The University of Alberta respects the sovereignty, lands, histories, languages, knowledge systems and cultures of First Nations, Métis and Inuit nations.

Augustana is located in (asiniskw sipisis - Stoney Creek) Treaty 6 territory; a travelling route and home to the Maskwacis Nêhiyawak, Niitsitapi, Nakoda, and Tsuu’ini Nations, the Métis and other Indigenous peoples. Their spiritual and practical relationships to the land create a rich heritage for our learning and our life as a community.

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The Report to the Community is published annually by the University of Alberta Augustana Campus. It is distributed to donors, sponsors, university contacts, government bodies, community partners and friends of the campus.

This report highlights achievements from Augustana Campus’ 2022/23 academic year: August 23, 2022 to April 28, 2023.
It is my pleasure to share with you this 2023 Report to the Community.

As many of our community members know, the past few years have presented challenges which we have had to overcome. One of the points of pride for me and my team has been how we have been able to sustain our campus despite these challenges. And, even more, how we have taken steps to improve.

Following a hiatus due to the pandemic, students were able to once again study abroad in India, Greece, Costa Rica and Cuba. Additionally, we held the first winter field course at our Augustana Miquelon Lake Research Station this past January. These courses offer diverse experiential opportunities for our students to enrich their studies and apply their knowledge in locales around the globe.

With seven hirings over the past two years — and more to be made this year — we have been successful in attracting colleagues who are excellent teachers, scholars and researchers. Meanwhile, our established faculty members continue to excel in their respective areas. In this report, you will discover how one researcher is working to address mental health needs amongst our farmers.

This past year has seen the University of Alberta undertake a number of strategic initiatives. These have included the University Strategic Plan (USP), Budget Model 2.0 and the Strategic Plan for Research and Innovation (SPRI) — among many others. Our collaboration and connections with the U of A are expanding through these ambitious plans — and as a member of the steering committee for the USP I myself have witnessed that U of A leadership continues to value, support and champion Augustana.

Our most recent cause for celebration has come from the return and expansion of various master’s programs on campus. Starting in fall 2024, master’s programs in speech language pathology, occupational therapy and physical therapy will be offered at Augustana Campus by the Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine.

Throughout the challenges and changes of the past few years, our community — you — have done so much to encourage and support us. By providing students with financial support, attending a myriad of events, cheering on our Vikings at nationals and joining us to celebrate the anniversary of wahkohtowin Lodge’s grand opening, you help ensure a bright future for our campus. As we look towards this future, I invite you to join us in celebrating the things we continue to do well and to also imagine the ways we can better serve our communities.

Sincerely,

Demetres P. Tryphonopoulos
Dean and Executive Officer
Augustana Campus

Sustaining and building a better Augustana
Timothy Dueck
2nd year BA ethics and global studies student

“This course had a lot of interesting things to say about the way we tell stories. Not just the myths we hear coming out of Ancient Greece, but the way modern Greek museums tell the stories of their past. The experience of not just learning about a place but also seeing it changes everything – viewing the places that history, and myth, happened.”

Gillian Ebidag
4th year BSc biology student

“With all the time I had spent collecting data and conducting my research, I formed a personal connection with the importance of my study (the influence of snow compaction on mammalian travel routes), which allowed me to become passionate about the topic outside of the course. Here, I could test the statistical knowledge I learnt in the second year and use it in a real-life example.”

Augustana Campus offers diverse educational experiences that enrich students’ learning — no matter what program or year of study they are in!

This past year saw both the first winter field course out at Miquelon Lake Provincial Park and the return of study abroad courses (which last ran in January 2020).

Hear from our students on how these experiences enhanced their education.
Augustana professor Rebecca Purc-Stephenson aims to improve the mental health of valuable community members — our farmers.

Did you know that people who own, operate or work on a farm have higher suicide rates compared to most other occupations? Or, did you know that a 2020 study reported 35 per cent of farmers are experiencing depression, 57 per cent anxiety and 76 per cent moderate to high stress?

Though largely invisible, poor mental health in the agricultural community “has been an issue for a long time,” says Rebecca Purc-Stephenson, a psychology professor, lead researcher of AgKnow and research associate with the Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities at the U of A’s Augustana Campus.

With livelihoods that can be threatened by weather, plant or livestock disease outbreaks, rising operational costs and other complex, evolving factors, farming “is one of the most stressful occupations there is,” she says.

By leading a series of studies to identify the biggest stressors they’re grappling with, Purc-Stephenson plans to bring more help to Alberta farmers, their families and veterinarians.

Overall, the studies will explore needs, gaps and challenges in mental health service delivery that were identified by farmers and mental health workers. Her research will also help build resources for AgKnow, an initiative created so that farmers and others in the agriculture industry can access information to help with their mental health. She aims to collect and share the stories of farmers who have experienced stress, as well as establish a peer support program.

- BEV BETKOWSKI

This research is being done in collaboration with the Agriculture Research and Extension Council of Alberta (ARECA) and supported by $524,500 in funding awarded to the group by Alberta Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Economic Development, through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership. Many undergraduate research assistants work with Purc-Stephenson on this research.
The 2022/23 season was one unlike any other for our Vikings.

In addition to various teams moving up in the rankings, six teams competed in Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference (ACAC) championships and five teams advanced to nationals. Most notably, our women’s curling team won the Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association (CCAA) national championships for the first time.

"Camrose is my home town. I grew up, went to school and curled here. Bringing home the gold to my community and knowing the amount of people who were supporting our team is truly a surreal feeling! It is such an honor to be able to represent my university on the national stage. We went in as the underdogs into the finals and we came out on top – it is such an unforgettable moment."

Josie Zimmerman
ACAC Female Curler of the Year
Vikings Women’s Curling Team, Skip

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Prepare for the 2023/24 season at govikings.ca
In 2022/23, four new faculty members joined our community. Take a moment to learn a bit about them and their work.

Ana Klahr  
Assistant Professor, Mental Health & Psychology

“When I grew up in Buenos Aires, Argentina, I was interested in space sciences. But I did my honours research under a psychology professor who is also a neuroscientist. I decided then that all I wanted to do was to study brains for the rest of my life. Now I study in animals what happens in patients who suffer a hemorrhagic stroke. My main goal is to find potential therapeutic targets and test the efficacy and safety of treatments.”

Thibaud Lutellier  
Assistant Professor, Computing Science

“With software, our expectations are lower and we tolerate a lot of problems. This matters, because software is used in critical domains. Everyone would complain if a car sometimes displayed the speed incorrectly! We need to raise the bar of what we consider acceptable quality. My research goals are to develop techniques that put quality and reliability at the centre of software development.”

Michael Omoge  
Assistant Professor, Philosophy & Black Studies

“Think about the many things you’ve come to know. Now ask yourself whether you indeed know them. In my work, I weigh and characterize our certainty with regard to what we know. I wanted to be a philosopher after taking logic and critical thinking in my undergraduate degree. I loved the simplicity and transferability. How it exposes human reason and enables proper reasoning.”

Ivana Schoepf  
Assistant Professor, Integrative Biology

“Nature constantly presents animals with challenges. My research focuses on understanding how individuals cope with the challenges of disease and competition. Deep down I have always known I wanted to be a biologist. Growing up in a small town in Italy, I made the formal decision to be a biologist at 13, when I had to apply for science high school. At Augustana, I look forward to developing my research to be truly holistic and integrative.”
On March 22, we celebrated the seventh anniversary of wahkohtowin Lodge’s grand opening on campus.

Organized by Augustana’s Indigenous Engagement Collective, this anniversary reflects the importance of the number seven in Cree culture. Through feast and ceremony, the event acknowledged the creation of the Lodge, which could not have been done without the dedicated work by Elders from Maskwacîs, members from nearby Indigenous communities and Indigenous students. The event was also an act of reaffirmation — of renewing our commitment to continuously supporting Indigenous presence on campus and working towards reconciliation.

We were grateful for the opportunity to reconnect with those who helped create wahkohtowin Lodge and those whom it continues to welcome. As we move into these next seven years and beyond, we welcome our community — Indigenous and non-Indigenous — to join us in continuing to make space to learn about, connect with and celebrate Indigenous peoples and cultures.

Discover Augustana events* at uab.ca/AugEvents
*Keep an eye out for our round dance in spring 2024!

From Indigenous programming to art shows to research lectures to observatory drop-ins and more, Augustana Campus hosted 200+ events open to the public in 2022/23.

The Lodge was created in the spirit of wahkohtowin, a nehiyaw (Plains Cree) concept related to “kinship.” wahkohtowin refers to the ties of mutuality and reciprocity that create responsibilities to other human beings and to animals, to the land, the water and the sky, that offer the bases of our lives and relationships.
Celebrating 50 Years of Community Awards

In 1973, community and campus members came together to make a difference.

Aware that some students face financial barriers when looking to attend post-secondary, the Community Awards Program was formed. Now, half a century later, the program has grown from a couple awards to a couple hundred – with some of the first donors still supporting students today!

Learn more about the program at uab.ca/AugAward

1 in 5 students receive a donor-funded award each year.

6,000+ students have received donor awards funded through the program since 1973.

226 donor-funded awards were offered in 2022/23.

"I attended Augustana for my first year of university years ago. At that time, they only offered one year of university, and that was a formative year in my life. I really wanted to be able to give back to Augustana once we moved back to Camrose. It was a very small program to begin with, of course, and at that time Camrose was a lot smaller and we thought, 'Well, we can just do the best we can and see if the program survives.' But I just couldn’t imagine the growth that the Community Awards Program has seen."

Alan Fielding, ’63 CLC, ’65 BA, ’69 LLB
Alan and Valerie Fielding Leadership Scholarship
Follow us on social media to keep up with campus news and activities year-round

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Leading with Purpose.