **Rationale 1.5.2a**

Building on Rationale 1.3.1c regarding the creation of a set of strategic committees as “platforms for dialogue” to address topics of critical future development at UNBC, we suggest creating an Aboriginal Priorities Council that would be informed by and receive support and advice from an Aboriginal Support Circle, and would serve as a focal point for deliberation on important Aboriginal and Indigenous matters at UNBC.

### **Recommendations 1.5.2a**

- *Commit to the development of an Aboriginal Strategic Action Plan.*
- *Build on the work of the Aboriginal Advisor to the President, the Provost's Committee on Pedagogical Practice Action Group on Indigenization, the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the First Peoples Principles of Learning to explicitly shape the work and understanding of Indigenization through collaborative and engaging effort between the institution and communities in the UNBC region. Some universities, for example, the University of Regina Aboriginal Advisory Circle to the President (AAC) understand Indigenization as:*

*"The transformation of the existing academy by including Indigenous knowledges, voices, critiques, scholars, students, and materials as well as the establishment of physical and epistemic spaces that facilitate the ethical stewardship of a plurality of Indigenous knowledges, and practices so thoroughly as to constitute an essential element of the University. It is not limited to Indigenous people, but encompasses all students and faculty, for the benefit of our academic integrity and our social viability."*

*This is a key opportunity to have UNBC embark on its own path of foundation and definition in regards to Decolonization and Indigenization in all spheres of the intuitional community.*

- *Create an Aboriginal Priorities Council, comprised of University members, community members, and Elders that can provide broad input and advice, and can serve as a focal point for deliberation on important Aboriginal and Indigenous matters at UNBC. The work of the Council would be informed by and receive support from, an Aboriginal Support Circle.*
- *Create an Aboriginal Support Circle comprised of individuals who can help inform, when needed, the deliberations of the Aboriginal Priorities Council.*
- *Engage with Elders and Aboriginal advisors to ensure administrative structures and processes are consistent with the concept of Aboriginal and Indigenous ways of knowing.*
- *Encourage more face-to-face communication (versus email or even phone calls), which promotes dialogue.*

### **Rationale 1.5.2b**

Indigenization of the curriculum, the learning environment, and the ongoing practices and operations of the University are also central to UNBC's academic structure – a vital part of who we are. Strong arguments were made about the value of maintaining a First Nations Studies academic program, about maintaining an independent First Nations Centre to support students and provide a unique space on campus. Also noted was the value and imperative of the University's regional presence, both generally but especially for Aboriginal communities, to supporting our academic programming and maintaining important inter-institutional partnerships/relationships with colleges and Aboriginal post-secondary institutes/institutions. As well, strong arguments were made for continuing to encourage Aboriginal content and approaches in UNBC's curriculum, while at the same time not requiring a "First Nations 100" type course for all undergraduate students. As such, we identified the need to provide greater

support to faculty and others delivering courses and programming.

**Recommendation 1.5.2b**

- *Identify resources and processes to help new faculty and staff hires become readily oriented to UNBC's rich history, relationships, mission, and mandate with respect to Indigenous, Aboriginal, and First Nations priorities, students, curriculum, services, and communities to assist new hires in more readily taking their place in the University's continuing journey.*

**Recommendation 1.5.2c**

- *Identify specific financial and structural resources to support:*
  - a. *The creation of an Aboriginal Support Circle;*
  - b. *An orientation package/process for new hires;*
  - c. *An Indigenization Facilitator to consider pathways to meet the Calls to Action put forward by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission;*
  - d. *A full-time position dedicated to actively building and developing relationships with First Nation and other Aboriginal communities in UNBC's service region; and*
  - e. *Clarification of the current position of Aboriginal Advisor to the President.*

**Recommendations 1.5.2d**

- *Commit support and resources toward an enrolment process that promotes decolonization and reconciliation (e.g. Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, Responsibility). The enrolment process is a partnership, and the enrolment strategy must be about a dialogue that leads to the development of relationships.*
- *Create a separate admissions path that connects Aboriginal communities to a team of recruiters and advisors.*
- *Increase the number of partnerships with Aboriginal and regional communities, and other educational institutes and agencies to examine shared goals and research priorities, and to facilitate student movement to UNBC.*
- *Increase funding, support, and expansion of the Elder-in-Residence program to allow for deeper integration of Elders into everyday campus life, classroom life, and throughout ceremonies and events, not just for the opening prayer. Ensure Elders are treated with respect and care, and are consulted as to the proper protocol required for their visits and participation, from the start to the end of their time at UNBC.*
- *As part of the Aboriginal Strategic Action Plan consider ways to value and facilitate the role of family in Aboriginal and Indigenous cultures. For example, through funding travel bursaries for families to attend convocation.*
- *Recognize through actions and decisions that symbolism, if not backed by authentic commitment and deep engagement, becomes tokenism and sensationalism. We recommend increasing the visibility of Aboriginal cultures at UNBC through the use of culturally appropriate symbols, signage, language, art, music, etc., in order to build community and acknowledge these places, cultures, and histories, as well as*

*making visible our collective commitment to decolonization and Indigenous ways of knowing. This includes the active and authentic acknowledgement of traditional territories, and integration of other culturally appropriate protocol into everyday life and experience on our campuses and in our activities.*

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## Part 2: Restructure

### 2.1. Academic Units - Guiding Philosophy

#### **Rationale 2.1.1a**

In balancing roles within administrative levels, we were attracted to a general structural philosophy that is quite typical within other universities where:

- The President is tasked with looking “externally” so as to guide the future development of the University, watch for threats and opportunities, and undertake to develop strategic partnerships and linkages;
- The Vice-President Academic and Provost is tasked with looking “internally” at the day-to-day management of the academic programming and functioning;
- The Deans are tasked with looking “externally” to guide the future development of their college, school, or faculty in much the same way as the President does for the institution; and
- The Chairs are tasked to look “internally” at the day-to-day management of their program or department.

#### **Recommendation 2.1.1a**

- *Confirm and support this guiding philosophy to leadership roles as it sets the critical foundation for the rest of the academic structure.*

### 2.2. Academic Units – Responsibility and Authority

#### **Rationale 2.2.1a**

In concert with the guiding philosophy, and possible changes to the existing colleges, we heard considerable input about the need for a re-organization of responsibilities and authority between different levels in the leadership structure. In particular, our concern focused upon the distribution of such responsibilities between Deans and Chairs.

The current allocation of responsibilities and authority between Deans and Chairs is largely governed by the Faculty Agreement. We recognized that the current allocation is a continuation of what was created to support and fit UNBC's first organizational framework. Given how that framework no longer exists, a comprehensive review of responsibilities and authority between these two leadership levels is long overdue. In order to make any new university academic structure functional, the distribution of responsibilities and authority between Deans and Chairs needs to be reviewed and rebalanced appropriately.

### **Recommendations 2.2.1a**

- *Develop a plan for reallocating responsibilities and authority between Deans and Chairs and that this be undertaken and set forth as a suite of changes to be adopted by both parties in the next Faculty Agreement collective bargaining.*
- *Develop and implement a comprehensive set of supports, training, and mentorship for academic Chairs.*

## **2.3. Academic Units – College Structure**

### **Goal 2.3.1**

The goal is to have organizational structures that enhance opportunities for academic programs to be supported, to grow, to function efficiently, and to enable effective leadership by Chairs and Deans.

### **Rationale 2.3.1a**

From the original thoughts of the Interior University Society (IUP), which pushed back on ideas that UNBC would be “a small mirror image of most Canadian universities” or “a glorified degree-granting technological institute,” through to President Weller’s notion of a university that offered a “reasonable range of programs” and had a positive influence on the “economic, social and cultural development of the region,” UNBC has offered students a breadth of programs that include arts, sciences, and professional programs. As a small university with a diversity of programs, the number of faculty supporting each academic program is small. In some cases, academic units have been able to work within the constraints of a small faculty complement through innovative collaborations, for example the integration of Chemistry and Biology faculty to create the very successful Biochemistry and Molecular Biology degree, or the Wildlife and Fisheries major that has relied on cooperation between Forestry and Biology faculty. We also have organizational units that offer both a BSc and a BA (e.g. Geography).

Collectively this results in a high probability that we are unlikely to come up with a college structure that is a perfect fit for every program or is fully satisfactory to every faculty member. However, our goal is to have structures that enhance opportunities for programs to be supported, to grow, to function efficiently, and to enable effective leadership by Chairs and Deans. As previously identified, the current two-college structure has been determined to lack these opportunities, and that the potential is to replace the two existing colleges with smaller, more cohesive, and thematically aligned units.

Among the many challenges associated with college re-organization, two issues are worth noting here. The first is the risk in going too far the other way, of creating too many small, disaggregated units that lack critical mass and synergy. The second is that no matter how cohesive and thematically aligned new college units might be, the creation of any structure also creates the potential for enhancing “separation” across the University. As noted elsewhere in this Academic Action Plan, our pathway forward is via an openness to integrative, collaborative, cross- and multi-disciplinary initiatives that support and infuse creativity and responsiveness across the University and amongst the faculty and staff.

To move the conversation about college structure along, we reviewed past structures, investigated structural models at other institutions, and sought ideas on potential models during both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Academic Action Planning process. We have tried to develop units that foster linkages within, but given the unique structures mentioned above, it will also be necessary for enhanced inter-college communication and cooperation. The result of those efforts is a proposed college structure, into which academic/degree programs/faculty would align themselves.

#### **Recommendations 2.3.1b**

- *This recommendation has been put forward to begin the dialogue about the college structure and therefore, we recommend that five colleges be created, in addition to the College of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies (described in section 2.7):*
  - *Business and Education (Education could also fit into the Health and Human Sciences)*
  - *Environment and Natural Resources*
  - *Health and Human Sciences*
  - *Humanities, Social and Indigenous Studies*
  - *Physical and Applied Sciences*
- *This college structure should align graduate degrees with organizational structures such that curriculum changes, teaching assignments, and other responsibilities can be more effectively managed, especially for the interdisciplinary graduate programs. It will be the responsibility of the College Dean to ensure that teaching, evaluation, and other needs in both undergraduate and graduate programs are met.*

## **2.4. Academic Units – Primary units**

#### **Rationale 2.4.1a**

In reorganizing into smaller colleges, opportunities must be provided for smaller academic units to cooperatively come together into larger units; we recognized that not all primary academic units on campus might be in need of reorganization, but it was identified that some smaller units face sustainability concerns. As a result, we recognized the need to create an opportunity for smaller primary academic units to work collaboratively to create larger units. Principles for such opportunities include: a coherence of disciplinary alliances that would facilitate the potential for co-teaching; reductions of first-year offerings via the co-listing of courses; and enhanced opportunities for cross-disciplinary teaching and collaboration. Furthermore, the spaces occupied by programs should respond to and support the nature of the degrees, as well as their students and faculty.

One of the key impediments to forming larger primary academic units is the need to preserve the visibility of traditional disciplines and knowledge areas even when new degrees and teaching options may emerge. Therefore, we recognize the importance of preserving discipline-based degrees and course prefixes in order to support disciplinary identity and visibility both internal and external to UNBC.

Our assessment of the challenges facing the University in the decades to come means that the academic units must maintain a level of readiness, responsiveness, and adaptability. The creation of some larger primary academic units in areas with intellectual coherence and the potential for synergies provides an opportunity for those units to enhance their creativity and flexibility in the face of emerging opportunities.

#### **Recommendations 2.4.1a**

- *Provide opportunities and incentives for smaller academic units to reorganize themselves into larger academic units.*
- *In any reorganization of smaller academic units, the disciplinary degrees and course prefixes be preserved to maintain disciplinary identity.*
- *Ensure Deans play a leadership role in assisting newly combined primary academic units to achieve efficiencies in their undergraduate course delivery and to revise their disciplinary-based degrees as well as any emergent degrees to make greater use of the synergies available in the combined units.*
- *Encourage the development of program identities.*

#### **Rationale 2.4.2a**

Planning documents made it clear that UNBC was to be a “full service university” with a range of academic programs. Feedback collected during the development of the Academic Action Plan has reaffirmed the desire to maintain a range of disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and professional programs. With limited resources, it then becomes imperative that units strongly consider and seek out ways to share teaching resources and instructional opportunities to mutually support and improve content and teaching quality, break down disciplinary and professional boundaries, create relationships, and improve efficiency.

#### **Recommendation 2.4.2a**

- *That Deans provide a framework and support for smaller administrative units to work together in the pursuit of efficiencies by conducting the following:*
  - a. *Comparing curricula and learning outcomes;*
  - b. *Reducing redundant courses;*
  - c. *Synchronizing scheduling between allied units/programs/degrees; and/or*
  - d. *Considering shared modules within and between courses. (See also Section 3.3 “Curriculum Flexibility).”*

## **2.5. Academic Units – Primary unit changes: process and support**

#### **Rationale 2.5.1a**

We propose a series of stages necessary in any effort to combine smaller primary academic units into larger ones. The process is not divisible. Two aspects are considered critical for success in any proposed re-combining of primary academic units. The first is that any such proposals must be bottom-up from the primary academic units themselves. The second is that the University’s senior administration must commit to the support identified in the process described below.

### **Recommendation 2.5.1a**

- *That any bottom-up proposals for the re-combination of smaller primary academic units into larger ones' work through the following process elements:*
  - *The original primary academic units must identify the core skill and knowledge sets required for the delivery of any existing discipline-based degree(s). This identification must be bounded by current offerings.*
  - *In the process of re-combining academic units, there must also be proposals for the re-organization of existing discipline-based degrees so as to take advantage of new synergies and new linkages within the larger academic unit.*
  - *In the proposed reorganization of existing discipline-based degrees, the academic unit must clarify and identify how disciplinary credibility is being maintained.*
  - *The re-combined primary academic unit must also develop at least one new course, major, stream, credential, focus, etc., proposal that takes advantage of the new academic unit structure, creates new opportunities for student recruitment, fits with the University's strategic directions, and capitalizes on emergent issues in society.*
  - *Once a proposed re-combined primary academic unit has completed the first four elements of this process, the University's senior administration should confirm its support for the initiative and commit to supporting unit sustainability by securing the faculty positions identified in element 1) as meeting the core skill and knowledge sets.*

## **2.6. Academic Support Units**

### **Goal 2.6.1**

Institutional priorities in the area of student support and innovative teaching are well supported, efficiently operated, and engage in meaningful collaborations among related units and academic programs.

### **Rationale 2.6.1a**

The current administrative structures require revision to ensure adequate allocation of resources in areas that are an institutional priority and in response to exponential growth in demand, and also to ensure meaningful collaborations among related units.

UNBC has particular responsibility to certain academic service units, many of which are experiencing considerable increases in demand for services while resources remain stagnant. These include the Academic Resource Centre (ARC), Counseling, the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology (CTLT), and the First Nations Centre.

UNBC also has a strong focus on experiential learning and while resources are currently available for development of experiential learning opportunities, there is little administrative

support, guidance or instruction for this highly effective teaching approach, especially in the case of field schools.

#### **Recommendations 2.6.1a**

- *New investments should be made in support units with priority given to ARC, Counseling, Centre for Teaching and Learning, and the First Nations Centre.*
- *Maintain the library as an independent unit with direct report to Vice-President Academic and Provost.*
- *Aggregate related academic administrative units into two divisions, while maintaining their existing unit structures that are academically organized and internally coherent, with each grouping to have an independent lead.*
- *Create a **Teaching and Learning Division** to be a collective of the following units.*
  - *Centre for Teaching, Learning, and Technology (CTLT - distance/hybridized learning)/Academic Success Centre/Mathematics Centre of Excellence*
  - *First Nations Centre*
  - *Experiential Learning Office (newly proposed), that provides support for the following units and activities:*
    - *Career Centre*
    - *Co-operative Education*
    - *Field School*
    - *Internships*
    - *Practica*
- *Create a **Student Affairs Division** that is a collective of the following units.*
  - *Financial Aid*
  - *Registrar*
  - *Advising (see separate recommendations for Advising in section 1.2.2)*
  - *Recruitment (see separate recommendations for recruitment in section 3.2.1)*
  - *Student Life and Residences*
  - *Office of Diversity, Human Rights, and Prevention of Discrimination (see 1.2.1)*
  - *Wellness Centre (Counselling and Wellness)*
  - *Academic Resource Centre (ARC)*
- *As much as possible, health and well-being services should be co-located (Counseling, Health, ARC, along with the new Office of Diversity, Human Rights, and Prevention of Discrimination) with effective procedures in place to ensure communication among the independent units.*
- *Undertake a review of laboratory support services with regard to reporting structure, roles and responsibilities, and opportunities for two-way discussions on productivity. This review would include the Radiation Safety Officer, Biosafety Officer, Chemical Safety Officer, Enhanced Forestry Lab, and Northern Analytical Services.*
- *Recognize that international students require a hybrid model of support, and that includes support specialized to international student needs as well as integration with other UNBC services available to all students (recruitment, student services, and educational programs).*

- *Complete a field safety manual and develop an on-line system that allows faculty to identify and navigate easily through necessary steps for experiential learning (required forms/processes for field trips, field schools, graduate fieldwork, etc.)*

## **Goal 2.6.2**

UNBC should have a clear set of realistic enrolment targets and a competitive admissions process. Admission processes are streamlined and efficient, and UNBC is competitive with other institutions regarding response time for admissions.

### **Rationale 2.6.2a**

In discussions with the university community, particularly those directly or indirectly involved with enrolments and the admission processes, it became clear that there are concerns about what is perceived as a lack of realistic enrolment targets for Aboriginal, domestic, and international graduate and undergraduate students. There are also concerns about the length of time it takes to admit students, particularly at the graduate level. It is important that the University provides clear direction on enrolment targets and adopts best practices for recruitment through to registration, and finally completion.

### **Recommendations 2.6.2a**

- *Evaluate all undergraduate and graduate admission and registration procedures for competitiveness and timeliness, and streamline procedures to support enrolment. Engage students in this process to include their unique perspective.*
- *Evaluate the scheduling process to facilitate effective course planning and timeliness for graduation.*
- *Streamline the completion process to minimize the unnecessary paperwork required for graduate students.*
- *Complete a full review of all forms to reduce confusion and redundancy.*
- *Implement fully online fillable/submittable forms and processes.*
- *Ensure all forms are available in one place and improve navigation tools to find them.*
- *Remove old forms and ensure version control is implemented.*
- *Reduce the need for multiple signatures as much as possible.*

## **Goals 2.6.3**

Create a personalized student experience in concert with UNBC's strategic priorities, through prioritized investment in staff and faculty positions that enable an increase in meaningful contact between students and UNBC personnel. Prioritize investment in staff positions that enable seamless service delivery and timely, effective communication.

Encourage optimal recruitment, retention and completion by highlighting academic excellence, and better linking our alumni success stories and the type of education we provide to recruitment.



### **Rationale 2.6.3a**

We aim to attract high-quality students, and increase awareness of the many pathways to admission. Highlighting student and alumni success stories, and meaningful personal contact will draw in students who want to become part of the community for the long-term, recognizing that their UNBC education will prepare them in a way that other universities do not.

### **Recommendations 2.6.3a**

- *Seek a balance between academic excellence and flexible admissions and enrolment, and recognize that enrolment is not the responsibility of a single office but a function that must be built into every aspect of university life.*
- *Deliver early comprehensive admission offers to qualified students.*
- *Enhance our celebration of student and alumni success in all of our promotion and marketing materials.*

## **2.7. College of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies**

### **Rationale 2.7.1a**

Over time, issues related to graduate education have received differential levels of attention within UNBC's various planning exercises. More recently, changes in the structure and administration of graduate programming provide an opportunity for this round of Academic Action Planning.

The University should direct significant attention towards the development of the College of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies. Amongst the issues that remain unresolved across the University are the intellectual as well as administrative “homes” for the various graduate programs, the assignment of ongoing teaching and academic administrative support for the graduate degrees, the administration of supervisory rights and responsibilities, and others. Given that graduate studies are a vital part of the university enrolment, as well as its research capacity, this must be an integrated element of any re-organization of our academic structure.

### **Recommendation 2.7.1a**

- *Develop a College of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies at UNBC, headed by a Dean.*
- *Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Dean of the College of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies, and the Deans of the large academic units, regarding teaching assignments and performance evaluations of faculty, and faculty responsibilities and rights regarding graduate supervision.*

### **Goal 2.7.2**

Graduate students and supervisors are aware of normal completion timelines and expectations by discipline, and work together for timely completion of graduate programs.

### **Rationale 2.7.2a**

Different timelines for completion of graduate programs can cause confusion and stress among students because of unclear, or perhaps unrealistic expectations. There is a need to examine trends in average timelines, and reasons for extending degree completion that could be instructive for student experience and retention, as well as faculty professional development. We should guard against expectation inflation or creep while understanding and accepting that completion times can vary by fields/disciplines. Extended timelines can happen for a number of reasons and these can inform efforts to improve student experience and satisfaction. In addition, unclear or unrealistic expectations may have planning and financial implications for graduate students, or undergraduates considering enrolling in graduate school. Reaffirm that Master's degrees are either professional qualifications or for learning research, and clearly distinguish the difference, while the PhD is to generate new knowledge.

In concert with the recommendation for a College of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies above, the relationship between the Registrar's Office and this College needs to be reviewed and roles/authority clarified and communicated to students and faculty. Feedback from students is clear that they don't understand the processes or leadership.

### **Recommendation 2.7.2a**

- *The Dean of the Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies College should conduct a review of rates, patterns, and duration of graduate degree completion, as well as supervisors' and students' expectations for an "on-time" completion, with the purpose of being clear and transparent about the expectations and the reasons for them, which are different for, and suitable to, different disciplines.*

### **Recommendation 2.7.2b**

- *Complete a full review of all graduate progress reports and other forms to reduce confusion and redundancy. Ensure all forms are available in one place and improve navigation tools to find them, and clear out old forms.*
- *Implement fully online/submittable forms and processes.*
- *Reduce the need for multiple signatures as much as possible.*
- *Determine an appropriate administrative structure for graduate and post-doctoral studies with consideration of current and future needs, to ensure stability of structure and processes for students.*

### **Goal 2.7.3**

Enhance the number of graduate scholarships and the amount awarded.

### **Rationale 2.7.3a**

A major impediment to attracting and retaining graduate studies is a lack of competitive entrance scholarships, and/or predictable teaching and research assistantships. Opportunities for graduate students to contribute to undergraduate delivery and experiential education can add value to their degree, and perhaps align with professional aspirations.

### **Recommendations 2.7.3a**

- *Ensure clear communications about the structure of the tuition fees and its benefits;*
- *Use the PhD tuition waiver to provide funding to PhD students through entrance scholarships;*
- *Increase availability and value of entrance and other scholarships that are competitive with other institutions;*
- *Increase the availability, value, and timeframe of acceptance of teaching assistantships; and*
- *Increase the availability, value, and timeframe of acceptance of research assistantships.*

### **Goal 2.7.4**

Develop unique, integrated graduate programs that respond to big ideas and challenges within UNBC's signature areas. Enhance communications about the program offerings that should be tied to those signature areas.

### **Rationale 2.7.4a**

There are many different ways to provide graduate education, and UNBC should be flexible and adaptive to the changing demographic and needs for professional development and enhanced education through graduate study.

### **Recommendations 2.7.4a**

- *Consider alternative graduate programs, such as a one-year course and service-based model.*
- *Provide opportunities to ladder one-year graduate certificate/diploma programs into longer research-based degrees.*
- *Provide opportunities for students in research-based degrees to switch from a thesis to a project or certificate program.*

## **2.8. Council of Deans**

### **Rationale 2.8.1a**

We were very concerned with how academic programming at UNBC could become more flexible and responsive to changes and opportunities moving forward. Rather than being mired in nearly continuous academic planning exercises, we felt that academic structures to support responsiveness which draw upon UNBC's hallmark attributes would be essential. We expected that within any college structure, there would continue to be Chairs' Councils organized by the individual Deans. In addition, we recognized the need to create a platform for dialogue which would support cross-university discussion. Such dialogue would be important for sharing opportunities, finding synergies, and mobilizing a responsive campus strategy. Therefore, it was recognized that a Council of Deans be established and be distinct from the current

Deans' Council reporting to the Vice-President Academic and Provost.

**Recommendation 2.8.1a**

- *A Council of Deans should be organized to support cross-university dialogue and Academic Action Planning and responsiveness.*

## 2.9. Northern Medical Program

**Rationale 2.9.1a**

While not part of the original academic make-up of UNBC, the Northern Medical Program (NMP) is an important part of UNBC's identity and is significant to its relationships with northern British Columbia communities and regions. However, the NMP differs from other academic units in that it is a University of British Columbia (UBC) program delivered in close partnership with UNBC. Final decision-making authority for the NMP, for example, rests with the UBC Dean of Medicine, and there are aspects of its programming and delivery that do not coincide with other models/nomenclatures found at UNBC. While the NMP is housed at UNBC, it is not integrated into its academic structure. As an academic unit, it rests much like the building itself, thinly tied to the rest of the campus.

Important for our discussions of academic structure are long-expressed concerns about the need to better "place" the NMP into the academic structure of UNBC. We recognize that there are some challenges that structure cannot assist with, such as faculty mentoring or the creation of program-specific expectations around teaching, service, and scholarship, but better situating the NMP into UNBC's academic structure can assist in a number of ways. It can provide a clear statement about how the NMP is valued by UNBC. It can provide a more welcoming home for NMP faculty and students, support a wider set of collegial relations to support those faculty and students, and create easier pathways for both faculty and students to broaden their research and other scholarly connections. Even on a mundane, day-to-day, basis it can bring clarity to various approval processes and paperwork signoffs for those in the NMP and the various administrative units across UNBC.

The following recommendations are in keeping with the earlier recommendation for the creation of five smaller colleges, each with a more coherent academic focus and led by a Dean. These activities cannot be undertaken independently or separately.

**Recommendations 2.9.1a**

- *One of the new smaller colleges should focus upon those academic units whose primary mission is with health and care services, and that the NMP be integrated into that college to better harmonize with existing UNBC structures.*
- *While the new college will have a Dean, the current Associate Vice-President NMP should be appointed to that college as an Associate Dean with responsibility for NMP staff/budget/curriculum management to better harmonize with existing UNBC structures.*

- *Consideration should be given to transforming all NMP affiliate appointments to UNBC into adjunct appointments with rank to better harmonize with existing UNBC structures.*
- *That the University and the UNBC Faculty Association commit to updating the Faculty Agreement with language that is informed by and appropriate for the NMP faculty as has been done for librarians, senior lab instructors, and others.*

## 2.10. Regional Programs

### **Rationale 2.10.1a**

Regional programs, regional campuses, and the delivery of academic programming away from the main campus in Prince George, have been fundamental to the fabric of UNBC since its original planning discussions and reports. They also remain fundamental to the University's ongoing connections with communities across its service region. Like other aspects of the University academic structure, challenges to the internal and external environments have impacted the original vision and working arrangements of regional programs. Despite different approaches over the years, there remain challenges with integration, coordination, and responsiveness.

We recognize the challenges identified in various University planning documents and exercises, as well as the steps that have been taken towards ameliorating these challenges. There have also been notable and ongoing successes in regional education programming. Included among these successes are cohort-organized delivery and programs tailored to specific regional campuses. To begin addressing issues of integration, coordination, and responsiveness in the regional delivery of educational programming, we recognize that the University must make a series of strong directional statements before new and detailed planning work can be undertaken.

### **Recommendation 2.10.1a**

*The following statements respecting regional programs should be endorsed by the university:*

- *UNBC is committed to maintaining its regional programs across British Columbia.*
- *UNBC is committed to having a physical presence in the regions that includes, at a minimum, its existing regional campuses in Terrace, Quesnel, Fort St. John, and Vancouver.*
- *UNBC is committed to the delivery of educational programming in the regions when student demand warrants.*
- *UNBC's regional presence and activities are a key element of the University's Indigenization initiatives. These include unique educational programs and learning opportunities offered in partnership throughout the region (such as through UNBC's longstanding relationship with the Wilp Wilxo-oskwhl Nisga'a Institute (WWN) in the Nass Valley).*
- *UNBC provide the resources needed to support current regional programs before investment in additional projects and offerings.*

### **Rationale 2.10.1b**

Only after the University has clearly re-affirmed its position and direction with respect to regional programs can attention then be turned to detailed programming and delivery discussions. In such cases, we felt that UNBC's 20+ years of experience in regional programming should inform its strategic options moving forward.

### **Recommendation 2.10.1b**

- *Detailed planning for more sustainable regional programs should be a focal point of the university. Such planning needs to consider the following:*
  - *Opportunities for programming and delivery are built upon a clear recognition of regional uniqueness and that a one-size-fits-all model is not tenable.*
  - *Existing regional programs management structures, which include the Dean of Regional Programs and the Regional Chairs, are effective and must be central to the planning process.*

### **Rationale 2.10.1c**

In mobilizing regional education opportunities and programming forward, UNBC has tremendous experience. We recognized the value of several existing formats, and also recognized the opportunity to extend emergent formats (e.g. courses offered in conjunction with Continuing Studies and a proportion of revenues flowing back to the regions).

### **Recommendation 2.10.1c**

- *Consider, and put in place, mechanisms to further develop the following regional delivery processes:*
  - *Cohort-based models, focused especially upon specific professional degrees, that have been very successful and proven to be both flexible and responsive to shifting student demand over time.*
  - *Develop a basic arts and a basic sciences degree that can be delivered in the regions. Delivery of these basic undergraduate degrees should be done through a combination of intensive block delivery and web-based courses. Web-based courses would need to be delivered through a "web and coach" model with on-campus supports hired to coach and mentor the students through the courses/programming.*
  - *Recognize that each region is unique, and working in concert with Regional Advisory Committees, develop and set in place mechanisms that will allow for the creation and pursuit of specific educational programming or degree offerings that may be unique to one or two of the regions. As with the basic arts and science degrees noted above, these would be delivered through a variety of intensive local and distance learning opportunities.*
  - *Develop and facilitate opportunities to increase the use of regional campuses, research centres, research forests, and non-academic units as*

*venues for experiential education in partnership with relevant and allied academic programs.*

- *Regions should take a leading role in attracting new students through short summer course offerings unique to place.*
- *Consider the logistics of either taking a course in the regions (students) or teaching a course in the regions (faculty) (e.g. housing, transportation).*

#### **Rationale 2.10.1d**

Educational programming such as that listed above needs an investment in local mentors and coaches, as well as technical support in order to ensure high-quality delivery and student success. Building on opportunities for bringing regional students into UNBC's enrolment must recognize that many of these students are unable to travel to the Prince George campus because they may be working full time or have other responsibilities locally.

#### **Recommendation 2.10.1d**

- *Develop a flexible structure of regional educational support to fund region-based mentors, curriculum coaches, technical assistance such as lab instructors, where student numbers and programming warrants.*

#### **Goal 2.10.2**

Identify best practices in the provision of academic supports and services, and provide resources to translate these practices between UNBC campuses in a contextualized manner.

Strengthen a sense of community on regional campuses so that all students feel a sense of belonging with UNBC.

#### **Rationale 2.10.2**

UNBC has a strong mandate to all the people of northern British Columbia; it also has opportunities to provide education across the globe. Distance and hybrid learning require attention, and are relevant both for providing education within northern British Columbia and beyond. Some of the assumptions on which regional operations and regional programs were founded at UNBC's establishment are no longer relevant.

The current structure of regional programming is heavily dependent on departmental/program chair decisions at the Prince George campus.

Library services available to the regions have been identified as needing improvement. The current model lacks specific content expertise and results in limited uptake of library services and assistance.

### **Recommendations 2.10.2**

- *Review and redesign administrative structures to facilitate the revitalization of regional programs to better support what is currently offered and to support innovative new programming. Engage Regional Advisory Committees (2.10.1.b), local students, faculty and staff in this process and ensure continuing attention to Indigenization and personalization.*
- *Streamline Reporting Structures and Responsibilities*
  - *Review and resolve the issue of reporting structure and the Regional Chair's role in this (e.g. the degree of the Chair's input into/authority over the courses offered; the role of the Regional Chair in evaluations).*
  - *Review responsibility and process obligations for offering courses and programs regionally.*
- *Empowerment*
  - *Expand regional course offerings will most likely depend on growth in contract teaching. Consider how best to structure who is involved in hiring. If the review of such identifies mismatches with what is required by the current Faculty Association Agreement, engage in discussion about desired modifications for next round of negotiations.*
  - *Explore how regional campuses can be more empowered to deliver what regions demand. This includes decision-making processes and configuration of relationships where the UNBC campus is co-located with another institution.*
  - *The Regional Advisory Committees (RAC) should be better employed to create an effective multi-way platform for dialogue and communication needs of the regions to UNBC, university opportunities, development and curriculum planning, and plans and priorities for the regions.*
  - *Maintain relations by regular face-to-face visits and prioritize these; avoid over-dependence on email and phone communication.*
  - *Create more meaningful engagement opportunities without "pomp and circumstance" and inclusive of students and on-the-ground community members.*
  - *Student Services (e.g. Counseling, Health, Learning Centre)*
    - *Support the process to enumerate student service and availability gaps between the Prince George and regional campuses, and identify options for delivery of the different services.*
    - *Consider how services (such as Peer Support) could be better offered to regional students, recognizing that face-to-face communication should be prioritized where possible.*
    - *Consider specific needs for support of Aboriginal students in the regions and how to meet these more effectively.*
- *Library*
  - *Review the scope of library services for students supported by a regional campus with more face-to-face interaction for teaching students, for example, how to do on-line research.*



- *Consider travel to the regional campuses to provide orientation for library support and services.*
- *Consider how to deal with needs for librarian services for students not supported by a regional campus, i.e. Langara College.*

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## Part 3: Innovate

### 3.1. Teaching and Learning

#### **Goal 3.1.1**

The University focuses its efforts towards high-impact teaching and learning and on developing capacity and appropriate use of experiential education, and affirms that faculty need space and time to be able to engage in high-impact teaching.

#### **Rationale 3.1.1a**

Faculty must have the space and time to plan activities, rework courses, take risks, experiment and learn new methods of teaching. Too-high demands for service make the necessary planning for high-quality experiential and community-engaged teaching as well as professional development impossible; it is currently not occurring at all, or it is happening over and above reasonable workloads driven by sheer passion that is unsustainable in the current structure. We need to reduce logistical burdens, and optimize teaching and service loads where they are most important and effective. This also relates to having a proper and predictable complement of faculty who contribute to service and accommodation for distance teaching in workloads.

#### **Recommendations 3.1.1a**

- *UNBC actively encourage teachers and departments to consider conceptual frameworks to help with decolonization, and approach Indigenization. Some examples include “two-eyed seeing”<sup>6</sup> and “healing the split head,”<sup>7</sup> as well as others.*
- *Along with this must come the space and time for faculty and staff to engage in decolonization and Indigenization. This must be valued by the institution with real endeavors such as, lighter teaching loads, professional development opportunities for all faculty and staff, co-teaching and mentorship opportunities, understanding and connection to place (land, language, and culture) on all UNBC campuses, and regular communication with experts and community members to offset isolation and increase the level of comfort.*
- *Faculty develop and review curriculum to support Indigenization in their teaching and learning - to better understand the needs and experiences of Aboriginal learners and to enhance the experience of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students and teachers - and be provided the necessary support and education to achieve this. This should be ongoing, as well as part of the identification of learning outcomes.*
- *Reaffirm and/or develop policies that recognize, value, and accept—with appropriate cultural and academic rigour and mentorship/supervision—assignments, theses, dissertations, etc. done in formats such as song, art, spoken word, etc., when and where these formats are appropriate.*

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<sup>6</sup> Hatcher, Bartlett, Marshall & Marshall (2009)

<sup>7</sup> Cajete (2001)

### **Recommendation 3.1.1b**

- *Programs should build from work already done to map out, clearly present, and communicate learning outcomes for their courses and degrees that:*
  - a. *Includes necessary first-year skills for academic success;*
  - b. *Progress from realistic expectations for newly-graduated high school students;*
  - c. *Contains core university-wide learning outcomes already identified (which should be periodically revisited);*
  - d. *Builds in appropriate experiential educational components situated within, and contributing to, learning progressions;*
  - e. *Reflect applicable requirements for academic breadth;*
  - f. *Covers and maintain core and contemporary disciplinary content and skills;*
  - g. *Enables effective contributions to contemporary social and environmental issues;*
  - h. *Provides skills and abilities to gain employment and succeed professionally;*
  - i. *Encourages life-long learning; and*
  - j. *Are trackable and understood by faculty, advising staff, and students.*

### **Recommendation 3.1.1c**

- *Develop a Strategic Action Plan for online education that is adopted and aligned with the academic structure to fully enable its success.*

### **Rationale 3.1.2a**

Considerable work on the first-year experience has already been done, and was intended to serve students who are new to university. This work includes high school-level courses, common first-year curriculum, “University 101”, Integrated Analytical Skills and Knowledge (IASK), and others. It is important to ensure that the first-year experience of all students, including those who transfer in from other institutions, is included in plans to better serve new (to UNBC) student needs. Plans going forward must ensure that students are fully integrated into university life, and that their interests are engaged by courses that immerse students in their area of interest.

### **Recommendations 3.1.2a**

- *Continue to discuss, consolidate, and improve approaches to first-year experiences for all students who are newly attending UNBC. Ensure that this experience transitions students fully into university, and includes experiences in their areas of interest;*
- *Engage with feeder high schools and ensure smooth curriculum transitions;*
- *Ensure that curriculum and activities enable new students to quickly feel part of, and identify with, particular programs, majors, or degrees while gaining exposure to others;*
- *Review delivery models such as IASK, mentorship, and XMAT as examples of different methods for teaching basic skills, adaptable to the degree being sought, and consider these in new plans for the first-year experience;*

- *Consider making some of these courses/modules competency-based, so as to enable students to “challenge” the requirements; and*
- *Identify and communicate more widely and clearly, the means by which Continuing Studies can assist students to transition to university programs.*

## 3.2. Enrolment Management

### **Rationale 3.2.1a**

Optimal retention and completion can only be achieved if resources are applied *to support* individuals and programs involved in Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) processes. Sufficient resources must enable efficiency in processes, prevent loss of productivity, ensure continuity and communication between departments, faculties, units, and individuals, and provide satisfaction with the processes associated with all stages of enrolment. Supporting individuals involved in the enrolment continuum, including potential and existing students, staff, and faculty must be a priority to reduce attrition in all areas.

### **Recommendations 3.2.1a**

- *Following the principles of SEM, invest sufficient resources into the development and maintenance of student-support systems that ensure processes and procedures contribute to a culture of student success and effective delivery of services to students and their family members.*
- *Ensure the Enrolment Taskforce remains a formal part of enrolment governance on an ongoing basis.*
- *Establish working groups identified by and reporting to the Enrolment Taskforce that are responsible for different areas of the enrolment continuum, beginning with recruitment, retention and completion, and expanding into alumni and pre-recruitment as priorities evolve.*
- *Utilize the Enrolment Taskforce to strengthen collaboration and integration between all administrative units that have a responsibility for pre-recruitment, recruitment, retention, completion or alumni relations.*
- *Form an ongoing international enrolment committee with appropriate stakeholder representation.*

## 3.3. Curriculum Flexibility

### **Goal 3.3.1**

To have an academic structure that is flexible and adaptable, allowing UNBC to modify programs to meet emergent topics and subject areas.

### **Rationale 3.3.1a**

We were concerned about the responsiveness of the UNBC curriculum to emergent topics and subject areas. These opportunities may be contained within single

programs/schools/departments, or they may bridge across such units or across colleges. We identified at least two general approaches to support responsiveness. The first is to draw upon courses regularly delivered within existing teaching loads that can be creatively reorganized or combined so that the new bundle of collective knowledge content meets the needs of the new topic. The second model is to create a supportive and facilitative mechanism by which numbers of faculty with an interest in the new topic may transition existing coursework or content to meet the needs of that new topic. In this case, we envision a body of support funding that would allow faculty to create new course materials and course directions over a period of approximately one year. The launch of the new degree program would coincide with the availability of this reorganized course material. Critical questions in this model include:

- a. The level of support which the university would make available;
- b. The implications for faculty teaching loads and existing assigned teaching; and
- c. Transitioning current teaching or courses with respect to whether it continues to meet former requirements in established degree streams or whether it transitions away from previous degree streams entirely to the new topic.

#### **Recommendation 3.3.1a**

- *Investigate models that support greater curriculum flexibility.*

#### **Rationale 3.3.1b**

We also looked at options for creating a roundtable for the discussion of curriculum opportunities. We settled upon the need for, and value of, a university-wide “curriculum review committee.” In reviewing a number of universities across North America, it became apparent that such a curriculum review committee structure was common practice in many places. While some committees were charged simply with reviewing new courses or changes to curriculum, others had a broader mandate to facilitate wider curriculum reviews, explore redundancies and efficiencies, support collaboration, and assist in the tailoring of offerings to emergent student or issue needs.

#### **Recommendation 3.3.1b**

- *Establish the mechanisms for a UNBC Curriculum Review Committee, which would propose/review university-wide curriculum policies, explore redundancies, and efficiencies in the curriculum, and study proposed or emergent opportunities and recommend potential options for addressing challenges.*

#### **Rationale 3.3.1c**

Challenges with routinely offering both required and optional “pick-list” courses is a significant problem affecting many students and programs at UNBC. To cope, students seek needed courses at other universities, and some programs have been reduced to offering exemptions in order to graduate students. There are a number of possible reasons for this including a combination of a lack of teaching capacity, out-of-date or over-full curricula, and/or a lack of planning. Providing predictable courses that allow for on-time completion of degrees is a basic function that must be fulfilled. Some programs have periodically, or recently, conducted

curriculum reviews, and we have Chairs at UNBC who could provide examples and guidance on how to proceed.

#### **Recommendations 3.3.1c**

- *Make better use of 2+2, cohort models, and early (pre-entry) identification with degrees/programs to encourage “buy-in” and sense of a home at UNBC.*
- *For each degree, program curriculum committees who have not recently done so should work with their Chairs to seriously review their curricula in order to remove redundant or unnecessary courses, identify a minimum path to graduation, and produce a semester-by-semester map to guide students (and their academic advisors) through on-time completion; this map and exercise also should be used by Chairs to plan regular course offerings, course rotations, teaching assignments, and teaching needs.*
- *Create efficiencies in course offerings by reducing the number of courses offered that are not integrated across programs.*
- *Identify the resources, processes, and support structures to encourage and assist faculty who want to enhance the Aboriginal content or overall Indigenization of their curriculum and teaching via an Indigenization Facilitator.*

### **3.4. Experiential Education**

#### **Goal 3.4.1**

Create, foster, and support undergraduate and graduate student access to high-quality, ethical, and culturally appropriate experiential education embedded across disciplines, across campuses, throughout our communities, and internationally.

#### **Rationale 3.4.1a**

Experiential education has been defined in a variety of ways that we summarize as “carefully-facilitated learning by intentional doing with integrated reflection.” Experiential education is a broad approach that can incorporate and inform other pedagogical approaches such as service learning, co-operative education, and the like. Experiential education can be employed within particular sessions, course assignments or topics, a whole course, at key points in a degree, across a curriculum, or an entire school. Experiential education can be used in a variety of settings and across disciplines, and vary in depth of engagement. At its best, experiential education engages students in real contexts and issues, relies on close relationships among students and instructors in shared learning, and encourages students to develop skills in reflexive and critical thought, as well as connecting theory and practice. Experiential education is student-centred: it meets students where they are and engages their interests, focuses on their learning rather than instructor’s delivery, and shares power and responsibility for learning. Depending on how it is practiced, experiential education is consistent with efforts towards decolonization and Indigenization of the academy.

### **Recommendations 3.4.1a**

- *Build on the work of the Provost's Committee on Pedagogical Practice Action Group on Experiential learning and support and fund work on:*
  - a. *Explicitly defining experiential education as envisioned by and for UNBC;*
  - b. *Engaging in a baseline assessment of current offerings that accounts for current practices being used in degrees and classes (not solely based on course titles or descriptions);*
  - c. *Developing a theoretically and pragmatically-informed typology of experiential education in use at UNBC (to be used in metrics, as well as communication with students);*
  - d. *A set of metrics and accompanying monitoring scheme that can easily track the extent, quality, and strategic deployment of experiential education in degrees and across the University (importantly, appropriate forms and uses of experiential education vary with fields, student training/year level, and/or having particular pre-requisite skills and knowledge, for example, and should be linked to learning outcomes); and*
  - e. *With an end purpose of providing data that will be used to inform targets for delivery of experiential learning by 2020 and then 2025, and so on. This target must also be appropriately assessed and monitored.*
- *Review capacity to ensure UNBC has the expertise needed and available resources to support faculty and degrees in professional development related to the practice of experiential education, and to coordinate with experiential learning positions across the institution.*
- *Facilitate the implementation of experiential education into the teaching and learning of programs across the University. Programs can follow either, or a combination, of the following options:*
  - a. *Acknowledging the need for hands-on and direct support (as opposed to the creation of new administrative positions and units), UNBC create staff and/or faculty positions to manage experiential learning within the academic programs/units so as to integrate experiential education in ways that are responsive to the particular needs of their disciplines and professions, thus adding depth of ability, not breadth of units (e.g. positions) would be designed to:*
    - *Directly support faculty in their courses and serve degrees in the creation and delivery of high-impact, ethical and culturally appropriate experiential education opportunities;*
    - *Manage equipment, logistics, and risk management for experiential education activities and field courses;*
    - *Teach practical courses and field training within the degree program(s) they serve, (not necessarily "outdoors" field but, rather, specific to the disciplines – so it could be in archives, or writing, public engagement, ethnographic or archeological technique, or on-site with industry);*
    - *Serve as a co-instructor/lab assistant for experiential education components and field courses;*

- *Contribute to an online system that allows faculty to identify and navigate easily through field schools, graduate fieldwork, etc.*
  - *Serve as a point person and bridge between degrees/faculty and the Teaching and Learning Division as well as risk management, student services, student life, continuing studies, community groups, and professional/industry associations and representatives;*
  - *Develop orientation programming, foster student life, and oversee student clubs for their respective degree programs; and*
  - *Foster relationships and recruit from high schools, and liaise with program alumni. This connects to recommendations concerning recruitment, Orientation, and First-Year experience.*
- b. Work with the newly-proposed Experiential Learning Office (see 2.6.1) that would provide support to the following units and activities:*
- *Career centre*
  - *Co-operative education*
  - *Field schools*
  - *Internships*
  - *Practica*
- *Recognizing the role and impact of scheduling, space, time, and incentives for the design and delivery of experiential learning opportunities, the Registrar, Facilities, Regional Programs, faculty, students, and appropriate administrators should work together to identify ways and means by which to overcome already-identified disincentives for experiential learning, and report out to Senate on strategies being undertaken to remove those disincentives:*
    - a. Solve scheduling issues – we need predictability and stability year to year, and flexibility for both “traditional” scheduling for some types of courses/degrees, but also complimentary block teaching options, along with suggestions for, perhaps, longer-class or even full-day options for experiential programming. Professional programs face issues around scheduling and student placements;*
    - b. Solve space issues – classrooms need to be usable for group work, and have open space. There is the sense that some very usable spaces are not available because they are “owned” by particular degree programs, while other programs have no predictable or flexibly-usable space. Consider building outdoor classroom and outdoor labs;*
    - c. Explore and compare options for providing transportation needed for experiential education and field schools in terms of cost, availability, flexibility of use. Consider purchasing fleet vehicles for course use; and Encourage reiterative engagement with course instructors to continually improve spaces and scheduling for high-quality education inside and outside of the classroom.*
  - *Provide incentives for faculty to engage in professional development for high-quality teaching and particularly for experiential education, and also to integrate experiential education into their courses and teaching. Incentives might include:*
    - a. Providing/supporting mentorship experiences and opportunities;*
    - b. Requirements in teaching evaluations;*



- c. *Requirements in and norms established through assessments of performance and for promotion;*
- d. *Altered teaching schedule (block courses, 'off peak' courses).*
- e. *Altered teaching load, money, or buy-out to develop courses or take training;*
- f. *Additional funding available to augment classes; and*
- g. *Continue to recognize and celebrate innovative teaching based on quality and innovation.*

#### **Rationale 3.4.1b**

Funding should remain earmarked and allocated for experiential education but be delivered in a way that is predictable and readily available to the degree programs. Doing so will support identified learning outcomes and important programmatic goals facilitated through such experiences (i.e. not centrally housed and requiring repeated application and competition, which adds work and diminishes proper integration into curricula because of unpredictability, but also not subsumed into general operations of units). Strategic investments and fundraising for experiential education should be directed to establishing physical infrastructure and human resources/capacity needed to consistently and properly provide high-quality experiential education across UNBC.

#### **Recommendations 3.4.1b**

- *Review and revise current mechanisms for funding experiential education.*
- *Develop and facilitate opportunities to increase the use of regional campuses, research centres, research forests, and non-academic units as venues for experiential education in partnership with relevant and allied academic programs. This can include greater use of summer or teaching semester offerings of specific courses or educational programming. This specific educational programming can be effectively delivered in the regions using block-teaching formats, and may hold promise for not only serving local students at regional campuses but also attracting students from outside of the area to our regional campuses.*
- *Building on the work to date by Communication, Marketing and Advancement related to the promotion and funding of experiential education, create a team that includes Recruitment/Enrolment, Advancement, students, faculty and the appropriate administrator to build a robust marketing and advancement strategy with experiential learning at its core, and which is adaptable for particular programs/degrees.*

#### **Goal 3.4.2**

Update and integrate risk management practices into experiential education.

#### **Rationale 3.4.2a**

Policies and procedures should enable, rather than deter, high-quality experiences within students' education and campus life. Faculty, staff, and students need to know they are practicing proper risk management, know that they are supported, how they are supported

(insurance, emergency response, legal representation, etc.), and under what conditions they are supported. The positions described in options for implementing experiential education (see 3.4.1a) would be a crucial link to both streamline procedures, educate in both directions, as well as engage in professional development and education around risk management.

**Recommendation 3.4.2a**

- *The Office of Risk Management should review, clarify, and work with programs to put in place practices, procedures, and policies (including insurance) that support, facilitate, and simplify doing experiential education as well as active recreation and leisure opportunities on and off our campuses, including our outdoor and international spaces.*

**Recommendations 3.4.2b**

- *Acknowledge the potential value of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities to student learning by recognizing them on student transcriptions.*
- *Maintain or further develop internships with the community to allow students to gain work experience responsive to academic programs.*

### 3.5. Internationalization and Interculturalization

**Goal 3.5.1**

Create, foster, and promote interculturalization as a central tenant of our institution, along with the authentic promotion and facilitation of global learning at UNBC and around the world (internationalization). An interculturalized institution has processes, learnings, and organization that is adapted to the diverse and multicultural nature of the University community. This connects with the Calls to Action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (see Indigenization). However, it is important to note that while Indigenization and interculturalization do intersect, they are not the same thing and their differences must be honoured.

As stated in our Values, UNBC has a strong commitment to diversity, inclusion, and accessibility, and UNBC faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to understand and articulate their own positionality (cultural self-awareness), and to identify how their work and lived experience is shaped by viewing the world through an intercultural lens.

The idea of internationalization does not simply refer to student exchange programs and the international student experience at UNBC. Those are two important components, but it also refers to elements such as global learning in the classroom, educating students to be informed citizens of the world, and fostering relationships between and amongst various cultures through travel, online communication, for our faculty, staff, students, and the northern British Columbia community.

### **Rationale 3.5.1a**

International education has been integral to the University since its founding. Of UNBC's original focal points, the inclusion of the Circumpolar North and the Pacific Rim marked a clear internationalization intention on the part of the young university. However, the integration of International education into the academic structure of the university has been less clear over the years. Further complicating matters, its management, reporting structure, and "home" within the university have shifted over time.

From the start, UNBC has also been active in international exchange agreements. These have covered the many facets of student and research exchange relationships. There have also been many good interactions with specific faculty or specific programs/schools/departments for activities such as field schools. However, these are often built on individual initiative and good will rather than ongoing structural foundations.

Among identified challenges is that International education mixes a number of functions including international student services, English as Second Language education, and recruitment/promotion/marketing amongst many others. There is also an imbalance in exchange programs where we take in more than we send out. Finally, although International education is central to UNBC's mission and academic structure, the importance of this is limited by challenges around its academic identity and connections.

Opportunities for International education include:

- Growing student numbers through:
  - Attention to increasing conversion rates of applications into registered students;
  - Bringing a sharper focus to both international connections, and International Education, that build on UNBC's strengths and create a 'international identity' to support recruitment; and
  - Using a more focused 'international identity' to drive targeted marketing.
- Welcoming students via improved:
  - Welcome/accluturation programs;
  - Social programming; and
  - Focus on academic programming.
- Better connecting international students:
  - With other UNBC student support and service units;
  - With academic programs; and
  - With potential graduate studies supervisors at UNBC.

### **Recommendations 3.5.1a**

- *Make a strong statement on the value of international education, and internationalization more generally, to UNBC's core mission.*
- *Support a collaborative dialogue focused upon clarifying and refining the mandate and scope of activities of the Office of International Education.*
- *Simplify its reporting structure to the Vice-President Academic and Provost.*

- *Support a collaborative process with the administration to identify the financial and staff resources needed to allow International Education to meet that refined mandate and scope of activities.*

### **Rationale 3.5.1b**

The focus of academic programming, and the next steps in a student's academic career, are critical components in recruitment strategies for attracting international students to UNBC.

### **Recommendations 3.5.1b**

- *Support a specific dialogue towards identifying and setting a distinct "international identity" for International Education that can support externally focused recruitment and internally focused connections with academic units.*
- *Support a review of administrative and operational structures that can more effectively grow student numbers by taking advantage of UNBC's distinct 'international identity' in international education.*
- *Support a collaborative dialogue and planning process by which International Education can develop a preparatory, pathway, or foundational-year-type curriculum to support student success, which could be delivered within a one- or two-year diploma structure, and which would also support international students laddering into UNBC academic programs.*
- *Support work on enhancing the academic structure linkages between International Education and academic programs across campus.*
- *Create working teams between programs/curriculum committees, the recruitment office, student advising and international advising to build out strategies and maintain those relationships.*

### **Rationale 3.5.1c**

We recognize that within the university academic structure, students should have equity of access to services, amenities, and programs. We also recognized that there are different mechanisms by which students are enrolled and that some of those processes affect access to services, amenities, and programs. Such may limit access by groups of students. A simple example would be the exclusion of some groups of students from the university bus pass/swimming pool arrangement.

### **Recommendations 3.5.1c**

- *Support work on enhancing international student orientation programming, the international student experience at UNBC, and international student success and retention (see also 1.2.1c).*
- *Support a broad dialogue towards resolving equity issues around student access to services, amenities, and programs with specific attention to various groups of international students.*

- *Develop and facilitate opportunities to allow international students the opportunity to spend time at our regional campuses and to become integrated into the cultural life of those communities.*
- *Institutional goals for internationalization should be carried out with full awareness of the fundamental and underpinning importance of decolonization and Indigenization.*

#### **Rationale 3.5.1d**

We recognize that the University's internationalization agenda has been, is, and will continue to be an important part of the University and its academic structure. Establishing a standing platform for creative dialogue around internationalization ideas and initiatives is, therefore, also very important.

#### **Recommendations 3.5.1d**

- *Create a cross-university internationalization committee to provide broad input and advice, serve as a focal point for creative deliberation.*
- *Review initiatives to streamline Senate processes related to internationalization.*

#### **Goal 3.5.2**

Interculturalization and internationalization are approached as a positive opportunity for learning and scholarship while providing the support needed for positive educational, cultural, and instructional experiences when students arrive and enroll at any of our campuses, or travel abroad and return.

#### **Recommendations 3.5.2a**

- *Explore, recognize, and preemptively (not reactively) put in place plans and actions that will mitigate the potentially negative consequences of soliciting and attracting international students, which include (but are not limited to):*
  - Actual or perceived disregard for ethical and historic responsibilities for and investment in services for Indigenous and northern peoples and communities;*
  - Degradation or diminution of scholarly and instructional standards available in our classes;*
  - Actual or perceived disregard for programs or units that either do not align or do not seek to participate in this particular effort; and*
  - Impacts on course, teaching, and performance evaluations.*
- *Ensure adequate resources and funding to provide safe, inclusive spaces that promote and encourage respectful, culturally appropriate dialogue and learning at all of our campuses.*

### Goal 3.5.3

UNBC faculty actively work toward building intercultural teaching competence (ITC). ITC is defined as:

“the ability of instructors to interact with students in a way that supports the learning of students who are linguistically, culturally, socially or in other ways different from the instructor or from each other, across a very wide definition of perceived difference and group identity”<sup>8</sup>. Intercultural teaching competence enables instructors to bridge cultural, linguistic or other differences in the classroom, communicate successfully across disciplinary cultures<sup>9</sup>, and establish meaningful relationships with and among students in order to facilitate learning and promote student engagement. In addition, intercultural teaching competence also includes the ability to model intercultural competence for students in the classroom and to facilitate dialogue about global issues using respectful, inclusive, and culturally relevant teaching strategies. Interculturally competent instructors are open to diverse ways of knowing<sup>1011</sup>, are reflective in their approaches to assessment and curriculum design<sup>1213</sup> and promote multiple perspectives when they select content, readings, and learning activities<sup>14 15</sup>.

#### **Recommendations 3.5.3a**

- *Review capacity to ensure UNBC has the expertise needed to support faculty in the on-going development of intercultural teaching competence.*
- *Make resources and funding made available to the CTLT to support international Teaching Assistants, sessional instructors, and faculty (or those from another culture or way of knowing) who are new to teaching in a Western university environment.*
- *Provide incentives for faculty to engage in professional development towards Intercultural Teaching Competence (ITC).*

## 3.6. Continuing Studies

### **Rationale 3.6.1a**

Continuing Studies has grown into a significant component of UNBC’s teaching and academic structure. It offers some for-credit courses, delivers on UNBC policy with respect to “interest-only” enrolment, and offers a range of non-credit courses – many of which are linked to industry certifications/credentials or to government-approved training courses. It has also developed extensive experience working with First Nations communities across northern British Columbia

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<sup>8</sup> (Dimitrov et. al., 2014, p. 89)

<sup>9</sup> (Dimitrov, 2012)

<sup>10</sup> (Archibald, 2008)

<sup>11</sup> (Haig-Brown, 2008)

<sup>12</sup> (Paige, 1996)

<sup>13</sup> (Hermida, 2010)

<sup>14</sup> (Deardorff, 2011)

<sup>15</sup> (Dimitrov and Haque, 2017)

to deliver specific course and programming packages. Through its programs and delivery, Continuing Studies has proved itself flexible and responsive to emergent opportunities.

Continuing Studies operations, however, are not without challenges. In terms of mandates, Continuing Studies has received different directives from administrations over the years with respect to the emphasis that is to be placed on credit versus non-credit offerings. The interest-only enrolment policy has great potential to grow long-term UNBC enrolment, but is currently operating in partnership with only one academic unit. As with regional programs, the lack of structural connection to academic programs, departments, and schools limits awareness about opportunities such as these. For non-credit courses, there are challenges with respect to the integration of processes for enrolment management and student record keeping between Continuing Studies and the Registrar's Office.

#### **Recommendations 3.6.1a**

- *Given the importance of Continuing Studies, and its growing potential role in student recruitment, it is recommended that the University make a strong statement on the value of Continuing Studies to UNBC's core mission and operations structure.*
- *Support a collaborative dialogue involving Continuing Studies, the University's academic leadership (including Chairs), and the administration focused upon clarifying and refining the mandate and scope of Continuing Studies.*
- *Support a dialogue process that will identify a place for Continuing Studies representatives on college councils so as to build structural links and support enhanced two-way communication and awareness.*

#### **Rationale 3.6.1b**

Opportunities exist to expand the role of Continuing Studies in student recruitment. A number of ideas have been identified including:

- The expansion of professional educational programming in concert with the requirements for continuing educational activities found within many professions;
- The creation of "pathway" educational programs (taking advantage perhaps of "interest-only" enrolment policies) to help bridge potential students (including those from high school as well as mature student admissions) into a full-time degree students at UNBC;
- This option may also link well with initiatives to increase enrolments amongst rural or Aboriginal students; and
- The creation of post-graduate educational programming to help recent graduates bridge into employment or add a critical experience or technical training to their resume so they become job competitive.

### **Recommendation 3.6.1b**

- *Support a process linking with faculty/chairs in developing new educational streams within Continuing Studies to support student enrollment. In concert with the general recommendation for a new cross-university Curriculum Review Committee, support and task this new committee on an on-going basis with identifying courses across the regular curriculum timetable that would be suitable for general community interest enrolments (see also 3.1.2a)*

## **3.7. Marketing**

### **Goal 3.7.1**

To have an effective marketing strategy that portrays a clear and authentic identity and is strategically targeted.

### **Rationale 3.7.1a**

Optimal recruitment cannot be served by a one-size fits all approach to marketing. A well-resourced UNBC marketing function must convey the University's unique ability as a small, research-intensive institution to offer a university experience that fits the needs of each student. Marketing must demonstrate how the University can fit the student rather than how the student fits the University. Marketing for programs should be tailored, targeted, strategic and flexible.

### **Recommendation 3.7.1a**

- *Focus on the dimensions of a leading destination university, take a strategic approach in marketing UNBC in all phases of the enrolment continuum, with particular emphasis on external marketing to drive recruitment, and internal communication that enhances access to student services and academic opportunities that enable retention and completion.*
  - *Continue to build on recent efforts to enhance the function of the UNBC website as a critical tool used in external recruitment and marketing, and internal communication of services and academic opportunities.*
  - *Increase the use of social media and other emerging digital technologies as part of an ongoing marketing and communication strategy.*
  - *Enhance the capacity for external marketing by creating a marketing manager position reporting to the Director of Communications and Marketing.*
  - *Ensure external marketing efforts remain responsive to enrolment challenges and opportunities throughout the UNBC community by establishing and integrating marketing as a core strategic mandate for the UNBC Enrolment Taskforce.*



- *Support marketing of UNBC as Canada's leading destination university by reviewing the existing brand and visual identity and developing an authentic place brand.*
- *Approach marketing in an evidence-based manner by conducting market research on an ongoing basis to identify the strategic advantages that UNBC and UNBC programs have in its existing markets and develop marketing campaigns that capitalize on these advantages.*
- *Conduct market research on an ongoing basis to identify new markets across Canada and internationally where UNBC or UNBC programs have a strategic advantage.*
- *Building on intelligence gained through ongoing market research, develop a three-year undergraduate marketing strategy that identifies actions and resources required to effectively market UNBC in existing and potential markets, and work to develop tailored strategies with programs/degrees.*
- *Ensure any marketing plan and the actions it contains recognize the unique needs, expectations, and experiences of different student groups, including but not limited to domestic students, Indigenous students, international students, mature students, and first generation university students.*
- *Strengthen external marketing of graduate research opportunities and external communication of graduate research success stories to drive stronger graduate recruitment.*
- *Strengthen external communication of student and alumni success stories that demonstrate how UNBC students and alumni transform lives and communities in the North and around the world.*
- *Invest in building a stronger UNBC alumni network and positive alumni relationships, recognizing that alumni are among the most important ambassadors of UNBC.*
- *Improve information management by extending the customer relations management system that is currently used for recruitment data so that it can support other functions related to retention and completion.*
  - *Increase the involvement of alumni in recruiting efforts where possible.*
  - *Ensure that information technology responds to enrolment needs rather than guiding decisions about enrolment.*

## Appendix A: Phase 2 Academic Action Planning Collaborative Team Members

### **Academic Administrative Organization Collaborative Team**

- Ankush Barad, Graduate Student Representative
- Barb Daigle, Vice-President Finance and Operations Appointee
- Gail Fondahl, Faculty Representative
- Ian Hartley, Faculty Representative
- Michelyn Rutledge, Undergraduate Student Representative
- Shannon Wagner, Provost Appointee

### **Academic Structure Collaborative Team**

- Michel Bouchard, Senator
- Greg Halseth, Faculty Representative
- Kathy Lewis, Faculty Representative
- Duncan Malkinson, Undergraduate Student Representative
- Farahnaz Soufinia, Graduate Student Representative

### **Enrolment Initiatives Collaborative Team**

- Mark Groulx, Provost Appointee
- Ngoc Huynh, Faculty Representative
- Saphida Migabo, Faculty Representative
- Tracy Summerville, Senator
- Arctica Cunningham, Undergraduate Student Representative
- Richard Foo, Graduate Student Representative

### **Faculty Renewal and Development Collaborative Team**

- Gant Bachand, Graduate Student Representative
- Chris Johnson, Faculty Representative
- Kevin Keen, Faculty Association Representative
- Alicia Rich, Undergraduate Student Representative
- Glen Schmidt, Faculty Representative

### **Student Experience and Pedagogy Collaborative Team**

- Amy Blanding, Senator
- Phil Mullins, Faculty Representative
- Karlee Nadorozny, Undergraduate Representative
- Caroline Sanders, Faculty Representative
- Wendel Schwab, Graduate Student Representative
- Heather Smith, Provost Appointee

## Appendix B: Community Engagement

*Please note that this section will be amended once the UNBC community engagement process concludes.*

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## Appendix C: Strategic Research Action Plan

The draft Strategic Research Action Plan is available for review on the Integrated University Planning SharePoint Site:

<https://our.unbc.ca/sites/IntegratedPlanning/iup/UNBCReports/2017%20Strategic%20Research%20Action%20Plan%20DRAFTv2.pdf?Web=1>

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