



UNIVERSITY
OF ALBERTA



2026 - 2030

Department of Physical Therapy

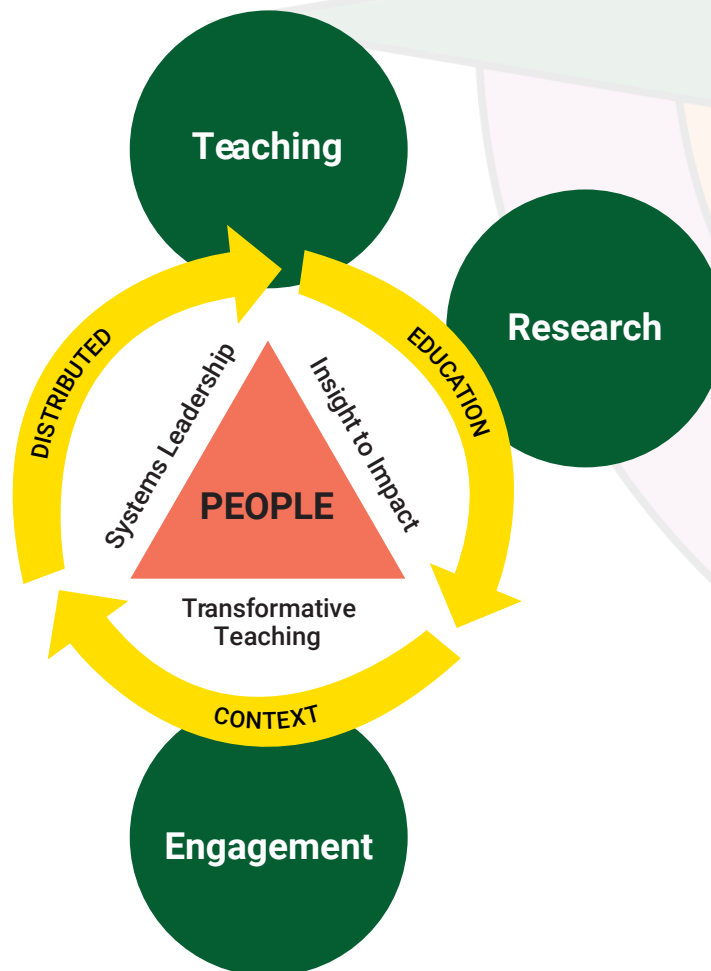
Strategic Compass

Shaping the Future of Physical Therapy

To advance physical therapy through accountable leadership, transformative education, and community-driven research, sustained by a resilient and inclusive professional community.

Students want personalized learning. Communities need integrated care. Healthcare partners are calling for creative, agile graduates. And our faculty is asking for increased collaboration and innovation to promote student success, research impact, and staff wellbeing. Upholding our commitment to accessibility, community, belonging, Indigenous and community engagement, this strategic plan shapes our future towards 2030.

Aligning with **SHAPE, our strategic pillars are:**



Foundation:

Focus on People

Creating a Resilient Community

Strategic Intent: To sustain a high-functioning environment where wellness is a structural priority. We will invest in our people through fair workloads and energizing assignments. We will work with partners to ensure students have access to supports that enhance mental health and well-being.

- **Action 1: Institutionalized Workload Sustainability:** Conduct a comprehensive workload audit to map “hidden labour” and develop policies that protect work-life balance for all faculty, staff, and students.
- **Action 2: Satellite Success & Inclusion Strategy:** Secure the necessary administrative support and partnerships for our satellite sites to successfully sustain our distributed service model to increase accessibility to rural physical therapy services.
- **Action 3: Accessible Supports:** Develop a multilayered and coordinated strategy that enables students to access mental health supports promptly.

Pillar 1:

Systems Leadership

Designing & Improving through Strategic Partnerships

Strategic Intent: To position the profession as a primary innovator of healthcare. We will lead through advocacy, interdisciplinary clinical models, and reciprocal community alliances.

- **Action 1: Provincial Advocacy & Primary Care Integration:** Partner with the Alberta Association of Physiotherapists and health authorities to support initiatives that position physical therapy as healthcare leaders (e.g., physiotherapy services in the Emergency Department, access to NetCare, expanded scope of practice, etc).
- **Action 2: Rural & Indigenous Health Hubs:** Transform satellites into “Health Hubs” that co-locate clinical care and teaching. These hubs will work toward prioritizing Treaty and Truth and Reconciliation Commission-aligned Indigenous partnerships and placements to increase rural access and workforce retention.
- **Action 3: Interdisciplinary Clinical Innovation:** Expand the physical therapy teaching clinics to support interdisciplinary services, teaching, and clinical research opportunities.

Pillar 2:

Insight to Impact

Advancing Physical Therapy Research and Innovation

Strategic Intent: To ensure our research and teaching scholarship are socially accountable and highly impactful. We will bridge the gap between discovery and delivery by involving people with lived experience in our agenda, capitalizing on translational “lab-to-community” implementation opportunities, and integrating research into our distributed education context.

- **Action 1: Impact Showcase:** Launch an annual “Impact Showcase” to highlight departmental breakthroughs (Research, Teaching, and Service).
- **Action 2: Operationalize Distributed Research Nodes:** Use CFI funding to equip satellite sites and Health Hubs with research infrastructure, allowing students and faculty to conduct research where patients live.
- **Action 3: Expand research/scholarship focus:** Building on existing expertise to bridge the gap from lab to community with direction from people with lived experience.
- **Action 4: Align efforts with existing Artificial Intelligence (AI) capacity at U of A** to expand the reach and impact of research and teaching scholarship.

Pillar 3:

Transformative Teaching

Shaping the Future PT Workforce

Strategic Intent: Build on our legacy of innovation to revitalize the educational continuum. By transitioning to a Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) model and optimizing emerging technology, we ensure our graduates are prepared for a digital, interdisciplinary, and distributed healthcare landscape.

- **Action 1: The DPT:** Advance to a DPT model that prioritizes student mental health and professional identity formation, modernizes the curriculum to consolidate learning, and increases interdisciplinary integration.
- **Action 2: Integrate technology into teaching:** Optimize the integration of AI, telehealth, and Virtual Reality into the curriculum.
- **Action 3: Scholarship of Excellence:** Formalize support for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.
- **Action 4: Leveraged distributed education:** Capitalize on instructors’ teaching excellence and provide support to innovate and implement best practices in distributed education.
- **Action 5: Classroom to Clinic Conduit:** Leverage PT Teaching Clinics for continued growth of internal placements, post-graduate educational offerings (micro-credentials/residencies) to support lifelong learning, and teaching scholarship.

Leading with Purpose.



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