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INVITATION TO JOIN THE DISCUSSION

The University of Alberta has a unique opportunity to assume a major national leadership role. We are in this position because of an alignment of economic, political, and demographic factors, combined with the trajectory of success established through the dedication and leadership of our faculty, staff, students, and other members of the university community. Bound together by a proud history and inspired by Henry Marshall Tory’s affirmation that knowledge is for the “uplifting of the whole people,” our university community has inspired the human spirit through outstanding achievements in learning, discovery, and citizenship in a creative community, building one of the world’s great universities for the public good. Faculty, staff, students, and alumni have discovered, disseminated, and applied new knowledge through teaching and learning, research and creative activity, community involvement, and partnerships. Because of these efforts, the U of A has increasingly played a leading role, giving national and international voice to innovation in our province and placing Canada at the global forefront.

The university’s success is rooted in the creativity and effort of individuals, but it is only through collaboration and teamwork that our full potential can be reached. By providing a clear direction, the university’s strategic plan is the single most powerful tool for building a shared vision, enabling co-ordinated efforts, and maximizing finite resources. It provides a blueprint around which many small projects can coalesce into major initiatives, and initial concepts can be patiently nurtured and reinforced toward long-term impact. The success of past strategic plans such as Dare to Discover and Dare to Deliver has paved the way for the U of A to take this activity to the next level. Let us develop a new strategic plan to guide the institution’s path toward success for the next five, 10, and 20 years—and beyond.
In our collegial environment, a strategic plan cannot be dictated from above. Our main objective during the institutional strategic planning process is to develop a plan that all members of the U of A community create and embrace. It must reflect our common values and capture our collective vision of what the university aspires to be. Together, we will then establish concrete, achievable, and measurable goals and strategies that will support our vision and provide us with direction that both responds to and takes advantage of our changing external and internal environment. In the years ahead, we will look to this one strategic plan to guide all institutional academic and administrative priority-setting, decision-making, and governance.

We invite you to join us in this critical process. In the pages of this discussion paper, we ask all members of the U of A community to consider some of the key questions facing our institutions today. Let us consider together what it means to uplift others and build a stronger community in a changing world. How can we educate citizens and leaders? How can we advance knowledge, feed intellectual curiosity, and nurture the talents and aspirations of our students, faculty, and staff? How can we pay better attention to and value the experience of the people we serve, providing research that increases the well-being of individuals and communities both close to home and far afield? In short, how can we lead widespread social, cultural, and economic change for the public good?
SETTING THE STAGE

This discussion paper marks the launch of an institutional strategic planning process that will continue for the next eight months. This paper is not a draft of the future plan but is instead a document intended to spark and guide campus-wide conversation and consultation.

Through a series of dialogues that will be conducted over the next several months in a variety of fora, we ask the University of Alberta’s community of students, faculty, staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders to consider the questions asked in this document and add others to the list. In conversation and debate, our common issues, strategies, and goals for the next five years will begin to emerge. When this initial round of consultations is complete, a first draft of the institutional strategic plan will be composed and distributed for further consultation early in the new year.

In this discussion paper, you will find a brief overview of where the U of A stands today, including a look at the changing global landscape which will help define our challenges and opportunities.

With these contextual factors in mind, we have prepared a series of questions organized around three main thematic goals:

**For the Public Good**

**Empowering the Whole Person**

**Engaging the Whole People**

Within each theme, we have identified three to four areas of strategic interest as focal points for our consultations.

Overarching all is our central question:

*How can we build a great university for the public good and the betterment of our community, nation, and world?*
The University of Alberta in 2015: A Brief Overview

Changes in the Post-secondary Learning Environment

The worldwide academy is in flux. Globalization, demographic and generational shifts, technological change in every arena, social media, and highly mobile human resources are some of the key factors shaping the evolution of universities and their core mission of research and teaching.

The university learning experience of the 21st century is increasingly characterized by diversity and choice. Alongside traditional degree programs, the numbers of joint degrees, interdisciplinary programs, and cross-disciplinary embedded certificates are growing. In many cases, new programs and content capture and model diversity not only in content, but also in approaches for studying problems and implementing solutions. Experiential learning is on the rise, with greater numbers of undergraduate and graduate students demanding and accessing opportunities such as co-ops, internships, community service learning, and research experiences in locations both close to home and around the globe. Many students also want to boost their degree credentials by undertaking co-curricular certificate programs or participating in a wide range of extracurricular activities, many of them created and directed by students.

Today’s students, at both the undergraduate and graduate level, not only expect diversity and choice in content and programming; they are also increasingly asking universities to provide greater flexibility in terms of how, when, and where they take courses. The traditional four-year time frame for undergraduate degrees, with the great majority of students taking two full-time study semesters per year and using the summer to work, is increasingly challenged by students who wish or need to balance work and study throughout their studies. Learning and professional development is now a lifelong expectation; increasing numbers of people are seeking flexible and accessible opportunities throughout their careers to attend courses and programs of interest, extend professional credentials, and increase technical knowledge and expertise.

These demands for greater flexibility, from all kinds of learners, are being met in part by changes in teaching technologies, including the development of massive open online courses, or MOOCs, as well as blended courses and flipped classrooms. At the master’s level, demand is growing for highly specific post-baccalaureate certificates and professional degrees (e.g., food safety, big data, public policy). These areas of study often cross traditional disciplinary boundaries, linking discrete sub-disciplines together.
EXTERNAL PRESSURES

Universities are increasingly facing pressure from students, parents, governments, and businesses to focus on educational programs that primarily prepare students for the workplace with skills and competencies needed for career and financial success. At the same time, employers consistently report that the knowledge and skills gained through liberal arts education, though not directed to any particular profession, most effectively prepare students to tackle complex challenges with critical thinking skills, creativity, and cultural sensitivity. The tension between career readiness and curiosity-driven inquiry is especially acute at the doctoral level, where fewer than 20 per cent of doctoral graduates currently secure tenure-track positions in the academy. As a result, graduate education is moving from a sole focus on preparation for the academic career to a broader focus on a range of professional career options—a change that is increasingly being reflected in new approaches to graduate programming, supervision, and mentorship.

Throughout the international post-secondary landscape, economic outcomes, rather than social and cultural outcomes, at both the individual and the societal level are increasingly foregrounded as a key measure of a university’s effectiveness as an educational institution. In many jurisdictions, these economic outcomes now affect the amount of public funding a university receives. In addition, although statistical analyses consistently show that educated citizens create stronger, healthier, and more diverse communities and that holding a university degree significantly boosts an individual’s lifelong earning potential, a prolonged difficult job market for new graduates has led to a growing sense among the public that a university degree is no longer “worth” what it once was and that students (and parents) are not getting value for the cost of tuition.

ENRICHING STUDENT EXPERIENCE

To address many of these issues and improve student outcomes, the faculty and staff at the U of A have dedicated efforts to enriching the undergraduate and graduate student experience over the last decade, resulting in significant advances in experiential learning from the addition of community service learning, undergraduate research, co-ops and internships, and co-curricular embedded certificates. By the measure of the National Survey of Student Engagement in both 2011 and 2014, a large majority of first- and fourth-year students at the U of A reported being satisfied or very satisfied with their experience, a result similar to feedback from their peers across the country.

In the last three academic years, 3,666 undergraduate students (approximately 7.3 per cent of undergraduates) at the U of A have participated in for-credit co-operative education and internship programs. Students from the faculties of agricultural, life and environmental sciences; arts; business; engineering; and science have spent time working in industries, NGOs, and governmental organizations related to their fields of study. In the faculties of business and engineering, approximately one fifth and one third of students (respectively) participated in co-operative education. In 2013–14, approximately three per cent of all U of A students participated in experiences abroad, marginally above the average for Canadian universities (2.6 per cent). Though this number is steadily increasing, it remains well below that of other OECD countries.
Demographics

In September of this year, Statistics Canada reported that people aged 65 and older now slightly outnumber those who are 14 or younger. By 2024, seniors will make up one-fifth of the Canadian population. Canada is not alone: overall population will age in regions across the world, most notably in countries in the developed world (e.g., Japan, Korea, China, and Europe).

In contrast to this situation, Government of Alberta demographic projections forecast an expansion in the potential post-secondary applicant pool in Alberta over the next decade. The 2014 Campus Alberta Planning Resource predicts that the 18- to 34-year-old population of Alberta will increase by 6.1 per cent between 2013 and 2023, including 6.2 per cent, 9.2 per cent and 6.7 per cent increases in Edmonton, Calgary, and Central Alberta, respectively, largely driven by in-migration to and ongoing urbanization of the province.

These demographic predictions suggest that Alberta universities will not face the declines in student enrolment predicted in the rest of the country, with two important caveats. First, these predictions were made during a stronger economic period in Alberta, and the current economic downturn may reduce net in-migration to Alberta and, in turn, reduce growth in the 18-to-34 age group. Alberta also faces perennially low post-secondary participation rates. Historically, post-secondary participation in Alberta has lagged four to seven per cent behind the national average. For example, the post-secondary participation rate for Albertans aged 18 to 34 years was 18 per cent in 2013, six per cent below the national average. On the other hand, university degree attainment for Albertans aged 25 to 64 years was 26.3 per cent in 2013, only two per cent below the national average. Lower post-secondary participation rates in Alberta, usually driven by high employment rates, are often counterbalanced by the arrival of interprovincial migrants whose credentials are already in place.

U OF A STUDENT BODY

In the last academic year, the U of A was home to 37,749 students (30,189 undergraduate and 7,572 graduate). Between 2010–11 and 2014–15, total undergraduate student enrolment increased only marginally (by 0.3 per cent), and graduate student enrolment by 3.1 per cent. In the preceding five-year period, undergraduate enrolment growth was higher but still under one per cent. Graduate enrolment, by contrast, grew sharply, up 21.4 per cent from 2006–2011.

Where do the U of A’s undergraduate students currently come from? In 2014–15, 49.6 per cent of all undergraduate students registered at the U of A reported their hometown as Edmonton. Of the new undergraduates who enrolled for fall 2015, 73 per cent came from schools within Alberta (mostly Edmonton, Calgary, and Red Deer), 15 per cent came from schools outside of Canada, and 12 per cent from other provinces. In Maclean’s 2015 University Rankings, the U of A ranked 14th of 49 (fifth among the U15) in the number of undergraduates attending from another province in Canada.
Last School Location of New Undergraduate Students, Fall 2015

By contrast, international student enrolment at the U of A has expanded significantly in the past decade. In 2014-15, international students comprised 35.1 per cent of graduate students and 13.8 per cent of undergraduates, compared with 20.3 per cent and 4.4 per cent respectively in 2005–06. This increase was the result of targeted recruitment strategies. Though the U of A’s international students hail from 142 countries, the largest proportion are from China (68 per cent of international undergraduates and 31 per cent of graduate students).

ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

Over the last decade, the U of A has increased the number of undergraduate students who self-identify as Aboriginal from 2.7 per cent of total student population in 2005-06 to 3.0 per cent in 2014-2015. Despite this positive growth, we can clearly do more to attract and serve this historically underserved population of talented young people. We know that Alberta’s expanding Aboriginal population is young: in 2011, the median age was 25. That year, 6.2 per cent of Albertans self-identified as Aboriginal, with 36.1 per cent living in Edmonton. Although there has been an increase in the percentage of post-secondary students in Alberta who self-identify as Aboriginal (from 2.6 per cent in 2004-05 to 3.9 per cent in 2012–13), university degree attainment rates for Aboriginal people in Alberta remain low—less than half of the rate for the overall population. Indeed, less than nine per cent of Albertan Aboriginal people aged 25 to 64 living off-reserve had completed a university degree as of 2013. Thus, more needs to be done to bridge the gap between the numbers of non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal post-secondary graduates.
The Academy

A similar picture of challenge and opportunity emerges from a close look at data relating to the state of the University of Alberta academy. One of our strengths is that the U of A has become a global microcosm with faculty, staff, and students coming from countries around the world. According to 2014–15 data, the U of A is home to 2,038 full-time faculty members (347 assistant, 745 associate, 946 full) and 922 contract academic staff.¹ Over the history of the university, their distinctions have been many, including 41 3M National Teaching fellows, 60 members of the Order of Canada, 138 fellows of the Royal Society of Canada (including three members of the newly formed RSC College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists), 20 members of the Alberta Order of Excellence, and 11 winners of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal.

¹ Headcount (not full-time equivalent)
RESEARCH EXCELLENCE: FUNDING RECORD

Over the last decade, U of A researchers have attracted total sponsored research funding in excess of $4.6 billion, putting the U of A fourth among Canada’s research-intensive universities. On an annual basis, sponsored research funding has averaged more than $400 million per year, with a peak value of $536 million in the 2010–11 fiscal year. In both 2009–10 and 2012–13 (most recent complete data available), the U of A ranked third in the U15 for sponsored research income per full-time teaching faculty.

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE: PUBLICATIONS AND CITATIONS

Two other important measures of research productivity are the number of publications and citations per full-time faculty member. By these measures, the U of A ranked third among U15 peers in publications and fifth in citations from 2010–2014.
FACULTY RENEWAL

Though these successes demonstrate that U of A faculty members excel in their work, there are demographic challenges on the horizon. Since the end of mandatory retirement, the average age of a professor has risen steadily to 49.7 years (50 for men and 49.1 for women). This has resulted in an imbalance across the academic ranks, with the number of assistant professors at the U of A dropping nearly 40 per cent since 2009–10. Conversely, the number of full and associate professors has steadily increased. Since 2006–07, the number of contract academic staff has also been growing in proportion to the overall number of faculty members: over this period, both contract and full-time faculty groups have increased by approximately nine per cent. These data suggest that plans for renewing our faculty must be a key priority in the future. Without this renewal, the U of A will have a reduced capacity to develop early-career leaders who will embrace emerging fields, explore new pedagogical methods, and sustain our overall research productivity.

Notes: Staff figures represent averages for the reported years 2010–11 to 2013–14 (most recent data available). 2012–13 and 2013–14 staff counts are not available for Université de Montréal and Université Laval. Publication and citation counts are for the calendar years 2010 to 2014.

In addition to these demographic challenges, the U of A has not bridged a critical gender gap in the professoriate, particularly in the most senior rank. Despite long-term efforts to achieve gender balance in the academy, male faculty members currently outnumber female faculty nearly 2:1. In the five-year period ending in 2014–15, the percentage of women in all ranks dropped very slightly (from 35.1 per cent to 34.7 per cent), with an increase at the associate rank from 39.5 to 42 per cent, and a decrease from 46.1 to 42.9 per cent at the assistant rank. The fraction of women varies significantly between faculties, but remains low in both the assistant and associate ranks in most of the larger faculties, including medicine and dentistry, science, engineering and ALES; in contrast, the balance is much closer to parity in the Faculty of Arts.
Resources

The U of A’s greatest asset is our people. Creating both a technically advanced physical research and teaching environment and an intellectually vibrant culture that can nurture our people’s talents depends on our ability to attract resources. In recent years, the university has experienced significant instability in provincial funding. From 2005–2010, provincial investments in the Campus Alberta grant grew six per cent each year for five successive years. With additional capital investments of more than $2 billion over the last decade, the U of A grew from three to five campuses and built 12 major teaching and research facilities. As a result of this increased operating and capital government investment, we were able to expand student enrolment in high-demand areas, build highly specialized laboratories to facilitate new areas of research, expand housing options for students, and deepen our engagement with partners both close to home and around the globe.

These substantial increases to provincial operating and capital funding ended after the financial crisis of 2009. As a result, operating budget reallocations and reductions have occurred across the university in the years since then. However, even with recent reductions, in March 2015, Government of Alberta reports showed that Alberta universities are strongly supported by provincial funding. Alberta universities receive 58 per cent of their operating revenue from the government, compared with 42 per cent in Ontario. The national average is 53 per cent. Comparisons with select peer institutions in Canada and the United States also show that the U of A’s provincial operating grant represents a relatively high proportion of the university’s total operating funds, whereas tuition represents a relatively low proportion. In many other regions, the proportion of public funding per FTE student has dropped while tuition fees have increased.
Global trends suggest that future increases in public funding for post-secondary institutions will be rare, and where they do occur, will be targeted to perceived areas of national or provincial strategic interest. In British Columbia, for example, the government recently announced that, by 2017–18, 25 per cent of operating funding for post-secondary institutions will be targeted to programs that feed into “high-demand occupations,” up from 10 per cent in the past.
Connections and Partnerships

Securing resources, raising the U of A’s international reputation, and enriching the learning experiences of both undergraduate and graduate students are closely tied to our ability to build partnerships across local, national, and international communities. A main focus of the university’s strategic planning to date has been to connect and engage with communities through the development of significant, influential, and effective local, provincial, national, and international partnerships.

LOCAL

The U of A has effectively strengthened connections throughout Edmonton and Alberta. For example, the U of A has become a major partner in the development of Edmonton’s downtown core. Enterprise Square marked the beginning of this engagement. Today, approximately 500 people work and 7,000 part-time learners study on our downtown campus. TEC Edmonton—one of the anchor tenants of the Enterprise Square campus—has grown to become one of the most successful university-business incubators in the world, with clients generating $160 million of commercial activity in 2014–15. The U of A also reaches out to youth in Edmonton and throughout Alberta, providing opportunities including sports programs, summer camps, school visit programs, and the WISEST summer research program. In 2015, children were registered for more than 8,000 sessions at U of A summer camps. U School, sponsored by the U of A Senate, exposes more than 700 students per year from socially vulnerable metro Edmonton areas, Aboriginal communities, or rural communities to a week-long university experience during the fall and winter terms.

Connections between Augustana Campus, the City of Camrose, and Camrose County have also strengthened in recent years through initiatives such as the development of the new Jeanne and Peter Lougheed Performing Arts Centre, a shared facility on the campus. Campus Saint-Jean, Canada’s only francophone faculty or university west of Manitoba, promotes French-speaking culture within the U of A and acts as a social and cultural hub with francophone communities in Edmonton, around Alberta, and across Western Canada. Recently, it extended its service to Alberta’s francophone community with the launch of Collège d’Alberta. Through programs such as the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program, the U of A has also built partnerships with post-secondary institutions throughout northern Alberta to deliver U of A degrees in locations close to the homes of students who otherwise would not have access to our degree programs.

GLOBAL

As this engagement with communities in Alberta has expanded, the U of A has also established a reputation for building multi-level, cross-sectoral, and mutually rewarding international partnerships with high-ranking universities and institutions in several regions of the world. In achieving this, the university community has taken a targeted, strategic approach, with a focus on India, China, Germany, the United States, and Brazil. In all partnerships, the aim has been to enable interdisciplinary, cross-border research teams and projects; open up graduate student and post-doctoral internships; and link universities with
industry, community organizations, and government agencies. Of note are partnerships with the Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres, the China Scholarship Council, Tsinghua University, and the Aga Khan Foundation. We are also a founding partner in IC-IMPACTS, one of Canada’s most significant joint research engagements with India, and we are among a select group of partners in the Worldwide Universities Network.

Time to Shift the Frame

The U of A, like universities around the world, faces real and significant challenges, but the opportunities for positive change are far greater for our university than for many others. We are well supported by a provincial government that has indicated its wish to provide stable funding to post-secondary institutions. We are home to talented faculty with a proven capacity as both excellent teachers and highly respected researchers, leading major research projects of local, national, and global significance. Our institutional capacity to attract external research funding and philanthropic support continues to grow with improved internal supports and systems. The opportunities for diversifying our student population in terms of attracting students from all over Canada and from traditionally underserved populations are clear and, with strategic direction, achievable. Our geographic location is also a major asset. Alberta is young; our province continues to attract talented people at a rate greater than all other regions of the country. Its wealth in both people and natural resources, combined with its desire for social, cultural, economic, and environmental innovation and diversification, mean that the U of A is set to play a major role in the fundamental reshaping of this province—and in doing so, to build a stronger, better, more compassionate and prosperous Canada.
QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION AND CONSULTATION

Our central question: How can we build a great university for the public good and the betterment of our community, nation, and world?

FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD

The following questions are meant to provoke broad, big-picture thinking about the University of Alberta’s contributions to society and the global academy. How can we enhance our leadership in the advancement of knowledge, scholarship, creative activity, teaching, and social and technical innovation for the benefit of society?

LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

Consistently recognized as one of Canada’s top five universities and frequently ranked among the top 100 in the world on international rankings of global universities, the U of A is poised to enter a period of unprecedented national and international leadership. Across the range of disciplines, U of A researchers are leading major research projects with international reach and influence. The U of A receives strong public funding, and in 2015, the U of A’s endowment surpassed the $1-billion mark. In addition to financial support, the U of A enjoys a high level of public trust based on our record of delivering excellence in teaching and research over our history. With these considerable assets, the U of A is in a unique position to play a leadership role in building a better Canada to the benefit of our communities, our province, and the world.

1. What specific strategies could we undertake to provide leadership in Alberta and Canada?

2. How can we encourage and reward change leaders and public intellectuals within our university community?

3. What roles and responsibilities should the U of A take on to play a leadership role in responding to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission? How can we most effectively acknowledge, serve, and engage Canada’s Indigenous communities?
EXCELLENCE

Excellence is both a goal and an attitude. At the U of A, we aspire to achieve the first and to inspire the latter. To inspire excellence, the university strives to create campus environments in which every member of the community feels uplifted—that is, encouraged and enabled to work at his or her full potential and inspired to seek the highest level of performance in all activities. To achieve the goal of excellence, we rely on measures of quality and impact, such as peer review, accreditation, citations, and research funding, to benchmark our progress and pinpoint areas of excellence where differential, strategic investment could lead to extraordinary results. In a crowded post-secondary landscape, such differentiation is becoming an increasingly important tool in attracting both people and funding.

1. What should be our criteria for identifying both current and emerging areas of excellence?

2. What areas of strength differentiate the University of Alberta from other universities and are we ready to differentially support and promote our areas of excellence?

CREATIVITY, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

As a public university supported primarily by the provincial government, the U of A has a responsibility to foreground our provincial role. For more than a century, U of A researchers and graduates have had a record of transforming ideas into social and technical innovations, evidence-based government policies, and diverse public and private enterprises—and in doing so, uplifting the whole society. Enriched education and research environments like ours not only nurture potential, spark creativity, and inspire individuals to fulfil their potential as individuals and citizens; they also form the foundation from which these individuals launch innovative ideas, organizations, and initiatives that become the building blocks of a just society and a sustainable, robust, and diverse public- and private-sector economy.

1. How can we improve our record of transferring and mobilizing knowledge, scholarship, creative activity, technology, and expertise to where it can positively impact the community?

2. How should and can our programs evolve to ensure that our students have the creativity, critical thinking, and technical knowledge, skills, and competencies they need to be social and economic entrepreneurs in the future?
REPUTATION AND ADVOCACY

Universities exist within an incredibly crowded public space, in which many valued and cherished institutions and organizations vie for attention and funding. Governments must balance competing public demands; students can choose between many universities; donors are courted by many good causes; and taxpayers insist on demonstrated returns on public investment. In this environment, universities have come to recognize that one of their greatest assets is their local, national, and international reputation. At the U of A, preserving and advancing our reputation reflects our consistent efforts to work to the highest standards. In doing so, we ensure that stakeholder expectations are consistently fulfilled or exceeded. Telling the story of that work is equally important. Reputation and advocacy are essential elements for maintaining the social contract that underscores public education; for securing operational, research, and philanthropic funding; for attracting outstanding students, faculty, and staff; and for enhancing local, national, and international reputation.

1. How can we engage Albertans and other core stakeholders in ways that increase their understanding and appreciation of our international, national, and provincial objectives?

2. How can we develop a robust reputation on the international stage, where rankings are of increasing influence to potential students, research partners, philanthropists, and granting agencies?
EMPOWERING THE WHOLE PERSON

The following questions narrow the focus and ask us to consider what we can do to create and sustain an environment that can nurture and support the full educational and career life cycle of University of Alberta students (undergraduate and graduate), faculty (regardless of rank or contract), post-doctoral fellows, and staff (both administrative and support).

STUDENTS

Like all universities, the U of A is constantly evolving to meet the needs of learners in a changing world. Through strategic planning and implementation of initiatives, the undergraduate experience is now characterized by many opportunities for experiential learning, from community service learning to undergraduate research, to co-ops and internships, to co-curricular embedded certificates. New student residences, including Peter Lougheed Hall and St. Joseph’s College Women’s Residence, make it possible for the U of A to offer a well-rounded educational experience to more students—one that includes enriched co-curricular and extracurricular programming. In the future, demographic shifts will affect our recruitment strategies; there is enormous potential for growth in attracting out-of-province students, Aboriginal students, other underserved populations, and lifelong learners.

1. How do we educate the future graduate and undergraduate student—the engaged and informed citizen, highly skilled professional, scholar/artist, and lifelong learner?

2. How can we more consciously assist our undergraduate and graduate students’ process of self-discovery and give them the skills to engage and use their talents, creativity, and curiosity to contribute to their communities and to enhance their lives?

3. How can we minimize the impact of future demographic challenges and maximize demographic opportunities for diversifying and enriching our student population? What is the right balance of graduate to undergraduate students?

FACULTY

The U of A is now home to 2,038 faculty members. These include many recipients of Canada’s four highest research awards: three Canada Excellence Research Chairs, nearly 100 Canada Research Chairs, 18 Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council Industrial Research Chairs, and two Trudeau Fellows. Over the last decade, our researchers have attracted sponsored research funding in excess of $4.6 billion, putting the U of A third among Canada’s research-intensive universities. At the same time, data show that we have a critical and immediate need to renew the professoriate and address important gaps in
equity and diversity among the ranks. Changes in research and teaching—many driven by advances in information and communications technologies—are also challenging us to rethink the traditional classroom and the role that professors will play in the future.

1. **What will it mean to be a professor in the future?**

2. **How can we further enable and enrich the intellectual, professional, and personal development of all faculty from appointment through promotion to retirement?**

3. **What is the right balance of ranks needed to renew and sustain the health and vitality of the academy at the U of A and how can we attain and sustain it?**

**ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC STAFF**

Administrative professional officers, librarians, faculty service officers, and non-academic staff members (full-time, part-time, temporary, and trust-funded) provide essential leadership and support to the research, teaching, and service mission of the university. They provide strategic advice, direction, and service throughout the university; they are accountable for planning, negotiating, administration, problem solving, risk assessment and prevention, and operational oversight of financial resources, learning services, student services, infrastructure, and much more. The operational health of the institution depends upon the U of A’s creation and enhancement of a supportive working environment that includes opportunities for professional development and lifelong learning, pathways for career progression and secondment, and investments in leadership programming for both academic and non-academic staff.

1. **How can we enable and enrich the intellectual, professional, and personal development of staff members?**

2. **How can we improve staff mobility within the university and create more opportunities for career progression to the benefit of both the individual and the university?**

**CAMPUS COHESION**

In addition to having a student, faculty, and staff population comparable with that of a small city, the U of A has five campuses and 18 faculties, offering 200 undergraduate and 170 graduate programs. Like many large, comprehensive, research-intensive universities, the U of A has a decentralized organizational structure. Such decentralization recognizes that there are significant differences among academic units and disciplines that are best served when decisions are made by the people who understand the goals and needs of the discipline and unit best. At the same time, to prevent the development of silos, it is essential to find and maintain shared values, vision, and goals so we can tackle shared challenges
and opportunities through a healthy, engaged governance system. The institution as a whole should be more than the sum of its parts, with each part strengthened by the university’s comprehensive reputation for excellence in student experience, research and creative activity, and service.

1. **What values do you think the University of Alberta should (or does) embody?**

2. **How can an individual or unit contribute to the overall benefit of the institution? How do we increase a culture of belonging to and engagement with the university?**

3. **How do we balance diversity and unity across the university in the interest of the greater good in good and bad times?**

**ENGAGING THE WHOLE PEOPLE**

The following questions bring our focus back out from the individual to the ways in which the University of Alberta can take advantage of our own diversity to deepen and extend our engagement with various communities (local, provincial, national, and international) to facilitate collaborative efforts that can address shared challenges, solve problems, and improve society.

**DIVERSITY**

One of the U of A’s defining features and points of pride is its diversity. As a comprehensive academic and research university, with medical and doctoral programs, the U of A provides the broad range of degree programs required to equip students to be informed, engaged citizens and highly skilled individuals across nearly all public and private sectors. We host Canada’s first and only Faculty of Native Studies and offer liberal arts education in both a rural setting at Augustana and in the French language at Campus Saint-Jean. We are also home to several centres and institutes that support and celebrate the rich disciplinary and human diversity that characterizes our community, such as the Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services, the China Institute, the Wirth Institute, the Centre for Ethnomusicology, and the Kule Centre for Canadian and Ukrainian Folklore, to name a few.

1. **How can we build on our ongoing efforts to support and celebrate the human diversity of our campuses and promote the values of diversity and equity across the broader community?**

2. **What incentives and supports do we need to put in place to take full advantage of the U of A’s diversity by facilitating and strengthening interdisciplinary and cross-faculty research and teaching initiatives?**
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Across a range of activities, the U of A engages with various community partners to translate learning and research into evidence-based public policy, effective public education campaigns, changed attitudes, and healthier, more compassionate communities. Key examples in this area include growth of partnerships with local government, community organizations, business, and industry (e.g., community service learning, TEC Edmonton, proposed Galleria project, Saville Community Sports Centre, the City-Region Studies Centre and the Centre for Public Involvement in the faculty of extension, downtown revitalization, waste management, our nation-leading number of research chairs) and provincial partnerships (e.g., multiple research projects, Alberta Health, Alberta Innovates).

1. How and for what purpose are we engaging with communities? How do we ensure our community engagement is mutual, sustained, relevant, and meaningful?

2. How can we promote and encourage community engagement in research and teaching? What incentives and rewards are needed?

EDMONTON AND REGION

1. How can we continue to strengthen our engagement with the City of Edmonton, its various communities, and surrounding regions?

ALBERTA

1. What are our key responsibilities within Alberta’s six-sector (differentiated) model of post-secondary education? How can we best fulfil our leadership role?

2. Where are the opportunities to increase our engagement with Alberta’s communities, and to help our Alberta partners connect with others on the national and international stage?
NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Although academic research has always transcended narrow geographical limits or national concerns, there is a growing awareness that major global challenges need a different kind of international research response. To that end, international research partnerships and networks are becoming increasingly multi-faceted and multi-layered, including partners from many sectors (academic, government, industry, business, and non-profit), multiple exchanges of talent and resources, and joint degrees and supervision of graduate students. Consortia such as the Worldwide Universities Network are on the rise, as are major, multi-year agreements between countries' top institutions. Institutions are not only attracting more international students than ever before, but also setting up international campuses.

CANADA

1. In what areas does the U of A have the greatest potential to demonstrate and provide national leadership?

2. How can we build on our current engagement with partners and provide exceptional leadership in Canada’s PSE sector, including the U15 and Universities Canada?

THE WORLD

1. How can and should the U of A respond to global challenges? In what areas could we have greatest impact?

2. Which regions of the world should be the focus of our future international engagement? How can we most effectively engage those regions?
JOIN THE PROCESS

The institutional strategic planning process will be led by President David Turpin and Provost and Vice-President Steven Dew, with guidance and feedback from an Institutional Strategic Planning Advisory Committee. This committee will provide feedback and insight on the discussion paper, questions, and forthcoming strategic plan drafts, and will help to gather, evaluate, and collate the broader community response throughout the process. The committee will consist of approximately 15 faculty, staff, and students from across University of Alberta’s faculties, campuses, and communities.

You can provide ideas and feedback through a variety of arenas. Please visit the Institutional Strategic Planning website (uab.ca/strategic-plan) to provide your thoughts online. The website is also your source of information (including email, dates and registration forms), relating to consultation events such as:

- Campus forums
- Roundtable discussions
- Committee consultations

Key governance bodies and committees will also be consulted, including General Faculties Council, Board of Governors, GFC Academic Planning Committee, Deans’ Council, Chairs’ Council, Senate, and Alumni Council. Once consultation on this discussion paper is complete, the president and provost, with advice from the Institutional Strategic Planning Advisory Committee and assistance from staff, will draft the first version of the institutional strategic plan. This draft will be circulated to the community for feedback and advice before the final draft of the plan moves through the May–June GFC and board governance approval process.

The tentative timeline is as follows:

- November–January: Broad-based consultations on the Discussion Paper
- February–March: Review and feedback on first draft of Institutional Strategic Plan
- April: Revision and preparation of final draft of Institutional Strategic Plan
- May–June: Governance pathway to final GFC and BOG approval of Institutional Strategic Plan on June 17, 2016

We invite you to participate often. Provide input. Add questions to the list. Help devise strategies that will enable the U of A to move forward. Provide input. Rethink and return with more ideas as often as you like. The U of A is your university. Our next Institutional Strategic Plan should reflect the values, goals, and aspirations of us all.