

2020–24 Academic Plan

DRAFT FOR SENATE DISCUSSION

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1.0 Setting the Stage

Urban, culturally diverse and inclusive, Ryerson is Canada's leader in innovative, career-oriented education. Home to almost 45,000 students with over 120 graduate and undergraduate programs and a vibrant school of continuing education, the Ryerson community also includes almost 4,000 faculty and staff and nearly 200,000 alumni worldwide.

Since 2014, Ryerson University has been guided by a bold Academic Plan. *Our Time to Lead* has articulated a shared vision to help Ryerson realize its objective of becoming Canada's leading comprehensive innovation university. It has empowered our diverse community of students, faculty and staff to continue pushing boundaries across disciplines, defining how we see ourselves as an academic institution.

The success of *Our Time to Lead* is demonstrated through major achievements across critical areas of our institution including teaching and experiential learning; graduate studies, scholarly, research, and creative (SRC) activity; and vital partnerships with community, government and industry. The establishment of our law school sets a new precedent by challenging the status quo to ensure lawyers of the future are equipped with the range of skills required to meet the needs of all Canadians.

As we move into Ryerson's next decade, our university continues to challenge conventional approaches in many areas — especially the three broad pillars of postsecondary education, research and city-building.

2.0 Celebrating Success

Over the past five years, *Our Time to Lead* has provided the guidance required to strengthen Ryerson as a comprehensive innovation university. Specific highlights speak to some of the Plan's many successes.

Challenging student minds

Undergraduate enrolment saw a 17 per cent increase, with graduate enrollment increasing by 23 per cent since 2014. Program offerings were expanded, with two new bachelor programs, seven new master's programs and three new doctoral programs being launched.

Students choose Ryerson because of opportunities to apply their learning in real-world situations. In the past five years, Ryerson has seen a dramatic increase in the development of co-op programs and experiential learning; the number of co-op programs has doubled to almost 25, while enrolment in courses with experiential learning has increased by more than by 2,000 registrations.

Strength in research and innovation

Achievements in scholarly, research and creative activity include a significant increase in external research funding. Further, research chairs such as the Jarislowsky Chair in Democracy and Ryerson's first Canada Excellence Research Chair were established, and several Canada Research Chairs were appointed over the past five years. Creating the Yellowhead Institute, a First Nation-led research centre, opening the Centre for Urban Innovation and establishing the Faculty of Science research space at MaRS have also greatly contributed to our SRC development. Ryerson has also been recognized as a leader in advancing equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) to foster inclusive excellence in SRC.

During this time, Ryerson has also made significant progress in fostering an innovation ecosystem. Among the many highlights we celebrate include:

- Obtaining approval for a new law school that will feature innovative approaches to teaching and learning;
- Expanding our Zone Learning network to 10 Zones across a wide and growing range of disciplines;
- Seeing our Digital Media Zone (DMZ) ranked as the world's top university incubator;

- Establishing applied research centres such as the Institute for Biomedical Engineering, Science and Technology (iBEST) and Centre for Urban Energy (CUE);
- Launching the Office of Social Innovation; and,
- Being named as the lead institution of Future Skills consortium, a group focused on finding solutions to anticipate the future needs of the economy to enhance access to in-demand skills and training..

Collectively, these and other initiatives illustrate how Ryerson is not only embracing the innovation landscape but playing a pivotal role in helping chart the course forward.

Focus on communities and cities

Since 2014, Ryerson has made significant contributions in community engagement and city-building. This includes appointing the first vice-president of equity and community inclusion, being named Canada's first Ashoka Changemaker Campus and seeing Ryerson join the WC2 group of universities working to address cultural, environmental and social issues affecting global cities. We have also established Ryerson Urban Water Institute, a multi-disciplinary collective that includes more than 40 experts across six faculties and 13 departments working to reshape urban water management and innovate new technologies.

SciXchange is another example of the university's active contribution within the broader community. Its mission involves making science engaging, comprehensible and accessible to the general public, with the goal of increasing 'science literacy' and fostering critical thinking about scientific issues. An important factor in SciXchange's success is that it provides opportunities for community members to engage in science through hands-on work and discussion.

Ryerson has amplified current conversations and research on social justice and sustainability issues in the GTA and beyond, including the 2019 Social Justice week programming that included discussions on our Indigenous perspectives on our responsibility to the earth, and challenges and opportunities of feeding cities as urban populations grow and outpace rural growth.

In recent years, Ryerson has also contributed to expanding community engagement and city-building by adding new buildings to the ever-changing Toronto landscape. They include the Daphne Cockwell Complex, the Centre for Urban Innovation and the Sheldon & Tracy Levy Student Learning Centre. Well beyond providing ideal spaces for learning and working, these buildings have transformed, expanded and modernized Ryerson's urban footprint while creating

welcoming spaces that encourage collaboration and innovation. Ryerson's Urban Farm, on the roof of the George Vari Engineering and Computing Centre, serves as one such example.

Looking back, moving forward

An Academic Plan is both aspirational and operational. It involves finding a balance between articulating our goals and bringing them to realization in practical and achievable ways. In consulting extensively across the Ryerson community, the overarching consensus is that *Our Time to Lead* offers a solid foundation for building the Academic Plan that will guide Ryerson from 2020 to 2024. Using it as our springboard, we will leverage our collective achievements as we continue striving for excellence.

By working together, we can continue advancing Ryerson's vision, mission and mandate while continuing to inspire the students who choose to study with us as well as the broader community.

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3.0 A Summary of Consultation Findings

In defining and shaping the next Academic Plan, members of the Ryerson community were invited to consider two key questions:

- *How do the values and priorities in Our Time to Lead intersect and how they might be refined or focused in the next plan?*
- *How does work in respective local units relate to the Academic Plan, and how might those units work with other groups across the university to advance Ryerson's priorities?*

Overview

Consulting with the Ryerson community on this Academic Plan began in late spring and summer 2019. Those consultations continued into a second phase in the fall of 2019.

Early in the process, there was general consensus about several critical cornerstones that helped bring structure to this document:

- The Ryerson community was enthusiastic about the university's overall direction;
- The community was comfortable with refining and refreshing the deliverables established in *Our Time to Lead*; and,
- The community expressed interest in seeing greater focus in the new Academic Plan, with clearly defined priorities and strategies and tangible markers that can be readily assessed and implementation strategies that can be developed.

Beyond these foundations, the consultations and town halls that took place identified other critical pieces that would inform this Academic Plan. Specifically, that included a wish to see a firm commitment to:

- **Furthering** our focus on Indigenous perspectives;
- **Expanding** international initiatives;
- **Broadening** Ryerson's national and global reputation through increased research, graduate studies, post-doctoral researchers, and a renewed focus on the overall student experience;
- **Advancing** sustainability, including fiscal, community, and environmental sustainability;
- **Enhancing** classrooms and other learning spaces;

- **Entrenching** civility as a value governing how we work and collaborate;
- **Renewing** our focus on collaboration and interdisciplinary approaches to learning;
- **Reinforcing** our recognition of the importance of overall wellbeing, including mental health;
- **Strengthening** our external connections beyond Ryerson in the form of partnerships, collaborations, work-integrated learning and co-op opportunities; and,
- **Placing** a new emphasis on city-building, with a focus on urban realities, a greater stewardship role and enhanced community engagement.

Other planning processes have been informed by priorities detailed in the Academic Plan, including the Budget, and the Research, Master, and Risk Management plans.

BY THE NUMBERS

Consultations on the 2020–24 Academic Plan

28 town halls/presentations

16 spring/summer town halls

12 fall town halls

1,750 participants

In addition, discussions took place with the Senate; Chairs, Deans, and Directors; distinguished visiting professors; students and staff in order to build a Plan that reflects a wide perspective.

4.0 Our Values

In the 2014-19 Academic Plan, 14 values were established as critical to propelling that plan and the university forward. These remain fundamental to the work of the Ryerson community, and are expressed as seven core values in the 2020-24 Academic Plan.

Underpinning all seven values is academic freedom. At the heart of what it means to be a university, academic freedom provides us the liberty to think critically, explore and exchange new ideas, and evaluate and challenge existing norms and preconceptions. Academic freedom is a cornerstone of knowledge creation. We embrace unequivocally freedom of thought and expression in support of teaching, learning and SRC. Building a community where we can speak, write, critique, and otherwise articulate ideas and view points provides a foundation for all that we do at Ryerson.

Woven throughout these values is a commitment to examine and challenge the status quo and identify where we can do things differently. Going forward, as an academic institution we remain committed to being bold in our thinking, actions and decisions as an academic institution — and in how we live our values every day.

Excellence

In everything we do at Ryerson, we aspire to excellence — to be our very best inside and outside the classroom. Whether that is in the research lab, at a co-op placement, in the office or maintaining a facility, it means we are always striving for excellence and doing so in a way that is positive and authentic. Excellence is supported by our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion – inclusive excellence means that a commitment to inclusion is infused throughout the university, from recruiting and admissions to curriculum development, faculty and staff hiring, administrative structures and leadership. At the same time, a focus on inclusion leads us to redefine the ways in which we measure or assess excellence. Overall, Ryerson’s commitment to providing an exceptional postsecondary experience at the undergraduate and graduate levels depends on the actions and accomplishments of the entire university community.

Equity and Diversity

Equity and diversity are necessary components of a modern, accessible post-secondary institution. Teaching, learning and SRC at Ryerson are influenced by the diversity of ideas and experiences that members of our community bring. By recognizing the relationship between the social and physical barriers and

disability, our focus is shifted to the environment and solutions to remove barriers, rather than to any perceived deficit of the person. This ensures we focus on solutions and our collective responsibility to remove barriers. A major strength of our university comes from the diversity in our Ryerson family which reflects the very essence of Toronto, the diverse, multicultural community we call home. All students, staff and faculty are respected and appreciated as valuable members of the Ryerson community, and a commitment to equity is embedded in our everyday thinking and actions.

Respect and Shared Success

At Ryerson, respect and a commitment to shared success underscore how we work together and how we treat one another. Collaboration with a view to mutual success shapes our work and the ways in which we measure achievement. It's about recognizing that while work or research might be independent, there is a bigger picture we are creating together. Respect is about how we communicate our ideas, how we debate and listen to each other, how we lead, and make decisions, and how we articulate and comprehend our identities in all their diverse forms. Learning can be transformative but can also, naturally, create discomfort. Healthy discussion, where differing viewpoints are expressed, is a cornerstone of higher education. That discussion is most effective when it occurs with integrity, responsibility and respect.

Sustainability

At Ryerson, sustainability means taking steps and behaving in ways that reflect our responsibility to future generations. That means continuously looking ahead and thinking about the future. Sustainability also means taking meaningful action to protect the environment and being fiscally responsible while ensuring a high-quality, student-centred experience. Ryerson is committed to pursuing environmental, social and economic sustainability through our programs, SRC activities, our built environment, our operations and policies. We recognize our individual and collective responsibility for our campus, our community and our planet.

Boldness

The university champions creativity, innovation and ingenuity, empowering its students, faculty and staff to think boldly, take initiative and demonstrate resourcefulness. This includes civic, cultural and social advancements that enrich society's fabric, improve quality of life and drive responsible change. It is how we approach all our work, from how curriculum is developed, to how services and

systems are delivered to support the operation of the university.

Wellbeing

Ryerson is committed to the success of its community by creating a safe, secure, collegial, healthy, and inclusive environment that puts people first, is supportive of the whole person and enhances the development of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Wellbeing is fundamental to positive social and academic outcomes, healthy communities and shared partnership in teaching and learning. Wellbeing includes flexibility, a foundational principle of an inclusive classroom and workplace. It focuses on the strengths individuals bring to our community, honouring and learning from each person's lived experiences.

Access

Access to education can transform lives and communities. Ryerson is committed to providing access to education and employment opportunities for our students, faculty and staff, particularly those from marginalized and under-represented and equity-seeking groups. Access includes lifelong learning, expanding our individual and collective horizons through professional development and learning opportunities. Building on a principle of shared responsibilities, Ryerson continues to create an environment where barriers to participation can be removed, and cultivates partnerships across the institution that make education more accessible to all students.

Collectively, these values give shape to what Ryerson is about, what inspires us and what we want our work to mean. Our values are not simply aspirational statements captured in a document; they are to be lived across all aspects of university life.

5.0 Our Priorities

THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Ryerson aims to cultivate a student experience that equips students of all backgrounds with the knowledge, skills and competencies they need to flourish and contribute to our ever-changing world.

Excellence in learning and teaching, outstanding programs and services that support students, committed faculty and staff, and an unwavering commitment to holistic student well-being both inside and outside the classroom – these are the ways in which Ryerson strives to provide an exceptional experience to every student. Delivering on this priority involves every member of the Ryerson community, anyone who in any way influences the Ryerson student experience.

An inherent part of delivering the student experience involves ensuring that all of our students can participate in local and global learning opportunities that speak to their goals and interests and that foster critical thought. Ryerson will strengthen its commitment to providing interdisciplinary and experiential learning opportunities that bring students and faculty together to address real-world local and societal problems. In this, students will become more fully engaged with communities, service providers and industries as partners in their learning experiences.

Quality teaching is vital to the overall student experience. Ryerson will continue supporting our faculty by nurturing a culture of teaching excellence that empowers our faculty and encourages experimenting with bold approaches, innovative and inclusive pedagogies, creative outlets and technology-enhanced learning that is informed by research.

Also critical to the student experience is the creation of accessible, inclusive and engaging learning environments for a diverse student population. This involves examining how learning occurs and using a range of teaching practices and learning spaces to support flexible, active learning that engage all students fully. Ryerson will continue fostering the use of open educational practices, inclusive curriculum design and technology-enhanced learning while creating flexible, modern environments and custom designed classroom spaces that are suitable for the multi-faceted and innovative teaching and learning approaches used at Ryerson.

Recognizing the importance of the student experience outside the classroom, Ryerson will continue providing exceptional academic, social and cultural programs and services that support our diverse student communities. These will be offered within a framework that promotes and protects students' overall wellbeing and that recognizes the value of the whole person. These experiences include ensuring that students, both undergraduate and graduate, have the chance to participate in global learning opportunities that speak to their goals and interests. Reciprocally, we will ensure the experience for international students attending Ryerson is positive, with international enrolment enriching the learning environment for both domestic students and those attending from abroad.

Ryerson embraces lifelong learning through undergraduate programming, continuing education courses and certificates, and a growing complement of graduate and post-graduate offerings. Lifelong learning also occurs in externally focused ways such as creating opportunities for volunteering and mentoring and a vibrant alumni system that connects students and graduates to Ryerson over their lifetimes.

As a city builder, Ryerson has a responsibility to help maintain a people-friendly, safe and inclusive environment for students and all community members. Key to this is ensuring the safety and security of our campus.

The conditions we create for students, coupled with inspirational teaching, an empowered faculty and staff and diverse learning environments and global experiences, are essential ingredients in delivering the very best student-centred experience — an experience that is uniquely Ryerson.

SCHOLARLY, RESEARCH, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY AND GRADUATE STUDIES

Ryerson fosters a robust culture of inquiry that attracts and provides talented and diverse faculty, graduate students and post-doctoral researchers with opportunities to develop and apply new ideas that matter in the world.

Excellence in scholarly, research and creative activity (SRC) is a cornerstone of Ryerson's identity. Our SRC strengths and priorities — including innovation, entrepreneurship and environmental sustainability — are demonstrated through the ongoing work of our Canada Research Chairs, our research centres and collaborations with industry and community partners. Collectively, they highlight Ryerson's growing national and international leadership in a multitude of areas. Ryerson is committed to enhancing the impact of its research with knowledge mobilization and open access initiatives.

So too is our commitment to attracting graduate students keen to participate in our extensive networks. This includes increasing the number of international students who choose Ryerson, and fully supporting them in their learning endeavours with us. It also includes providing greater opportunities for global learning, for both faculty and students, such as participating in international research partnerships and connecting to global research networks.

Our research and graduate students make tangible contributions to local communities, industry and society. As Ryerson aspires to a more prominent national and global profile, new partnerships and endeavours based on our talent and research expertise promise to deepen our research intensity and overall influence.

Overall, to attract and retain students, faculty and post-doctoral researchers of the highest calibre, Ryerson will continue to champion its commitment to fostering excellence in graduate studies. This includes ensuring our graduate programs are accessible to under-represented groups, and that appropriate services and supports are available for all students.

Ryerson will also focus on our graduate programs and the talented students who choose to pursue their graduate work at our institution. These programs include those that are research-oriented as well as those with a professional focus. We will expand learning opportunities, maintain our focus on addressing labour market and societal needs, and support Ryerson's broad research plan.

Ryerson's continued commitment to SRC, Graduate Studies and our graduate students affirms our intent to deepen our reputation for world-class excellence as we broaden our connections across Canada and the world. The recently completed Strategic Research Plan (2019-2024) reflects this commitment to SRC by articulating Ryerson's key research themes that reflect the diverse SRC activity that is taking place across the university. Combined with this Academic Plan, the development and implementation of the respective plans will place an even stronger focus on support of SRC across Ryerson.

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ADVANCING INDIGENOUS INITIATIVES

Ryerson aspires to social change by embedding Indigenous thinking, ideas, ideals, cultures and understanding in every facet of our work.

Toronto is in the *Dish With One Spoon Territory*. The Dish With One Spoon is a treaty between the Anishinaabe, Mississaugas, and Haudenosaunee that bound them to share the territory and protect the land. Subsequent Indigenous Nations and peoples, Europeans and all new comers have been invited into this treaty in the spirit of peace, friendship and respect.

Ryerson is steadfastly committed to truth and reconciliation. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) has emphasized the special role of educational institutions, both in terms of the state of relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians and the role education can play in revitalizing Indigenous knowledge and reconciliation more broadly.

Situated in Toronto, home to one of the largest and most diverse Indigenous populations in Canada, Ryerson is well placed to support the community. Building on existing foundations, entrenching an Indigenous focus in all aspects of our university affairs is critical.

This includes:

- **increasing** our Indigenous faculty and staff complement;
- **integrating** Indigenous pedagogies and experiential learning opportunities,
- **expanding** our curriculum with Indigenous content;
- **recruiting and supporting** Indigenous students;
- **promoting** community-grounded research; and
- **transforming** our university space to recognize the Indigenous community's presence.

Realizing these priorities involves thoughtful cross-campus collaboration led by Indigenous voices, and the broader Indigenous community, to ensure the steps we are taking are meaningful and result in the most positive impact in whatever areas they touch.

In recent years, groups and individuals across the university have begun this meaningful work. Going forward, those initiatives will be increasingly supported.

Initiatives related to this priority will also remain informed by the contributions of the university's Truth and Reconciliation Commission Strategic Working Group,

which is guiding the implementation of recommendations from the *2018 TRC Community Consultation Report*.

This priority is about embedding Indigenous thinking, ideas, ideals, cultures and understanding in all our work. Equally, it is fundamentally about reversing the marginalization of Indigenous peoples and knowledge while ensuring Indigenous communities can continue growing and thriving at Ryerson. By embedding this as a priority in this Academic Plan, and across our campus, Ryerson aspires to realize greater social change by helping break down racism and stereotypes — playing a direct role in transforming Canadian social institutions and norms, and moving towards a future defined by respect and dignity for all.

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INNOVATION: CONTINUING TO CHALLENGE THE STATUS QUO

Ryerson's vision is to be Canada's leading comprehensive innovation university.

Throughout our history, innovation has meant evaluating and challenging conventional approaches to post-secondary education inside and outside the classroom. That approach has enriched our society and the Toronto community Ryerson calls home, and resulted in an improved overall quality of life.

An innovation ecosystem is characterized by risk-taking, examining subjects critically and creatively and thinking broadly to derive fresh ideas and solutions to problems. Ryerson's innovation ecosystem is showcased in many ways, including our labs, SRC partnerships, teaching, and Zone Learning network. Focused on various sectors ranging from biomedical engineering, to fashion, energy and social justice, our 10 innovation zones are providing students in all programs with access to resources which help bring ideas to life as viable entrepreneurial ventures in the private and non-profit sectors.

In practice, each and every day across the Ryerson campus, innovation occurs in all our Faculties and in their approaches to teaching, learning and curriculum. It can be seen in how we support students, and how our faculty and staff approach their daily work. A culture of innovation helps students to think creatively, take initiative and demonstrate resourcefulness. For well beyond half a century at Ryerson, innovation has:

- **stimulated** creative thinking and know-how, rewarding ideas and bringing innovation to life through, education, research and learning opportunities and experiences offered to students;
- **strengthened** interdisciplinary connections;
- **enhanced** curriculum development;
- **increased** partnerships with complementary organizations; and,
- **reinforced** our university's strong commitment to continue building a robust teaching and SRC culture.

Innovation also requires an exchange of ideas across diverse communities and industries, bringing new perspectives together to consider important questions and solutions. Whether the members of our university are engaging in social or civic ventures, driving responsible change in existing organizations or creating new companies, products or jobs, or running the operations of the university, they are tapping into the spirit of innovation that is the very essence of Ryerson.

This spirit transcends our local and domestic borders, allowing us to exchange knowledge and share our perspectives with others, and opening us to alternative ways of thinking and to different cultural approaches.

Being innovative is true to who we are — a campus and community that has always embraced ‘out-of-the-box’ thinking and approaches to learning, teaching, SRC, and administration. Innovation makes us unique and allows us to stand apart. We will build on our roots, continuing to develop and foster an innovation ecosystem across and throughout Ryerson.

We will do this by continuing to nurture an environment that instills creative and critical thinking across disciplines and supports more students, faculty and staff in becoming innovators, entrepreneurs, activists and socially responsible citizens who can make a positive difference.

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COMMUNITY AND URBAN PARTNERSHIPS

Ryerson is committed to advancing conversations on culture, economics, technology, social justice and the environment that lead to policies and actions that contribute to building inclusive, resilient, sustainable and dynamic cities.

As a university located at the centre of Canada's largest city, Ryerson has deep connections with those who share our physical space and landscape.

Closely linked to our surrounding communities, we are constantly seeking ways to engage collaboratively in partnership with these communities and their residents. Equally, these partnerships offer reciprocal benefits for our neighbours and real opportunities for Ryerson's students, faculty and staff to make a difference. For everyone in the partnership, they put knowledge-sharing and learning exchange into everyday practice.

Building on tradition spanning more than seven decades, we will continue engaging with our local communities. This includes delivering valuable community services and social programming and building on our SRC excellence. We remain committed to equity, diversity and community inclusion.

With more than 80 per cent of Canada's population living in urban environments, cities are our future. Given our downtown location, Ryerson is especially well positioned to play a significant role as communities in Toronto and beyond navigate the social, economic, political, environmental, cultural, physical and technological aspects of our ever-changing communities.

Going forward, we will continue seeking new ways and partnerships to advance both the conversation and action around safe, diverse, resilient, inclusive and sustainable cities. Equally, we will continue harnessing and sharing our expertise — keeping Ryerson at the forefront of policy-oriented discussions on key urban issues such as sustainable housing, renewable energy, health, water policy, future land use, smart infrastructure, urban design, migration and settlement, democratic governance, community and individual well-being.

As we look ahead, Ryerson will continue broadening its societal impact by developing stronger regional and global ties. One way we'll achieve this is by strengthening our focus and scope on city-building. This calls for enhancing our expertise as a leader in urban study and thought while also sharing what we've learned by doing. We will take a more global lens as we define what and who comprises a city, how and why international students choose Ryerson, and how we can further engage with a global community of city builders.

Being viewed as an urban thought leader calls for incorporating ideas and thinking from beyond our campus. That means collaborating with experts from other cities to share learning, ideas and solutions on critical urban issues.

These and other efforts will position Ryerson at the forefront of city-building discussions and initiatives, and will recognize and enhance our position as a city-building university.

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6.0 What's Next?

To better align budget resources and allow flexibility in responding to a changing environment, implementation strategies for the Academic Plan will be outlined in a separate document. This supporting Strategy Guide will provide examples of short, medium and long-term strategies that we heard throughout the consultation process for this Academic Plan.

This Strategy Guide will be updated periodically and tied to the annual budget process. Faculties and divisions will be able to adapt or develop strategies locally in alignment with the Academic Plan.

Progress will be monitored regularly, with annual reports to the community on the ways in which we are furthering the priorities articulated in the Plan.

PLACEHOLDER FOR LINKS TO OTHER PLANS (E.G., RESEARCH, INTERNATIONAL)