

ACADEMIC ACTION PLAN – FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

Introduction

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

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

At the beginning of Phase 2 of the Academic Action Planning process, a series of discrete collaborative teams were established (see Appendix A) to explore topic areas identified within the initial Phase 1 planning conversations. These collaborative teams focused on the following subject matter areas:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Priorities

Definitions

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

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

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

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

Opening recommendation on implementation

Each of the member collaborative teams engaged in Phase 2 of the Academic Action Planning process agree strongly that the time and effort invested by the University community in the recommendations contained in this report need careful and purposeful stewardship towards implementation. The collaborative teams also recognize that while we are fortunate to have developed this Academic Action Plan from the ground up, and that implementation will in many ways be the responsibility of everyone at UNBC, with the implementation of specific issues being led by particular units as appropriate, we must still recognize that overall responsibility rests with the Vice President Academic and Provost. The collaborative teams also recognize that implementation of these recommendations is complex. At times, implementation of some recommendations may fall to individual units or programs with little impact beyond those units/programs. At other times, implementation may involve the need for cross-university dialogue and transformation. The recommendations are intended as recommendations, not directives, and units involved in implementation should use them as a guide, and adjust as necessary as dialogue and implementation unfolds.

Some of the recommendations contained herein are currently ongoing. We kept these in the Academic Action Plan in order to recognize the good work that is already happening and to ensure integration of these activities into the context with the rest of the plan.

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

Recommendation

Following approval by Senate, it is the recommendation of the member collaborative teams engaged in Phase 2 of the Academic Action Planning process that an Academic Action Plan Advisory Committee be created that is committed to supporting the successful integration of these proposals into the Integrated University Plan, Strategic Road Map, and Annual Action Plans and

to continue to provide support, feedback, and advice as the University community works towards the implementation of the recommendations. Specifically, the Academic Action Plan Advisory Committee has the following mandate and characteristics:

- a. *Provide monitoring of the recommendations contained in the three sections of this report and organized under the priorities identified herein;*
- b. *Support the Director, and Office, of Integrated Planning in the work of stewarding the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report;*
- c. *Where needed, provide advice to individual units and the Vice-President Academic and Provost, on additional strategic direction for prioritizing implementation around the recommendations contained in this report;*
- d. *Where needed, advise, guide, organize, or support collaborative processes to assist individual units or cross-university activities in their work towards implementation of the recommendations contained in this report;*
- e. *That membership be limited to approximately nine individuals comprised of four representatives from the Phase 2 Academic Action Planning Collaborative Teams for continuity, and five additional individuals with representation from each of faculty, staff, students, and administration;*
- f. *That these five additional individuals be selected as follows: the faculty representative be elected from among members of the Faculty Association, the staff representative be elected from all staff groups, the two student representatives be suggested by their respective undergraduate and graduate student societies, and that the administrator be suggested by the President;*
- g. *That the committee Chair be determined by its membership;*
- h. *That the Academic Action Plan Advisory Committee be part of a two-way reporting process developed in collaboration with the Vice-President Academic and Provost and the Office of Integrated University Planning; and*
- i. *That the Academic Action Plan Advisory Committee has access to the annual unit action plans so as to report to the UNBC community on the overall progress made on the Academic Action Plan, including problems encountered.*

Prioritizing for Implementation

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

this priority provides guidance for a coordinated implementation that reflects the internal logic of the Academic Action Plan.

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

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

I. Decolonization and Indigenization

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

II. Strategic Enrolment

This issue is urgent. The implementation and integration of a strategic, holistic, effective, and sustainable approach to enrolment at UNBC is imperative. Achieving this priority set is critical to the immediate and long-term success and survival of the University. Short-term decisions and tactics should fit within, and not jeopardize, long-term strategy for (a) building capacity across the enrolment continuum, from pre-recruitment through to alumni relations, and (b) achieving an ideal student body for UNBC as a destination university. We need to also invest in frontline service staff and systems; presently, we cannot properly serve our applicants or our enrolled students. Until fixed, this will continue to constrain the success of student recruitment, the delivery of academic programs, and the satisfaction of our students and alumni. Action towards some goals and on some recommendations can begin independently, while others need to be integrated with changes suggested in other priority sets.

III. Academic Structure

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

IV. Curriculum Reviews

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

V. Faculty Complement

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

VI. Experiential Education, Teaching and Learning

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

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Mission, Vision, and Values

Earlier planning and dialogue processes helped establish the following statements with respect to UNBC's vision, mission, and values. The working groups in this phase of the academic action planning process were tasked by Senate to look at specific topic areas. We have included these statements on UNBC's mission, vision, and values as a reference point because they guided our work.

Our Motto

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

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

Our Mission

To prepare leaders for tomorrow by influencing the world today.

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

Our Vision

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

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

Our Values

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

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

- **Experiential learning, exploration, and discovery** - Our community celebrates and strives to provide an unparalleled learning experience that ensures that our students are prepared to meet the challenges of a fast-paced modern world, while stepping up and making a difference. UNBC is a champion of intellectual freedom, academic inquiry, learning for its own sake, access to information, learning through applied and best practices in experiential initiatives and the development and mobilization of new knowledge.
- **Inclusiveness and diversity** - Social and cultural diversity is core to enriching the learning environment of a modern university. The confluence of diversity and respectful discussion stimulates creative thoughts, new ways of thinking, and new pathways of inquiry. This ensures that our research questions address society as a

whole, and enables us to train leaders who understand our local and global communities.

- **Community** - UNBC is a place where community thrives and where we strive to understand and care for other members of our University. It is a place all are welcome and where we commit to being respectful, innovative, resourceful, and responsive in our interactions with others.
- **Integrity** - To succeed we must be true to who we are, and focus on where we are now and what we want to be in the future. We are honest, supportive, and forthright in all our interactions, confronting problems and issues openly and constructively.

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Our Aspirations for Students and Community

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

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

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

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

UNBC graduate programs are well integrated into the structure and ethos of the university, and are well supported. These programs attract and retain students nationally and internationally based on faculty reputation, research opportunities, financial support, and innovative curriculum design and delivery. The graduate degrees draw on the unique location and perspective of UNBC to inform and work within international and global issues and contexts. At the Master's level they provide the philosophical and practical training in the foundations of high-quality research and professional qualifications. Doctoral degree programs at UNBC focus on training researchers and future scholars to generate new knowledge, and equip them with the skills to succeed in academia and other career paths that require the highest level of scientific and scholarly training. Graduate students contribute to and learn from mutually beneficial engagement with undergraduate programs at UNBC via teaching and research opportunities. Regional campuses and instructional technologies aid in facilitating high-quality research and accessible graduate-level education.

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

Part 1: Respect

1.1. University Direction – Strengths, Enrolment, Research

Goal 1.1.1

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

Rationale 1.1.1a

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

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

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

Recommendation 1.1.1a

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

Rationale 1.1.1b

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

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

Recommendations 1.1.1b

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

Goals 1.1.2

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

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

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

Rationale 1.1.2a

Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) is a comprehensive and coordinated process that enables a university to identify enrolment goals that are aligned with its mission, its strategic plan, its environment, and its resources, and to reach those goals through the effective integration of administrative processes, student services, curriculum planning, and relevant data analysis¹. It is an institution-wide process that embraces virtually every aspect of an institution’s function and culture to achieve and maintain the optimum recruitment, retention, and graduation rates of students, where “optimum” is defined within the academic context of the institution².

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

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

¹ (Kerlin, C., 2008, pp. 10-14)

² (Dolence, M.G., 1993)

The human and community face of SEM is about building relationships. Understanding how to create, nurture, and appreciate relationships will help to structure, plan, and lead SEM³.

Recommendations 1.1.2b

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

Goal 1.1.3

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

Rationale 1.1.3a

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

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

³ (Henderson, S. E., 2017)

1.2. University Life

Goal 1.2.1

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

An obvious and prominent inclusion within the draft Academic Plan is the acknowledgement of "Indigenization and Decolonization" as being an important part of UNBC's path forward. Not only is this complementary to the institution's overall mandate and mission, but it celebrates UNBC as a leader in this area. It is important to recognize that Indigenization and decolonization is not intended to be prescriptive in nature. Instead, by embedding this terminology within the context of the overarching Academic Action Plan, the opportunity for evolution and change as related to these two areas can be realized. Succinct and tightened definitions of what Indigenization and decolonization means at UNBC may potentially disadvantage the creative and innovative ways our institution respectfully implements Indigenous and decolonizing-related initiatives as part of UNBC's institutional identity and strength. Through dialogue exchange and sharing, further understandings of how UNBC can embrace Indigenization and decolonization will be enacted.

Rationale 1.2.1a

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

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

Recommendations 1.2.1a

- *Commit to a healthy and vibrant university community that:*
 - a. *Cares for the physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual well-being of the UNBC community, which may often involve family responsibilities; and*
 - b. *Fosters and supports work/life balance for students, staff, and faculty.*
- *Affirm and support the important function of our University as a venue for free and informed expression and debate.*
- *Increase access to healthy, affordable, and sustainable food options and food vendors on all UNBC campuses.*
- *Increase programmed opportunities inside and outside the class that encourage students, faculty, and staff to connect to nature, social, and civic responsibilities, and volunteering on UNBC campuses.*

- *Create an Office of Diversity, Human Rights and Prevention of Discrimination that reports directly to the President. This newly formed office would be responsible for bringing together currently disjointed activities related to its mandate, which includes:*
 - *Human Rights and Workplace Respect related activities;*
 - *Ombudsperson related activities;*
 - *Truth and Reconciliation related activities;*
- *Would serve students, staff, and faculty, and therefore cannot report to Human Resources; and*
- *Sexual violence and misconduct⁴ protocols, trauma-informed training and education, and disclosures.*

Rationale 1.2.1b

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

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

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

Recommendations 1.2.1b

- *The delivery of student affairs as well as teaching and learning services be recognized as comprising established professional and theoretically-informed domains as well as specific cultural competencies, in which UNBC must achieve best practices that are tailored to our unique communities.*
- *Regional delivery of activities, services, and space needed to support student life and a “UNBC experience” be made a priority, facilitated through cross-communication among units responsible for student services and regional delivery of academic programs.*

⁴ <http://www.unbc.ca/sexual-violence/policy-procedures>

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

- *Front-line staff have necessary training and support to enable them to provide services that are responsive to the ebb and flow of student life, and that these staff have a role in the identification of training and support requirements (this may require clarification and negotiation with employees' unions).*
- *Consider a combined portfolio of Student Affairs, Teaching, and Learning (see 2.6.1a), encompassing the above goals and recommendations, be created and placed under the purview of a senior administrative lead or leads to ensure coordination and sustainability. The mandate for this position should include a strong statement that decisions must be informed by students and front-line staff, and that actions taken within the portfolio be guided foremost by a strong ethic of service to students.*

Rationale 1.2.1c

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

Recommendations 1.2.1c

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

Goals 1.2.2

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

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

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

Rationale 1.2.2a

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

Recommendations 1.2.2a

- *Provide opportunities for students to connect with external communities and engage in extra-curricular activities.*
- *Improve students' advising experience by investing in, or enabling through technology improvements or efficiencies, more advising capacity, and ensure that students can readily access advisors, especially around peak times.*
- *Keep in contact with students who leave UNBC prior to completion, update them with what is happening at UNBC, and develop a re-entrance strategy for students who may become motivated or better prepared to return to studies at UNBC.*
- *Create an "invite us" calendar that lets high school and other counsellors plan for their students to visit or for recruiters/advisors to meet at the school.*
- *Ensure advisors are experts in their areas, but with cross-training in case of absence.*
- *Support advisor – program links to ensure that advisors are aware of program changes and for advisors to provide programs with advice regarding proposed changes.*
- *Maintain a hybrid model of advisors centrally located together, but with program-specific portfolios.*
- *Maintain the co-location of Advising, Recruitment, and Admissions – these units need to be in close physical and organizational proximity to best serve students.*
- *Investigate the opportunity to bring together Health, Counseling, and the proposed Office of Diversity, Human Rights and Prevention of Discrimination in neighboring locations, while retaining their function as independent units (due to confidentiality).*
- *Consider development of a neighbourhood of learning centres where appropriate, to improve student access and reduce redundancy (e.g. The Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology (CTLT), Academic Success Centre (ASC), Access Resource Centre (ARC), Mathematical Academic Centre for Excellence (MACE), Chemistry Tutoring in The Nucleus) while recognizing some resource centres require and succeed in particular locations.*
- *Conduct periodic reviews of lab and computer/technology services and support to ensure needs of students, faculty, and staff are being met.*
- *Enable and support opportunities for cultural expression on UNBC campuses and in our host communities, and broaden and invest in outdoor recreation, outdoor leisure, and outdoor sport activities and opportunities that reflect and embrace the northern setting and seasonality of our campuses. The approach to doing so should:*

- a. *Ensure adequate resources and funding to provide spaces for diverse cultural practices and engagement at all of our campuses; ensuring there are safe (i.e. trauma-informed) spaces is important;*
 - b. *Review the status of, and provide where needed, permanent facilities that reflect, celebrate, and enable local Indigenous ceremonial, spiritual, and cultural practices to live; this should be part of the Aboriginal Strategic Action Plan recommended in 1.5.1c;*
 - c. *Prioritize leisure and recreation opportunities that emphasize northern places, peoples, issues, and experiences;*
 - d. *Through the portfolio of Student Affairs, Teaching and Learning (recommendation 1.2.1b and goal 2.6.1) develop a plan to foster collaborations between academic and non-academic units so as to provide opportunities both for leisure and learning within the UNBC community;*
 - e. *Encourage the development of partnerships with local communities, groups, clubs, associations, organizations, and businesses that bring opportunities for students and other University members to connect with each other and internal and external communities. Ensure the resulting opportunities for the UNBC community are not-for-profit and accessible;*
 - f. *Cultural and recreational activities at UNBC should benefit local communities whenever possible;*
 - g. *As part of the Strategic Enrolment Plan (Recommendations 1.1.2b), assess mobility barriers that students face in accessing community and natural amenities, and develop and implement a plan to reduce or eliminate these barriers (e.g. by operating a UNBC shuttle); and*
 - h. *Task a representative from Student Affairs to work with the Northern Undergraduate Student Society (NUGSS) and the Northern British Columbia Graduate Student Society (NBCGSS) to find ways to better establish and support student clubs and chapters on all UNBC campuses to provide accessible events and activities that contribute to campus life.*
- *Monitor retention and completion efforts among UNBC's diverse student groups, including but not limited to domestic students, Indigenous students, international students, mature students, and first-generation university students, by tracking attrition rates, recognizing that any one student may belong to several groups.*
 - *Conduct a student housing study to identify existing UNBC student housing patterns, current student housing needs and demand, and gaps between these.*
 - *Conduct a study of students' satisfaction and ideas for improving food services as well as general student space on UNBC campuses.*
 - *Recognize and collaborate with appropriate local groups (e.g. business development, farmers' market, arts and culture associations) to further develop and better communicate reasons and ways for community members to come to UNBC campuses, and students to engage off campus with host communities.*
 - *Collaborate with local governments to identify opportunities to provide off-campus student housing in amenity rich areas (e.g. downtown Prince George).*
 - *Collaborate with the City of Prince George and British Columbia Transit to explore opportunities to connect the UNBC Prince George Campus and Downtown Prince George via an express bus route.*
 - *Determine transit problems that should be addressed at regional campuses.*

- *Explore collaboration with transportation organizations (e.g. British Columbia Transit, Via Rail, bus and airline companies, and local municipalities) to improve inter-campus transit.*

1.3. Empowerment and Collaboration

Goals 1.3.1

University operations will become more efficient and effective when front-line employees are empowered to make decisions without having to wait for permission from their “one-up” or higher to approve and then for the approval to work its way back down the ladder. Better decisions and more efficient use of resources will result from enhanced communication and collaboration among academic and administrative units, and involvement of employees in decision-making processes will support employee commitment and productivity. Engagement feedback suggested opportunities for faculty and staff development that included attention to enhanced professional development, training, and mentoring. Together, these suggestions identified a collaborative approach to faculty and staff recruitment, retention, and succession planning that could greatly enhance job satisfaction and performance, and assist overall the University functioning.

Rationale 1.3.1a

Engagement feedback strongly indicated that employees were feeling a lack of empowerment and an increase in workload (more work with fewer people) so that burnout was a very significant theme throughout. Faculty and staff feel that their role in decision-making and the overall mission of the University is not understood and respected, and they seek a greater input into university decision-making. Many employees at UNBC are never, or are infrequently, evaluated. This is a lost opportunity for two-way communication that can lead to increases in performance and productivity.

Recommendations 1.3.1a

- *The implementation phase of the Academic Action Plan look for opportunities by which UNBC employees can be empowered to make responsible decisions whenever possible. Decision-making authority should be distributed, with particular focus on front-line employees, so that meaningful information can be provided quickly and accurately at the point of first contact.*
- *Develop a collaborative process, which engages unit members, to review organizational units with an eye to redistribute resources toward front-line services, with less emphasis on management.*
- *Explore, develop, and communicate processes through which UNBC faculty and staff who have the desire and specific expertise could be temporarily released in whole or in part from their current duties, so as to be deployed or re-deployed for work on pressing or innovative issues for the University or part thereof.*
- *Value student leadership by involving them in decisions that affect student supports and services.*
- *Ensure that institutional priorities, as articulated in this and other University plans, are clear.*

- *Conduct a review of university-wide data collection, analysis, and reporting to identify gaps, streamline processes, and implement effective tools and technology to enhance reporting and access. This will ensure that we have the data and data collection to make strategic recruitment and retention decisions.*
- *Encourage individual units to create internal strategic action plans flowing from the University Integrated Planning, including faculty and staff development and succession plans, to help guide unit direction and provide buy-in and clarity for unit personnel.*
- *Ensure that all policies and procedures are up-to-date, to reflect laws, regulations and mandates; ensure that these are posted so that the external community as well as UNBC employees can access them (transparency), and that old policies and procedures are cleared from the system.*
- *As a component of Chair training and mentoring (Recommendation 2.2.1a), and supervisor and employee training and mentoring, ensure that relevant policies and procedures are included as part of the training, and subsequently interpreted consistently and implemented.*
- *Faculty orientation should include an enhanced understanding of administrative processes, and opportunities should be provided for ongoing training and for dialogue between faculty and staff groupings to ensure continued efficiency of operations.*
- *Consider developing, expanding, and maintaining a central online hub (e.g. student portal) of institutional information and education tools for faculty and staff, to improve and facilitate processes, collaboration, and internal research.*
- *Unit heads should review training needs for members of the unit, and ensure appropriate training is provided. Unit heads should be trained in mentorship, and able to provide mentorship to all positions, with clear, articulated expectations for performance.*
- *To improve retention and job satisfaction amongst faculty and staff, provide for upward and downward evaluations and exit interviews.*
- *Reduce redundancies in databases and enable information sharing. Deans should be tasked with a review of allocation of administrative support (administrative assistants) by workload (e.g. numbers of students, numbers of faculty, activities of unit) to ensure equity among both administrative assistant workload and support available to faculty.*
- *Improve communication between structural layers of UNBC by providing opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to talk directly with senior administration informally, and for regular senior administration visits to program, staff and student meetings.*

Rationale 1.3.1b

As noted elsewhere in this report, the Senate committee structure needs to be re-evaluated for a number of reasons, the most relevant in this section is to enhance and support the role of students, faculty, and staff on Senate and Senate committees, and to ensure decision-making is efficient and well-informed by those on the front-line.

Recommendation 1.3.1b

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

Rationale 1.3.1c

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

Recommendation 1.3.1c

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

Goal 1.3.2

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

Rationale 1.3.2a

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

Recommendation 1.3.2a

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

1.4. Faculty Renewal and Development

The UNBC community requires clarity, stability, equity, and predictability in the process and criteria used to make decisions about faculty positions, hiring, and program complements; the process and criteria used should reflect and support enacting this Action plan.

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

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

The faculty complement at UNBC is diverse. Thus, we adopted a “bottom-up” approach to identify the important elements of renewal and development. As the foundation of the recommendation process, we asked individual faculty members and librarians to share their ideas on how UNBC could support their work and in turn why that was important to the success of the University. From new term instructors to faculty that had invested their careers in UNBC, we allowed the aspirations and concerns of individual faculty members to inform and guide our work.

During Phase I of the academic planning process, there were efforts to consult with faculty members on the topic of renewal and development. Those initial efforts were influenced by the then recently completed contract negotiations. We carefully weighed the results from an initial Phase I faculty survey and focus group sessions, and a faculty survey completed as part of the Phase II planning process. We hoped that faculty would see Phase II as a new opportunity to discuss these important issues.

A large proportion of the UNBC faculty members participated in events designed to encourage discussion and elicit ideas centered on the broad topic of faculty renewal and development. We did not define renewal and development or limit the scope of discussion, but let ideas emerge from open-ended and directed consultation. Many of those ideas originated from focus groups that were facilitated by an external and impartial party (Tekara Organizational Effectiveness Inc.). Focus groups were stratified by type of position and years of employment: Tenured/Tenure-Track with 6 or fewer years of seniority; Tenured/Tenure-Track with more than 6 but not more than 15 years of seniority; Tenured/Tenure-Track with more than 15 years of seniority; Regional Faculty; Term-Appointed Faculty; and Senior Lab Instructors and Librarians. The focus groups followed a semi-structured format. In total, 56 of 337 faculty participated in one of six two-hour discussions. The facilitator reported that participants were engaged and enthusiastic.

We considered the individual themes that emerged from the focus groups, and these informed the development of a web-facilitated survey (see Appendix D). A stratified random sample was drawn of 183 individuals randomly selected for the strata used for the focus groups but only from amongst those who did not participate in the focus groups. The design was proportionate to the population of each stratum and was to have a margin of error of 5% for estimating a proportion 19 times out of 20. Five-point Likert scale responses from strongly disagree to strongly agree were solicited for specific themes identified by the focus groups. This was followed by the opportunity to provide open-ended responses at the end of each theme. There were no missing data for the Likert scale response because respondents were forced to provide an answer, but with two additional choices: “No Opinion/Not Applicable” or “Prefer Not to Answer.” With an initial email solicitation and three reminder email messages, faculty provided a total of 102 surveys completed, resulting in a response rate of 56%. This is well below the rule of thumb of a minimum response rate of 80% for conducting formal statistical inference, so only proportions without standard errors were estimated for the Likert scale questions on the Phase II survey. It is noted that the Phase I survey on Faculty Renewal and Development was intended as a census but only had 27 responses.

In addition to the focus groups and structured survey, plan recommendations were informed by conversations with faculty members including those discussions at public engagement events. Also, we commissioned an informal survey of Canadian universities to identify existing programs, policies, or facilities that were designed to broadly support faculty renewal and development.

Collectively through those engagement strategies we identified four thematic areas that represent broad goals for guiding the renewal and development of faculty at UNBC⁶.

Goal 1.4.1

Faculty members at UNBC feel strongly that teaching, research, and service are a core mandate for faculty members. The University must support faculty in achieving those expectations. This

⁶ Recommendations for faculty renewal are proposed with recognition of the importance of contract negotiations to these issues.

includes ensuring that there are a sufficient number of instructors with the disciplinary expertise to maintain the existing curricula at the Prince George and regional campuses.

Rationale 1.4.1a

UNBC is at a point in its evolution where many from the first cohort of faculty hires likely will retire in the next ten years. Faculty members are concerned that there is neither a policy nor a systematic process to support the hiring of replacement faculty let alone meet new areas of strength for UNBC.

The University is consistently ranked by Maclean's as one of the best in its category. That ranking can be maintained only by hiring world-class instructors and researchers who are committed to a career at UNBC. Rapid turn-over in faculty limits the development of comprehensive research programs, excellence in teaching, and the progression of young to experienced faculty who can move into senior administrative positions. Faculty noted that recruitment is dependent on workload, compensation, and benefits that are competitive with other universities. It should be noted that comments from the focus groups and the surveys strongly and repeatedly indicated that compensation is a major factor in retention and recruitment of faculty. Compensation refers to salary and the adequacy of the pension plan. There were also comments relating to the loss of merit pay as well as high teaching loads. Comments pertaining separately to recruitment and retention included the requirement of a positive policy regarding spousal/partner hiring.

Recommendations 1.4.1a

- *The formation of a committee to develop a policy and implement a process for the strategic hiring of new faculty. The committee's work ought to recognize the emerging academic structure recommended through the Phase II planning process as well as the strengths and needs of existing degree offerings and provide flexibility to capitalize on new or emerging areas that will strengthen UNBC's core academic themes. The committee should focus on the prevention of anticipated gaps in teaching of required courses and encourage innovation in developing new programs that will serve UNBC's mission. Elements were not prescribed to be contained within a policy for strategic hiring, yet faculty noted the importance of gender and cultural representation. This included broader efforts to increase the indigenization and decolonization of UNBC's campuses.*
- *That the University recognize compensation and benefits as essential elements in attracting and retaining world-class faculty. As expressed by faculty members, compensation must be competitive with similar Canadian universities. This includes more than salary; funding of professional development, pension, extended health, and retirement benefits are important elements of a total compensation package. In particular, faculty members for whom professional practice and continuous education are required need to be supported in meeting these obligations.*
- *The compensation structure at UNBC presents unique challenges to term-appointed instructors, who communicated a desire for greater support and opportunity to participate in research and service. In some cases, contractual expectations and resulting compensation is based on instructional time. Yet research and service to*

UNBC may be an implicit expectation, generally with no direct compensation or recognition. Compensation for term instructors should recognize services and research responsibilities if that is an implicit expectation of the employment contract.

- *The formation of a committee to develop a policy that will address preferential hiring for a spouse/partner. Currently, UNBC has no written spousal/partner hiring policy leaving hiring committees and the Provost with no guidance in this regard. Faculty members acknowledged that this is a complex issue. Some faculty members recommended priority hiring for the spouse/partner of a person being recruited to join UNBC while others noted a need for policy in the case of current faculty members whose spouse/partner is qualified for a new position. Some faculty members were concerned that preferential hiring of a spouse/partner would limit the flexibility to recruit a more suitable applicant. A preferential spousal/partner hiring policy for faculty positions could limit course offerings or collaborative and innovative directions in research.*

Goal 1.4.2

Faculty at UNBC of all ranks expressed considerable interest in improving and innovating their teaching, broadening their research program, and exploring new areas of service to their profession, the community, and the university. Many faculty members spoke of the selfless community that is UNBC, and committed to helping colleagues achieve their goals for professional achievement. This included a desire to serve as mentors. The University must support the mentorship process through all stages of career development.

Rationale 1.4.2a

Although the survey results indicated confidence in seeking mentorship, the survey comments indicated that the amount and quality of mentorship has been primarily a function of individual chairs rather than any systematic university approach to mentorship with virtually no continuing education being offered to prepare chairs for this role. Faculty members that expressed a positive experience with mentorship did so because they had a Chair who actively took on the role.

Some faculty members noted that they had insufficient opportunities to participate in professional development activities. The reasons varied, but included the distance and expense of travelling from regional campuses to Prince George or attending meetings and conferences in southern British Columbia and beyond. Others felt that given the high teaching and university service expectations there was insufficient time to participate in existing professional development opportunities, such as workshops offered by the CTLT, or for self-exploration of new areas of teaching and research. Some faculty members have professional development requirements that are specific to their discipline with direct relevance to teaching, research, and service. This includes memberships in professional associations and colleges as well as safety and training certifications. There are also requirements to engage in professional practice in addition to the work expectations of their academic unit at UNBC.

Recommendations 1.4.2a

- *The formation of a committee to develop a formal mentorship program to meet the broad needs and interests of UNBC faculty. Mentorship should address the challenges facing new faculty members in refining their teaching skills and initiating a research program and mentorship could also assist more experienced faculty members, who are innovating their teaching and developing new directions in research and service. The University ought to recognize the contributions of mentors and the efforts of those being mentored through the promotion and performance evaluation processes.*
- *Provide additional support to allow faculty to interact with colleagues who are distant from their primary campus. This may include workload and funding support to travel and to participate in activities at regional and the Prince George campuses to meet with colleagues, or attend scholarly or service events in other locations, or to participate through video-conferencing facilities.*
- *Provide additional support to allow faculty to engage in professional activities inclusive of but not limited to training and certification. Depending on the nature of the activity, this may include adjustment of workload or compensation for associated professional dues, fees, courses, and exams.*
- *Consider the many competing demands on faculty time when developing approval processes, setting expectations for faculty participation in university committees, and negotiating instructional workload. Faculty members, Senior Laboratory Instructors, and Librarians recognize that course instruction, research, service, and other professional duties are essential expectations. However, efficiencies in the delivery of these core activities ought to provide opportunities to develop professionally. Further excellence in instruction, service, and research will benefit the University.*

Goal 1.4.3

Faculty expressed a sense of disengagement from governance structures (such as the Senate and the Board of Governors) and decision-making at UNBC. In the survey responses and survey comments there was an expressed desire that senior administration make every effort to build a stronger and more transparent relationship with faculty members.

Rationale 1.4.3a

Comments that related to collegiality represented the second highest number after comments regarding salary and compensation. It should be noted that collegiality also referred to relationships among faculty members as well as administration and faculty member relationships. In the focus groups many faculty members reported that their role in the overall mission of the University was not understood and respected by either senior administration or staff.

Almost half of the survey respondents indicated that they lacked recognition for their contributions. Faculty requested greater input into university decision-making and this included the desire for sincerer two-way communication with senior administrators.

Recommendations 1.4.3a

- *Recognize, support and, where appropriate, enhance the role of faculty in governance and decision-making. This recommendation does not point to any specific governance committee, structure, process, or method. This recommendation is meant to provide the foundation for effective and productive working relationships amongst faculty, program chairs, and senior administrators.*
- *That administration and faculty members establish mechanisms to promote open communication and mutual respect. Leadership, communication, and respect are core values that will support the implementation of the academic plan.*

Goal 1.4

Health and wellness are elements that are closely related to retention and recruitment. In our survey of Canadian universities, we found that other universities have developed health and wellness policies. Policies of this nature seem to be lacking at UNBC and need to be developed.

Rationale 1.4.4a

The focus groups, survey responses, and survey comments indicated that health and wellness is a broadly defined concept. For example, respondents made reference to the stress and anxiety that arises from a lack of collegiality and they also noted the stress that occurs as a result of workload and uncertainty regarding factors such as scheduling and job security. A large number of respondents believed that there should be ready access to the Northern Sports Centre by way of a benefit.

Recommendation 1.4.4a

- *Consider provision of membership at the Northern Sports Centre, other facilities for the regional campus, and other alternatives as a benefit.*

1.5. Decolonization and Indigenization

Decolonization and Indigenization, as an extension of UNBC's motto and signature area of First Nations and Indigenous priorities, is woven throughout the Academic Action Plan.

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

Goal 1.5.1

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

Rationale 1.5.1a

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

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

Decolonization and Indigenization are linked because they involve a process of transformation to more broadly include Indigenous knowledge, voices, learning spaces, and means of dialogue and decision-making within the academy. To do so requires acknowledgement of and respect for ways of knowing and learning that are distinct from the Western worldview upon which the academy was founded.

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

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

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

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

can be further informed by research done at UNBC and elsewhere concerning Indigenous education around the world.

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

The following First Peoples Principles of Learning from the British Columbia First Nations Education Steering Committee, along with the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to “integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms” and “build student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect,” provide context to UNBC’s commitment to decolonization and Indigenization as a main and on-going area of emphasis for the institution:

BC First Nations Education Steering Committee First Peoples Principles of Learning:

- *Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.*
- *Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).*
- *Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one’s actions.*
- *Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.*
- *Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge.*
- *Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.*
- *Learning involves patience and time.*
- *Learning requires exploration of one’s identity.*
- *Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.”⁷*

Recommendations 1.5.1a

- *A clear statement should be developed from Senate and the Board of Governors reaffirming UNBC’s commitment to Aboriginal and Indigenous priorities, students, and communities.*
- *Working with Aboriginal communities, UNBC should seek to understand and resolve structural biases of all types on our campuses.*
- *UNBC must open opportunities and explore avenues to actively decolonize our governance structures, physical spaces, and processes.*

Rationale 1.5.2a

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

⁷ FNESC (2015). First Peoples Principles of Learning. Retrieved from <http://www.fnesc.ca/learningfirst> peoples)

Aboriginal Support Circle, and would serve as a focal point for deliberation on important Aboriginal and Indigenous matters at UNBC.

Recommendations 1.5.2a

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

The transformation of the existing academy by including Indigenous knowledges, voices, critiques, scholars, students, and materials as well as the establishment of physical and epistemic spaces that facilitate the ethical stewardship of a plurality of Indigenous knowledges, and practices so thoroughly as to constitute an essential element of the University. It is not limited to Indigenous people, but encompasses all students and faculty, for the benefit of our academic integrity and our social viability.⁸

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

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

Rationale 1.5.2b

Indigenization of the curriculum, the learning environment, and the ongoing practices and operations of the University are also central to UNBC's academic structure – a vital part of who we are. Strong arguments were made about the value of maintaining a First Nations Studies

⁸ (Indigenization | Strategic Plan, University of Regina. (2011, 2017). <https://www.uregina.ca/strategic-plan/priorities/indigenization.html>)

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

Recommendation 1.5.2b

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

Recommendation 1.5.2c

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

Recommendations 1.5.2d

- *Commit support and resources toward an enrolment process that promotes decolonization and reconciliation (e.g. Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, Responsibility). The enrolment process is a partnership, and the enrolment strategy must be about a dialogue that leads to the development of relationships.*
- *Create a separate admissions path that connects Aboriginal communities to a team of recruiters and advisors.*
- *Increase the number of partnerships with Aboriginal and regional communities, and other educational institutes and agencies to examine shared goals and research priorities, and to facilitate student movement to UNBC.*
- *Increase funding, support, and expansion of the Elder-in-Residence program to allow for deeper integration of Elders into everyday campus life, classroom life, and throughout ceremonies and events, not just for the opening prayer. Ensure Elders are treated with respect and care, and are consulted as to the proper protocol required for their visits and participation, from the start to the end of their time at UNBC.*

- *As part of the Aboriginal Strategic Action Plan consider ways to value and facilitate the role of family in Aboriginal and Indigenous cultures. For example, through funding travel bursaries for families to attend convocation.*
- *Recognize through actions and decisions that symbolism, if not backed by authentic commitment and deep engagement, becomes tokenism and sensationalism. We recommend increasing the visibility of Aboriginal cultures at UNBC through the use of culturally appropriate symbols, signage, language, art, music, etc., in order to build community and acknowledge these places, cultures, and histories, as well as making visible our collective commitment to decolonization and Indigenous ways of knowing. This includes the active and authentic acknowledgement of traditional territories, and integration of other culturally appropriate protocol into everyday life and experience on our campuses and in our activities.*

DRAFT

Part 2: Restructure

2.1. Academic Units - Guiding Philosophy

Rationale 2.1.1a

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

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

Recommendation 2.1.1a

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

2.2. Academic Units – Responsibility and Authority

Rationale 2.2.1a

In concert with the guiding philosophy, and possible changes to the existing colleges, we heard considerable input about the need for a re-organization of responsibilities and authority between different levels in the leadership structure. In particular, our concern focused upon the distribution of such responsibilities between Deans and Chairs so that responsibility and authority is better aligned with the appropriate levels needed for effective and efficient decision making, and that older “habits” of institutional sign-offs are no longer simply carry forward.

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

We also heard considerable input aimed at limiting increases in middle managers (e.g. Deans and Chairs), and minimizing layers of bureaucracy in any recommendations brought forward. Some input suggested elimination of Chairs and/or Deans in order to reduce layers of decision-making authority. In making our recommendations, we had to balance the overarching goals of strategic leadership, and effective decision-making, with the need to efficiently carryout tasks such as teaching assignments and faculty evaluations that are largely controlled by the Faculty Agreement.

Recommendations 2.2.1a

- *Create a Responsibility and Authority Task Force to review leadership and management processes in existing structures, consider structures recommended in 2.3.1, and with the goal of efficient decision-making, strategic leadership, and day-to-day management of academic units, develop a plan for structuring and reallocating responsibilities and authority within each large academic unit and across units. This task force should consider a number of leadership options, and should work with the Academic Action Plan Implementation Advisory Committee to ensure compatibility with the rest of the Academic Plan. Issues and responsibilities to consider include the following leadership and management processes:*
 - a. *Teaching and assignments;*
 - b. *Faculty evaluations;*
 - c. *Faculty mentoring;*
 - d. *Demands from the external community for engagement of faculty and students in community activities. These activities are important for UNBC to be involved with, but also can create significant workload for unit leaders;*
 - e. *Cross-disciplinary communication and sharing of resources;*
 - f. *Supervision and roles of Administrative Assistants; and*
 - g. *The range of extra-curricular interactions with students.*
- *The task force should set forth a suite of changes that can be implemented under the current Faculty Agreement, and a suite of changes to be adopted by both parties in the next Faculty Agreement collective bargaining.*
- *Develop and implement a comprehensive set of supports, training, and mentorship for academic leaders consistent with the structure recommended above.*

Rationale 2.2.1b

In concert with recommendations around the changes to college structures, and for supporting opportunities for individual academic programs to come together into larger units, there is a concomitant need to open up the dialogue on the internal structures of both colleges and academic program units. In supporting flexibility, responsiveness, and the unique make-up of some units, there is perhaps no need for all units to be structured identically. For example, innovative curriculum committees could be formed that would report directly to Deans. Larger comprehensive faculties could have a collection of schools, programs, or curriculum committees the chairs of which report to the Dean. Such opportunities are worth investigating.

Recommendation 2.2.1b

Building upon the Responsibility and Authority Task Force identified in recommendation 2.2.1a, to further request that this task force explore alternative models for structures and reporting mechanisms within Faculties, and that this exploration be carried out with open dialogue with members of academic units.

2.3. Academic Units – College Structure

Goal 2.3.1

The goal is to have organizational structures that enhance opportunities for academic programs to be supported, to grow, to function efficiently, and to enable effective leadership. The goal is also to have an organizational structure that supports creativity, flexibility, and the interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration that will allow UNBC to respond to opportunities that fit our unique skills and assets.

Rationale 2.3.1a

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

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

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

University and amongst the faculty and staff. Third, in making these recommendations we recognize that time will be required both in the realignment of academic units and also in the adjustments needed for support services.

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

This Faculty structure should align graduate degrees with organizational structures such that curriculum changes, teaching assignments, and other responsibilities can be more effectively managed, especially for the interdisciplinary graduate programs

Recommendation 2.3.1a

- *This recommendation has been put forward to begin the dialogue about the college structure and therefore, as an initial starting point for discussion, we identified that five Faculties could be created, in addition to the Faculty of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies (described in section 2.7):*
 - *Faculty of Business or Faculty of Business and Economics*
 - *It is not unusual for Business units at other Canadian institutions to function as a separate unit. The School of Business at UNBC has the track record of success and the administrative capacity and experience to function as its own entity. Some have argued that it gains little from its current membership in the College of Science and Management. We identified an option for Economics to be included in this unit, pending discussions among the two sub-units.*
 - *Faculty of Natural Resources and Environmental Studies*
 - *This suggestion is consistent with the goal of supporting more cohesive and thematically aligned units. The proposed name is also consistent with the existing graduate program, which currently lacks sufficient support for oversight and leadership as it is linked to multiple existing sub-units with no budgetary or reporting authority.*
 - *Faculty of Health and Human Sciences*
 - *We heard recommendations that one option would be for all professional programs to be combined into a single larger unit. However, the breadth and diversity of “professional programs” across the University does create significant challenges to such an option. Drawing upon this notion, and combining it with an attention to thematic connections between units, this proposed Faculty can provide an opportunity to bring together a range of health and human science related programs. It can also provide*

an opportunity for inclusion of related professional programs such as Education.

- *Faculty of Humanities, Social, and Indigenous Studies*
 - *Input strongly suggested that Indigenous Studies needed to be maintained as an academic degree-granting unit, and that it should be explicitly recognized among the larger organizational units. Through the recommendations on Decolonization and Indigenization (see 1.5), the Aboriginal Strategic Action Plan, and the Aboriginal Priorities Council (see 1.5.2a), we aimed to incorporate Indigenous connections across all of the UNBC community.*
- *Faculty of Physical and Applied Sciences*
 - *This suggestion is consistent with the goal of supporting more cohesive and thematically aligned units related to the physical sciences and their application. As may be the case across the university, there is an expectation that some units within this faculty will need to collaborate with units in other faculties for degree delivery. This faculty would help to increase the visibility of important disciplines, professions, and degrees for potential students and external partners.*

2.4. Academic Units – Primary units

Rationale 2.4.1a

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

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

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

Recommendations 2.4.1a

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

Rationale 2.4.2a

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

Recommendation 2.4.2a

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

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

Rationale 2.5.1a

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

Recommendation 2.5.1a

- *That any bottom-up proposals for the re-combination of smaller primary academic units into larger ones’ work through the following process elements:*

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

2.6. Academic Support Units

Goal 2.6.1

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

Rationale 2.6.1a

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

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

Other units also have limited front-line resources and these limitations are impacting student service levels. Increased front-line service is necessary in order to provide students with meaningful support (e.g. currently advisors do not have time for more than “snap-shot” advising). The issue of directing service to front-line and away from top-heavy administrative structure is paramount to the intent of this Action Plan.

UNBC also has a strong focus on experiential learning and while resources are currently available for development of experiential learning opportunities, there is little administrative support, guidance or instruction for this highly effective teaching approach, especially in the case of field schools which also need a consistent and well-supported funding model.

Recommendations 2.6.1a

- *New investments should be made in support units with priority given to ARC, ASC, Centre for Teaching and Learning, the First Nations Centre, and Counseling.*
- *Maintain the library as an independent unit with direct report to Vice-President Academic and Provost.*
- *Conduct a full review of library services, as well as program portfolios for librarians to maximize library accessibility for students, staff, and faculty.*
- *Aggregate related academic administrative units into two groups, while maintaining their existing unit structures that are academically organized and internally coherent (see 1.2.1b). These groupings are based on meaningful themes; leadership structure will need additional consideration and unit engagement.*
- *Create a **Teaching and Learning group** to be a collective of the following units:*
 - *Centre for Teaching, Learning, and Technology (CTLT); Academic Success Centre (ASC); Access Resource Centre (ARC); Mathematical Centre of Excellence (MACE); and The Nucleus.*
 - *Experiential Learning Office (newly proposed), that provides support for the following units and activities:*
 - *Career Centre*
 - *Co-operative education*
 - *Field school*
 - *Internships*
 - *Practica*
 - *Service learning, and public service opportunities*
 - *Leadership development for students*
- *Create a **Student Affairs group** that is a collective of the following units:*
 - *Financial Aid and Awards*
 - *Office of the Registrar*
 - *Advising (see separate recommendations for Advising in section 1.2.2)*
 - *Recruitment (see separate recommendations for recruitment in section 3.2.1)*
 - *First Nations Centre*
 - *Student Life and Residences*
 - *Office of Diversity, Human Rights, and Prevention of Discrimination (see 1.2.1)*
 - *Wellness Centre (Counselling and Wellness)*
- *As much as possible, health and well-being services should be co-located (Counseling, Health, Student Life, along with the new Office of Diversity, Human Rights, and Prevention of Discrimination) with effective procedures in place to ensure communication among the independent units.*
- *Create a one-stop student information service desk/kiosk that provides a single point of communication to direct students to services such as:*

- *navigate core university services and processes (e.g. admissions, academic records, registration, ombudsperson, library support, financial aid and awards, co-operative education); and*
- *obtain essential information to enhance their university experience and campus life (e.g. wellness support services, student activities and clubs, campus transportation options, MACE, The Nucleus).*
- *This one-stop student information service desk could be supported by cross-training and mentoring existing UNBC professionals such as the Enrolment Services Representatives.*
- *Undertake an independent review of the effectiveness, reach, and approaches used by the Centre for Teaching, Learning, and Technology to facilitate good teaching across the University among the various populations this Centre services.*
- *Undertake a review of laboratory support services with regard to reporting structure, roles and responsibilities, and opportunities for two-way discussions on productivity. This review would include the Radiation Safety Officer, Biosafety Officer, Chemical Safety Officer, Enhanced Forestry Lab, and Northern Analytical Services.*
- *Recognize that international students require a hybrid model of support, and that includes support specialized to international student needs as well as integration with other UNBC services available to all students (recruitment, student services, and educational programs).*
- *Review the field safety manual and develop an on-line system that allows faculty to identify and navigate easily through necessary steps for experiential learning (required forms/processes for field trips, field schools, graduate fieldwork, etc.).*

Goal 2.6.2

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

Rationale 2.6.2a

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

Recommendations 2.6.2a

- *Evaluate all undergraduate and graduate admission and registration procedures for competitiveness and timeliness, and streamline procedures to support enrolment. Engage students in this process to include their unique perspective.*
- *Evaluate the scheduling process to facilitate effective course planning and timeliness for graduation.*
- *Streamline the completion process to minimize the unnecessary paperwork required for graduate students.*

- *Complete a full review of all forms to reduce confusion and redundancy.*
- *Implement fully online fillable/submittable forms and processes.*
- *Ensure all forms are available in one place and improve navigation tools to find them.*
- *Remove old forms and ensure version control is implemented.*
- *Reduce the need for multiple signatures as much as possible.*

Goals 2.6.3

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

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

Rationale 2.6.3a

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

Recommendations 2.6.3a

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

2.7. Faculty of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies

Rationale 2.7.1a

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

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

Recommendations 2.7.1a

- *Develop a Faculty of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies at UNBC, headed by a Dean.*
- *Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies, and the Deans of the large academic units, regarding teaching assignments and performance evaluations of faculty, and faculty responsibilities and rights regarding graduate supervision.*
- *Develop a process for faculty to apply to the Faculty of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies, including Adjunct Faculty with Rank for special affiliates (e.g. Northern Medical Program faculty).*
- *Work with other units across the institution, including the CTLT and Office of Research, to ensure that graduate students receive appropriate and necessary support for research and professional development.*

Goal 2.7.2

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

Rationale 2.7.2a

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

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

Recommendation 2.7.2a

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

Recommendations 2.7.2b

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

Goal 2.7.3

Enhance the number of graduate scholarships and the amount awarded.

Rationale 2.7.3a

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

Recommendations 2.7.3a

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

Goal 2.7.4

Develop unique, integrated graduate programs that respond to big ideas and challenges. Enhance communications about the program offerings.

Rationale 2.7.4a

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

Recommendations 2.7.4a

- *Consider alternative graduate programs, such as a one-year course and service-based model.*

- *Provide opportunities to ladder one-year graduate certificate/diploma programs into longer research-based degrees.*
- *Provide opportunities for students in research-based degrees to switch from a thesis to a project or certificate program.*

2.8. Council of Deans

Rationale 2.8.1a

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

Recommendation 2.8.1a

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

2.9. Northern Medical Program

Rationale 2.9.1a

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

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

approval processes and paperwork signoffs for those in the NMP and the various administrative units across UNBC.

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

Recommendations 2.9.1a

- *One of the new smaller faculties should focus upon those academic units whose primary mission is with health and degree programs, and that the NMP be integrated into that faculty to better harmonize with existing UNBC structures.*
- *While the new Faculty will have a Dean, the current Associate Vice-President NMP should be appointed to that faculty as an Associate Dean with responsibility for NMP staff/budget/curriculum management to better harmonize with existing UNBC structures.*
- *Consideration should be given to transforming all NMP affiliate appointments to UNBC into Adjunct Appointments with Rank to better harmonize with existing UNBC structures. Adjunct Faculty can hold research funds at UNBC, and through an admission process to the Faculty of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies (see Recommendation 2.7.1a), Adjunct Faculty with Rank can supervise graduate students.*
- *That the University and the UNBC Faculty Association commit to updating the Faculty Agreement with language that is informed by and appropriate for the NMP faculty as has been done for librarians, senior lab instructors, and others.*

2.10. Regional Programs

Rationale 2.10.1a

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

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

Recommendation 2.10.1a

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

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

Rationale 2.10.1b

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

We heard some uncertainty as to the effectiveness of the current regional management structure which includes the Regional Chairs providing local leadership, the Dean of Regional Programs providing overarching leaderships, linkages to Prince George, and budgetary responsibility, and Prince George based Program Chairs providing approval of courses and instructors for regional delivery. Regional faculty, staff, and students report feeling isolated and unsupported by the main campus in Prince George, and limited in their ability to develop as regional campuses.

Recommendation 2.10.1b

- *Detailed planning for more sustainable regional programs should be a focal point of the University. Such planning needs to consider the following:*
 - *Opportunities for programming and delivery are built upon a clear recognition of regional uniqueness and that a one-size-fits-all model is not tenable.*
 - *Opportunities for reviewing the current regional management structure, regional Chairs, and Dean of Regional Programs with the new thematically-aligned Faculties.*
- *Review existing laddered programs from community colleges with regard to sustainability of the programs and opportunities to enhance them.*

Rationale 2.10.1c

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

Recommendation 2.10.1c

- *Consider, and put in place, mechanisms to further develop the following regional delivery processes:*
 - *Cohort-based models, focused especially upon specific professional degrees, that have been very successful and proven to be both flexible and responsive to shifting student demand over time.*
 - *Develop a regionally unique arts and a regionally unique sciences degree for each region that would attract domestic and international students to the regions. Delivery of these unique undergraduate degrees should be done through a combination of intensive block delivery and web-based courses. Web-based courses would need to be delivered through a “web and coach” model with on-campus supports hired to coach and mentor the students through the courses/programming.*
 - *Recognize that each region is unique, and working in concert with Regional Advisory Committees, develop and set in place mechanisms that will allow for the creation and pursuit of specific educational programming or degree offerings that may be unique to one or two of the regions. As with the basic arts and science degrees noted above, these would be delivered through a variety of intensive local and distance learning opportunities.*
 - *Develop and facilitate opportunities to increase the use of regional campuses, research centres, research forests, and non-academic units as venues for experiential education in partnership with relevant and allied academic programs.*
 - *Regions should take a leading role in attracting new students through short summer course offerings unique to place.*
 - *Consider the logistics of either taking a course in the regions (students) or teaching a course in the regions (faculty) (e.g. housing, transportation).*

Rationale 2.10.1d

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

Recommendation 2.10.1d

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

Goal 2.10.2

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

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

Rationale 2.10.2

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

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

Library services available to the regions have been identified as needing improvement. The current model lacks opportunities for students to learn to use the library and that results in limited uptake of library services and assistance.

Recommendations 2.10.2a

- *Review and redesign administrative structures to facilitate the revitalization of regional programs to better support what is currently offered and to support innovative new programming. Engage Regional Advisory Committees (2.10.1.b), local students, faculty and staff in this process and ensure continuing attention to Indigenization and personalization.*
- *Streamline Reporting Structures and Responsibilities*
 - *Review and resolve the issue of reporting structure and the Regional Chair's role in this (e.g. the degree of the Chair's input into/authority over the courses offered; the role of the Regional Chair in evaluations).*
 - *Review responsibility and process obligations for offering courses and programs regionally.*
- *Empowerment*
 - *Ensure that sufficient support and services are made available to allow faculty to develop their teaching, research, and service portfolios.*
 - *Expanded regional course offerings will most likely depend on growth in contract teaching. Consider how best to structure who is involved in hiring. If the review of such identifies mismatches with what is required by the current Faculty Association Agreement, engage in discussion about desired modifications for next round of negotiations.*
 - *Explore how regional campuses can be more empowered to deliver what regions demand. This includes decision-making processes and configuration of relationships where the UNBC campus is co-located with another institution.*

- *The Regional Advisory Committees (RAC) should be better employed to create an effective multi-way platform for dialogue and communication needs of the regions to UNBC, university opportunities, development and curriculum planning, and plans and priorities for the regions.*
 - *Maintain relations by regular face-to-face visits and prioritize these; avoid over-dependence on email and phone communication.*
 - *Create more meaningful engagement opportunities without “pomp and circumstance” and inclusive of students and on-the-ground community members.*
- *Student Services (e.g. Counseling, Health, Learning Centre)*
 - *Support the process to enumerate student service and availability gaps between the Prince George and regional campuses, and identify options for delivery of the different services.*
 - *This should include routine funded travel and related support for in-person communication between key student service representatives and regional students.*
 - *Consider how services (such as Peer Support) could be better offered to regional students, recognizing that face-to-face communication should be prioritized where possible.*
 - *Consider specific needs for support of Aboriginal students in the regions and how to meet these more effectively.*
- *Library*
 - *Review the scope of library services for students supported by a regional campus with more face-to-face interaction for teaching students, for example, how to do on-line research.*
 - *Consider travel to the regional campuses to provide orientation for library support and services.*
 - *Consider how to deal with needs for librarian services for students not supported by a regional campus (i.e. Langara College).*

Part 3: Innovate

3.1. Teaching and Learning

Goal 3.1.1

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

Rationale 3.1.1a

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

Recommendations 3.1.1a

- *UNBC actively encourage teachers and departments to consider conceptual frameworks to help with decolonization, and approach Indigenization. Some examples include “two-eyed seeing”⁹ and “healing the split head,”¹⁰ as well as others.*
- *Along with this must come the space and time for faculty and staff to engage in decolonization and Indigenization. This must be valued by the institution with real endeavors such as, lighter teaching loads, professional development opportunities for all faculty and staff, co-teaching and mentorship opportunities, understanding and connection to place (land, language, and culture) on all UNBC campuses, and regular communication with experts and community members to offset isolation and increase the level of comfort.*
- *Faculty develop and review curriculum to support Indigenization in their teaching and learning - to better understand the needs and experiences of Aboriginal learners and to enhance the experience of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students and teachers - and be provided the necessary support and education to achieve this. Such review and development should be ongoing, as well as part of the identification of learning outcomes.*
- *Be aware of the K – 12 British Columbia provincial curriculum, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and other resources and perspectives (including University of the Arctic) when developing or revising curriculum.*

⁹ Hatcher, Bartlett, Marshall & Marshall (2009)

¹⁰ Cajete (2001)

- *Reaffirm and/or develop policies that recognize, value, and accept—with appropriate cultural and academic rigour and mentorship/supervision—assignments, theses, dissertations, etc. done in formats such as song, art, spoken word, etc., when and where these formats are appropriate.*

Recommendations 3.1.1b

- *Periodically revisit university-wide learning outcomes, and integrate new outcomes available through student participation in extra-curricular activities such as governance, community work, and orientation (among other possibilities) that are part of university life and student affairs;*
- *Programs should build from work already done to map out, clearly present, and communicate learning outcomes for their courses and degrees that:

 - Includes necessary first-year skills for academic success;*
 - Progresses from realistic expectations for newly-graduated high school students;*
 - Contains core university-wide learning outcomes already identified;*
 - Builds in appropriate experiential educational components situated within, and contributing to, learning progressions;*
 - Reflect applicable requirements for academic breadth;*
 - Covers and maintain core and contemporary disciplinary content and skills;*
 - Enables effective contributions to contemporary social and environmental issues;*
 - Provides skills and abilities to gain employment and succeed professionally;*
 - Encourages life-long learning; and*
 - Are trackable and understood by faculty, advising staff, and students.**

Recommendations 3.1.1c

- *Develop a Strategic Action Plan for Online Education and Distributed Learning that is aligned with the academic structure, and able to integrate with alternative and mixed formats and schedules to fully enable its success.*
- *Review and seek improved options for digital and on-line delivery that can, among other things, allow for greater interactivity among students and faculty, as well as more natural real-time engagement that could help to better connect UNBC campuses, students, staff, faculty, and administrators who are at a distance from one another.*
- *Make use of the analytic potential in software and platforms such as learn.unbc.ca and enrolment management systems to improve and support student affairs as well as teaching and learning; early alerts, for example, could be generated for students encountering issues and sent to instructors, teaching assistants, supervisors, or selected support units to promote intervention.*

Rationale 3.1.2a

Considerable work on the first-year experience has already been done, and was intended to serve students who are new to university. This work includes high school-level courses, library workshops and instruction, common first-year curriculum, “University 101”, Integrated Analytical

Skills and Knowledge (IASK), and others. It is important to ensure that the first-year experience of all students, including those who transfer in from other institutions, is included in plans to better serve new (to UNBC) student needs. Plans going forward must ensure that students are fully integrated into university life, and that their interests are engaged by courses that immerse students in their area of interest.

Recommendations 3.1.2a

- *Continue to discuss, consolidate, and improve approaches to first-year experiences for all students who are newly attending UNBC. Ensure that this experience transitions students fully into university, and includes experiences in their areas of interest.*
- *Engage with feeder high schools and ensure smooth curriculum transitions.*
- *Ensure that curriculum and activities enable new students to quickly feel part of, and identify with, particular programs, majors, or degrees while gaining exposure to others.*
- *Review delivery models such as IASK, mentorship, and XMAT as examples of different methods for teaching basic skills, adaptable to the degree being sought, and consider these in new plans for the first-year experience.*
- *Consider making some of these courses/modules competency-based, so as to enable students to “challenge” the requirements.*
- *Identify and communicate more widely and clearly, the means by which Continuing Studies can assist students to transition to university programs.*

3.2. Enrolment Management

Rationale 3.2.1a

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

Recommendations 3.2.1a

- *Following the principles of SEM, invest sufficient resources into the development and maintenance of student-support systems that ensure processes and procedures contribute to a culture of student success and effective delivery of services to students and their family members.*
- *Ensure the Enrolment Taskforce remains a formal part of enrolment governance on an ongoing basis.*
- *Utilize the Enrolment Taskforce to strengthen collaboration and integration between all administrative units that have a responsibility for pre-recruitment, recruitment, retention, completion or alumni relations.*

- *Establish working groups identified by and reporting to the Enrolment Taskforce that are responsible for different areas of the enrolment continuum, beginning with recruitment, retention and completion, and expanding into alumni and pre-recruitment as priorities evolve.*
 - *Improve data collection for appropriate and relevant data:*
 - *to allow for evidence-based decision making;*
 - *to formulate future enrolment strategies; and*
 - *to develop appropriate SEM reports.*
 - *Improve information management by extending the customer relations management system that is currently used for recruitment data so that it can support other functions related to retention and completion.*
 - *Increase the involvement of alumni in recruiting efforts where possible.*
 - *Ensure that information technology responds to enrolment needs rather than guiding decisions about enrolment.*
- *Form an ongoing international enrolment committee, with appropriate stakeholder representation, that have responsibility for international recruitment, retention, completion, or alumni relations.*

3.3. Curriculum Flexibility

Goal 3.3.1

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

Rationale 3.3.1a

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

- a. The level of support which the University would make available;
- b. The implications for faculty teaching loads and existing assigned teaching; and
- c. Transitioning current teaching or courses with respect to whether it continues to meet former requirements in established degree streams or whether it transitions away from previous degree streams entirely to the new topic.
- d. The role and use of external reviews, the requirements of various accreditation processes, and the involvement of other external processes such as the provincial Degree Quality Assurance Board.

Recommendation 3.3.1a

- *Investigate models that support greater curriculum flexibility.*

Rationale 3.3.1b

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

Recommendation 3.3.1b

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

Rationale 3.3.1c

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

Recommendations 3.3.1c

- *Make better use of 2+2, cohort models, and early (pre-entry) identification with degrees/programs to encourage “buy-in” and sense of a home at UNBC.*
- *For each degree, program curriculum committees that have not recently done so should work with their Chairs to seriously review their curricula in order to remove redundant or unnecessary courses, identify a minimum path to graduation, and produce a semester-by-semester map, including for example notations on alternate year offerings, to guide students (and their academic advisors) through on-time completion; this map and exercise also should be used by Chairs to plan regular course offerings, course rotations, teaching assignments, and teaching needs.*
- *Identify the resources, processes, and support structures to encourage and assist faculty who want to enhance the decolonization and Indigenization of their curriculum and teaching via an Indigenization Facilitator (see Recommendation 1.5.2c).*

3.4. Experiential Education

Goal 3.4.1

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

Rationale 3.4.1a

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

Recommendations 3.4.1a

- *Build on the work of the Provost’s Committee on Pedagogical Practice Action Group on Experiential learning and support and fund work on:*
 - a. *Explicitly defining experiential education as envisioned by and for UNBC;*
 - b. *Engaging in a baseline assessment of current offerings that accounts for current practices being used in degrees and classes (not solely based on course titles or descriptions);*
 - c. *Developing a theoretically and pragmatically-informed typology of experiential education in use at UNBC (to be used in metrics, as well as communication with students);*
 - d. *A set of metrics and accompanying monitoring scheme that can easily track the extent, quality, and strategic deployment of experiential education in degrees and across the University (importantly, appropriate forms and uses of experiential education vary with fields, student training/year level, and/or having particular pre-requisite skills and knowledge, for example, and should be linked to learning outcomes); and*
 - e. *With an end purpose of providing data that will be used to inform targets for delivery of experiential learning by 2020 and then 2025, and so on. This target must also be appropriately assessed and monitored.*
- *Review capacity to ensure UNBC has the expertise needed and available resources to support faculty and degrees in professional development related to the practice of experiential education, and to coordinate with experiential learning positions across the institution.*

- *Facilitate the implementation of experiential education into the teaching and learning of programs across the University. Programs can follow either, or a combination, of the following options:*
 - a. *UNBC support staff and/or faculty to manage experiential learning within the academic programs/units so as to integrate experiential education in ways that are responsive to the particular needs of their discipline, thus adding depth of ability. This support would:*
 - *Directly support faculty in their courses and serve degrees in the creation and delivery of high-impact, ethical and culturally appropriate experiential education opportunities;*
 - *Manage equipment, logistics, and risk management for experiential education activities and field courses;*
 - *Teach practical courses and field training within the degree program(s) they serve, (not necessarily “outdoors” field but, rather, specific to the disciplines – so it could be in archives, or writing, public engagement, ethnographic or archeological technique, or on-site with industry);*
 - *Serve as a co-instructor/lab assistant for experiential education components and field courses;*
 - *Contribute to an online system that allows faculty to identify and navigate easily through field schools, graduate fieldwork, etc.*
 - *Serve as a point person and bridge between degrees/faculty and risk management, student services, student life, regional campuses, continuing studies, community groups, and professional/industry associations and representatives;*
 - *Develop orientation programming, foster student life, and oversee student clubs for their respective degree programs; and*
 - b. *Foster relationships and recruit from high schools, and liaise with program alumni. This connects to recommendations concerning recruitment, orientation, and first-year experience. Work with the newly-proposed Experiential Learning Office (see 2.6.1) that would provide support to the following units and activities:*
 - *Career Centre*
 - *Co-operative education*
 - *Field schools*
 - *Internships*
 - *Practica*
 - *Service learning, and public service opportunities*
 - *Leadership development for students*
- *Recognizing the role and impact of scheduling, space, time, and incentives for the design and delivery of experiential learning opportunities, the Registrar, Facilities, Regional Programs, faculty, students, and appropriate administrators should work together to identify ways and means by which to overcome already-identified disincentives for experiential learning, and report out to Senate on strategies being undertaken to remove those disincentives:*

- a. *Solve scheduling issues – we need predictability and stability year to year, and flexibility for both “traditional” scheduling for some types of courses/degrees, but also complimentary block teaching options, along with suggestions for, perhaps, longer-class or even full-day options for experiential programming. Professional programs face issues around scheduling and student placements;*
- b. *Solve space issues – classrooms need to be usable for group work, and have open space. There is the sense that some very usable spaces are not available because they are “owned” by particular degree programs, while other programs have no predictable or flexibly-usable space. Consider building outdoor classroom and outdoor labs;*
- c. *Explore and compare options for providing transportation needed for experiential education and field schools in terms of cost, availability, flexibility of use. Consider purchasing fleet vehicles for course use; and Encourage reiterative engagement with course instructors to continually improve spaces and scheduling for high-quality education inside and outside of the classroom.*
- *Develop and capitalize on experiential education opportunities available through and for university life, research, and services, as well as across UNBC campuses, and through engagement with communities, sectors, industries, and associations in northern British Columbia and around the world.*
- *Provide incentives for faculty to engage in professional development for high-quality teaching and particularly for experiential education, and also to integrate experiential education into their courses and teaching. Incentives might include:*
 - a. *Providing/supporting mentorship experiences and opportunities;*
 - b. *Requirements in teaching evaluations;*
 - c. *Requirements in and norms established through assessments of performance and for promotion;*
 - d. *Altered teaching schedule (block courses, ‘off peak’ courses);*
 - e. *Altered teaching load, money, or buy-out to develop courses or take training;*
 - f. *Additional funding available to augment classes; and*
 - g. *Continue to recognize and celebrate innovative teaching based on quality and innovation.*

Rationale 3.4.1b

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

Recommendations 3.4.1b

- *Review and revise current mechanisms for funding experiential education.*

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

Goal 3.4.2

Update and integrate risk management practices into experiential education.

Rationale 3.4.2a

Policies and procedures should enable, rather than deter, high-quality experiences within students' education and campus life. Faculty, staff, and students need to know they are practicing proper risk management, know that they are supported, how they are supported (insurance, emergency response, legal representation, etc.), and under what conditions they are supported. The positions described in options for implementing experiential education (see 3.4.1a) would be a crucial link to both streamline procedures, educate in both directions, as well as engage in professional development and education around risk management.

Recommendation 3.4.2a

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

Recommendations 3.4.2b

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

3.5. Internationalization and Interculturalization

Goal 3.5.1

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

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

Internationalization is an institutional commitment to international enrollment, international engagement (through partnerships, exchanges, and international student experiences), international research and its translation, and internationalizing curricula. International creates, fosters, and promotes authentic global learning opportunities for UNBC faculty, staff, and students.

Rationale 3.5.1a

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

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

Among identified challenges is that International Education mixes a number of functions including international student services, English as Second Language education, and recruitment/promotion/marketing amongst many others. There is also an imbalance in exchange

programs where we take in more than we send out. Finally, although international education is central to UNBC's mission and academic structure, the importance of this is limited by challenges around its academic identity and connections.

Opportunities for International Education include:

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

Recommendations 3.5.1a

- *Make a strong statement on the value of international education, and internationalization more generally, to UNBC's core mission.*
- *Support a collaborative dialogue focused upon clarifying and refining the mandate and scope of activities of the Office of International Education.*
- *Simplify its reporting structure to the Provost and Vice-President Academic.*
- *Support a collaborative process with the administration to identify the financial and staff resources needed to allow International Education to meet that refined mandate and scope of activities.*

Rationale 3.5.1b

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

Recommendations 3.5.1b

- *Support a specific dialogue towards identifying and setting a distinct "international identity" for international education that can support externally focused recruitment and internally focused connections with academic units.*
- *Support a review of administrative and operational structures that can more effectively grow student numbers by taking advantage of UNBC's distinct 'international identity' in international education.*
- *Support a collaborative dialogue and planning process by which the International Education can develop a preparatory, pathway, or foundational-year-type curriculum to support student success, which could be delivered within a one- or two-year*

diploma structure, and which would also support international students laddering into UNBC academic programs.

- *Support work on enhancing the academic structure linkages between International Education and academic programs across campus.*
- *Create working teams between programs/curriculum committees, the recruitment office, student advising and international advising to build out strategies and maintain those relationships.*

Rationale 3.5.1c

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

Recommendations 3.5.1c

- *Support work on enhancing international student orientation programming, the international student experience at UNBC, and international student success and retention (see also 1.2.1c).*
- *Support a broad dialogue towards resolving equity issues around student access to services, amenities, and programs with specific attention to various groups of international students.*
- *Develop and facilitate opportunities to allow international students the opportunity to spend time at our regional campuses and to become integrated into the cultural life of those communities.*
- *Institutional goals for internationalization should be carried out with full awareness of the fundamental and underpinning importance of decolonization and Indigenization.*

Rationale 3.5.1d

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

Recommendations 3.5.1d

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

Goal 3.5.2

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

Recommendations 3.5.2a

- *Explore, recognize, and preemptively (not reactively) put in place plans and actions that will mitigate the potentially negative consequences of soliciting and attracting international students, which include (but are not limited to):*
 - a. *Actual or perceived disregard for ethical and historic responsibilities for and investment in services for Indigenous and northern peoples and communities;*
 - b. *Degradation or diminution of scholarly and instructional standards available in our classes;*
 - c. *Actual or perceived disregard for programs or units that either do not align or do not seek to participate in this particular effort; and*
 - d. *Impacts on course, teaching, and performance evaluations.*
- *Review, improve, and monitor the effectiveness of systems in place to support and assess the English language ability of international undergraduate and graduate students wanting to enroll in classes, as well as those systems that support faculty and instructors teaching and supervising international students.*
- *Ensure adequate resources and funding to provide safe, inclusive spaces that promote and encourage respectful, culturally appropriate dialogue and learning at all of our campuses.*

Goal 3.5.3

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

“the ability of instructors to interact with students in a way that supports the learning of students who are linguistically, culturally, socially or in other ways different from the instructor or from each other, across a very wide definition of perceived difference and group identity”¹¹. Intercultural teaching competence enables instructors to bridge cultural, linguistic or other differences in the classroom, communicate successfully across disciplinary cultures¹², and establish meaningful relationships with and among students in order to facilitate learning and promote student engagement. In addition, intercultural teaching competence also includes the ability to model intercultural competence for students in the classroom and to facilitate dialogue about global issues using respectful, inclusive, and culturally relevant teaching strategies. Interculturally competent instructors are open to diverse ways of knowing^{13,14}, are

¹¹ (Dimitrov et. al., 2014, p. 89)

¹² (Dimitrov, 2012)

¹³ (Archibald, 2008)

¹⁴ (Haig-Brown, 2008)

reflective in their approaches to assessment and curriculum design^{15,16} and promote multiple perspectives when they select content, readings, and learning activities^{17,18}.

Recommendations 3.5.3a

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

3.6. Continuing Studies

Rationale 3.6.1a

Continuing Studies has grown into a significant component of UNBC's teaching and academic structure. It offers some for-credit courses, delivers on UNBC policy with respect to "interest-only" enrolment, and offers a range of non-credit courses – many of which are linked to industry certifications/credentials or to government-approved training courses. It has also developed extensive experience working with First Nations communities across northern British Columbia to deliver specific course and programming packages. Through its programs and delivery, Continuing Studies has proved itself flexible and responsive to emergent opportunities.

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

¹⁵ (Paige, 1996)

¹⁶ (Hermida, 2010)

¹⁷ (Deardorff, 2011)

¹⁸ (Dimitrov and Haque, 2017)

Recommendations 3.6.1a

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

Rationale 3.6.1b

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

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

Recommendation 3.6.1b

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

3.7. Marketing

Goal 3.7.1

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

Rationale 3.7.1a

Marketing must demonstrate how the University can fit the student rather than how the student fits the University. Marketing for programs and audience should be tailored, targeted, strategic and flexible.

Recommendations 3.7.1a

- *Enhance the capacity for external marketing by creating a marketing manager position reporting to the Director of Communications and Marketing.*
- *Continue to build on recent efforts to enhance the function of the UNBC website as a critical tool used in external recruitment and marketing, and internal communication of services and academic opportunities.*
- *Increase the use of social media, videos, and other emerging digital technologies as part of an ongoing marketing and communication strategy.*
- *Approach marketing in an evidence-based manner by conducting market research on an ongoing basis to identify the strategic advantages that UNBC and UNBC programs have in its existing markets and develop marketing campaigns that capitalize on these advantages.*
- *Ensure any marketing plan and the actions integrates well with UNBC recruiters (domestically and internationally) and it recognizes the unique needs, expectations, and experiences of different student groups, including but not limited to domestic students, Indigenous students, international students, mature students, and first generation university students.*
- *Strengthen external marketing of graduate research opportunities and external communication of graduate research success stories to drive stronger graduate recruitment.*

Rationale 3.7.1b

Recognizing that the brand is an identity that defines UNBC to both internal and external audiences, it is important that the brand supports the University's unique personality and characteristics, while being responsive to new environmental factors and audiences.

Recommendations 3.7.1b

- *Support marketing of UNBC as Canada's leading destination university by reviewing the existing brand and visual identity, and developing an authentic place brand that embraces the urban and natural setting of the North and Canada.*
- *Strengthen external communication of student and alumni success stories that demonstrate how UNBC students and alumni transform lives and communities in the North and around the world.*
- *Invest in building a stronger UNBC alumni network and positive alumni relationships, recognizing that alumni are among the most important ambassadors of UNBC.*
- *Conduct a brand audit of UNBC on an ongoing basis to ensure the marketing strategy is aligned with the University's current vision and identity, recognizing that previous branding and identity campaigns continue to linger.*

Rationale 3.7.1c

Optimal recruitment cannot be served by a one-size fits all approach to marketing. A well-resourced UNBC marketing function must convey the University's unique ability as a small, research-intensive institution to offer a university experience that fits the needs of each student.

Recommendations 3.7.1c

- Focus on *the dimensions of a leading destination university, take a strategic approach in marketing UNBC in all phases of the enrolment continuum, with particular emphasis on external marketing to drive recruitment, and internal communication that enhances access to student services and academic opportunities that enable retention and completion.*
- *Conduct market research on an ongoing basis to identify new markets across Canada and internationally where UNBC or UNBC programs have a strategic advantage.*
- *Invest in capacity and resources for external marketing and market research to targeted groups.*
- *Ensure external marketing efforts remain responsive to enrolment challenges and opportunities throughout the UNBC community by establishing and integrating marketing as a core strategic mandate for the UNBC Enrolment Taskforce.*
- *Building on intelligence gained through ongoing market research, develop a three-year undergraduate enrolment strategy that identifies actions and resources required to effectively market UNBC in existing and potential markets, and work to develop tailored strategies with programs/degrees.*

Appendix A: Phase 2 Academic Action Planning Collaborative Team Members

Academic Administrative Organization Collaborative Team

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

Academic Structure Collaborative Team

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

Enrolment Initiatives Collaborative Team

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

Faculty Renewal and Development Collaborative Team

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

Student Experience and Pedagogy Collaborative Team

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

Appendix B: Academic Action Planning – Phase 2 Community Engagement

The following is a list of Phase 2 UNBC community engagement sessions, along with the corresponding number of participants per session:

November 25, 2017	Phase 2 Academic Action Planning Orientation and Workshop
February – May 2017	Individual / unit interviews with the five Academic Action Planning Collaborative Teams (70+ interview participants)
February 24, 2017	UNBC Community Town Hall and Open Engagement Session (38 participants)
March 7 and 8, 2017	Faculty Renewal and Development Focus Groups (56 participants)
April 27, 2017	Regional Retreat (10 participants)
April 30 – May 11, 2017	Faculty Renewal and Development Survey (102 respondents)
May 4, 2017	Provost Integrated Leadership Team (5 participants)
May 5, 2017	Terrace / Prince Rupert /WWN (18 participants)
May 8, 2017	Senior Leadership Forum (16 participants)
May 11, 2017	CSAM College Council (33 participants)
May 11, 2017	Staff (17 participants)
May 12, 2017	WWN (6 participants)
May 15, 2017	CASHS College Council (29 participants)
May 15, 2017	Students (NUGSS and GSS) (4 participants)
May 16, 2017	Faculty (5 participants)
May 16, 2017	Staff (23 participants)
May 17, 2017	Students (NUGSS and GSS) (9 participants)
May 18, 2017	Senate Committee on Academic Affairs (12 participants)
May 19, 2017	Registrar’s Office (24 participants)
May 24, 2017	Faculty (8 participants)
May 24, 2017	Northern Medical Program Session (4 participants)
May 24, 2017	Senate (37 participants)
May 25, 2017	Student (2 participants)
May 25, 2017	Staff (5 participants)
May 29, 2017	Northern Post-Secondary Council Members (4 participants - NPSC)

May 29, 2017	Open Faculty Session – Bluejeans (16 participants)
May 29, 2017	Human Resources Session (6 participants)
May 29, 2017	Education Program Session (6 participants)
May 30, 2017	Summary of feedback from unbcplan@unbc.ca (47 responses)
June 2, 2017	Meetings with Chairs of the College of Arts, Social and Health Sciences (8 participants)
June 19 - 23	Meetings with Chairs of the College of Science and Management (in-progress - approximately 10 participants)
June 7, 2017	Senate Committee on Academic Affairs (16 participants)
June 28, 2017	Senate Committee (** participants)

For a summary of the feedback received during the UNBC community engagement sessions, please visit the Academic Planning SharePoint site at:

<https://our.unbc.ca/sites/IntegratedPlanning/academicplanning/SitePages/Home.aspx>

Appendix C: Strategic Research Action Plan

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

https://our.unbc.ca/sites/IntegratedPlanning/iup/_layouts/15/WopiFrame2.aspx?sourcedoc=/sites/IntegratedPlanning/iup/UNBCReports/2017%20Strategic%20Research%20Action%20Plan%20DRAFTv2.pdf&action=default

DRAFT

Appendix D: Faculty Renewal and Development Web-Facilitated Survey

Table 1. Survey sample design for margin of error $\pm 5\%$ with 95% confidence.

Stratum	Population Size	Focus Group Size	Planned Sample Size	Sample Proportion	Actual Sample Size	Response Rate*
Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty: 6 or fewer years	24	5	13	0.542	9	0.692
Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty: more than 6 but 15 or fewer years	52	9	28	0.538	22	0.786
Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty: more than 15 years	74	16	40	0.541	29	0.725
Regional Faculty (includes Limited-Term)	45	6	25	0.556	8	0.320
Senior Laboratory Instructors and Librarians	31	11	17	0.548	10	0.589
Limited-Term Appointment Faculty (Prince George campus)	111	9	60	0.541	24	0.400
Total	337	56	183	0.543	102	0.557

*-After initial invitation by email to participate and 3 reminder email messages.

Table 2. Percentages for responses from the Faculty Renewal and Development Survey calculated as a weighted average using strata population-sizes.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Opinion / Not Applicable	Prefer Not to Answer
I am confident in seeking mentorship at UNBC.	6	14	19	38	23	6	0
I am confident in providing mentorship at UNBC.	1	3	11	49	36	5	0
UNBC provides adequate training and support for me to be a mentor.	11	37	29	19	4	10	0
UNBC offers adequate support for me to develop as a researcher.	11	25	24	30	9	10	0
UNBC offers adequate support for me to develop as a lecturer and teacher.	4	16	20	41	19	3	0
UNBC offers adequate support for me to develop in my service role to the University, profession, and community.	4	15	25	45	11	7	1
UNBC offers adequate training and support for me to transition successfully to being a Chair of an academic program or department.	20	28	30	15	7	47	0
UNBC offers adequate training and support for me to transition successfully to being in an academic administrative role.	26	36	21	10	8	43	0
There need to be two separate career paths at the university: one for tenured/tenure-track (teaching/research/service) and another for teaching-and-service only.	17	14	10	32	27	5	1
UNBC should have a hiring policy for spouses or partners.	6	1	17	55	22	15	1

UNBC supports my career aspirations.	9	14	24	42	11	6	0
I receive recognition by the University for my contributions.	13	24	24	34	5	2	1
UNBC administrators effectively communicate with me.	8	28	27	35	2	2	2
I try to build strong relationships with UNBC's senior administrators.	0	24	18	50	8	11	1
UNBC's senior administrators try to build strong relationships with me.	18	32	28	22	0	10	0
UNBC has a transparent process for filling current and future vacant positions.	20	23	19	37	1	4	1
I have input into decision-making processes at UNBC.	8	25	37	29	1	5	3
I have opportunities to participate in collaborative and collegial dialogue that contributes to the overall strategic processes at the University.	2	20	23	48	7	5	0
I shall have an adequate pension when I want to retire.	18	22	35	18	7	14	1
I plan to remain at UNBC.	3	6	22	46	22	1	10
UNBC is an interesting and stimulating environment.	4	6	12	58	20	1	0
I enjoy living in northern British Columbia.	4	4	13	33	45	5	2
My immediate family enjoys living in northern British Columbia.	6	7	19	28	40	21	2

1. The percentages for the categories from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree” should sum to 100% but may not due to rounding.
2. The percentages for the categories of “No Opinion / Not Applicable” and “Prefer Not to Answer” are calculated out of the total responses for each statement.
3. No data were missing as answers were coerced to one of the possible 7 responses to each statement by the online survey software.
4. Numbers in bold for a given statement sum to in excess of 50%.

Table 3. Gender of respondents

	Female	Male	Other*
Count	44	42	16
Percentage	43	41	16

*-The categories of “Female and Non-Binary”, “Male and Non-Binary”, “Other, please specify...”, and “Prefer Not to Answer” have been combined to preserve anonymity.

Table 4. Contingency table of counts of individuals by strata and categories of years of seniority.

	6 or fewer years	More than 6 but not more than 15 years	More than 15 years	Don't know	Prefer not to answer
Tenured/Tenure-track Faculty: 6 or fewer years	7	0	0	0	2
Tenured/Tenure-track Faculty: More than 6 but not more than 15 years	2	17	1	2	0
Tenured/Tenure-track Faculty: More than 15 years	0	0	28	0	1
Regional Faculty (includes Tenured/Tenure-Track and Term-Appointed)	2	6	0	0	0
Senior Laboratory Instructors and Librarians	3	3	2	1	1
Term-Appointed Faculty	12	7	2	2	1