



OUR SHARED FUTURE

Building on our Strategic Plan

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND THE PROVOST

We are excited to update the University of Manitoba (UM) community on how we will continue to build upon our shared commitments and priorities over the next 12 to 18 months. This work will guide us as we prepare for a full planning process, to be launched in 2022, to develop a new strategic plan for the University of Manitoba.

Since spring 2020, when we presented our final report on *Taking Our Place: University of Manitoba Strategic Plan 2015-2020*, UM has continued to achieve meaningful results across all five priorities described in that plan—namely, inspiring minds, driving discovery, creating pathways, building community, and forging connections. We are advancing the values, vision, and mission of our university and delivering on our commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented our community with immense challenges, but also with opportunities to learn and innovate. New problems lead to progress as we adapt to new ways of teaching, learning, researching, working, and engaging with each other. Indeed, the resilience we've seen across our university is nothing short of inspiring. In the coming months and years, we will work together to evaluate what we've learned and build on innovations that can strengthen our institution beyond the pandemic.

The tremendous goodwill and confidence expressed by our community is empowering our efforts to chart the university's future in a time of continued uncertainty. In recent months, we heard from close to 2,000 members of the UM community about what matters most to them. Whether it was in our meetings with faculty councils, deans, directors and senior administrative leaders, discussions with Senate and the Board of Governors, engagement with alumni, conversations with student leaders, or through a questionnaire we shared with every member of this community, we heard a shared commitment to the future of Manitoba's research university.

Your input has led us to focus on post-COVID planning and to further our commitment to anti-racism, experiential learning, Indigenous achievement and engagement, and equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). These are in addition to our unwavering commitment to environmental sustainability and addressing climate change, which necessarily inform all our plans and priorities.

Undoubtedly, we will need to re-evaluate and finetune these priorities to adapt to changing circumstances, as our university has done for 144 years. In the meantime, we look forward to working collectively to build on our achievements, and we thank you for your ongoing contributions to this dynamic community of learning and discovery.

Dr. Michael Benarroch
President and Vice-Chancellor

Dr. Diane Hiebert-Murphy
Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

SUMMARY

The University of Manitoba's strategic plan, [Taking Our Place 2015-2020](#), will continue to guide us as we work towards introducing a new plan in 2023. Notably, we remain committed to the following strategic priorities:

- Inspiring minds through innovative and quality teaching.
- Driving discovery and insight through excellence in research, scholarly work, and other creative activities.
- Creating pathways to Indigenous achievement.
- Building community that creates an outstanding learning and working environment.
- Forging connections to foster high-impact community engagement.

The COVID-19 pandemic has delayed the extensive community engagement that is fundamental to developing a new plan. Nevertheless, in June 2021, we invited every member of the university to participate in an online questionnaire that built on the many discussions held across the university over the past year. Based on the rich feedback we received from these discussions, and from close to 2,000 UM respondents—primarily faculty, staff, and students—we confirmed five priorities that will drive our efforts. Over the next 12-18 months, we will:

- 1) Support and sustain a post-COVID teaching, learning, research, and work environment. This includes our commitment, as one of Canada's top 15 research universities, to remain a leader in research excellence.
- 2) Develop and publicize a university-wide anti-racism strategy.
- 3) Enhance and expand opportunities for learning, including research opportunities for students.
- 4) Deliver on our commitment to Indigenous achievement and engagement.
- 5) Create a more accessible, equitable, diverse, and inclusive university.

While our path forward continues to reflect what our community values most, the impact of COVID-19 requires us to consider each of our strategic priorities through a new lens.

In 2022, as circumstances allow, we will undertake a comprehensive strategic planning exercise with our community to gain perspectives on a broader range of issues. This will include developing strategic metrics to help measure progress towards our goals. Together, when the time is right, we will create a new strategic plan that will guide the major decisions of our university for years to come.

1) POST-COVID PLANNING

As Manitoba's only medical doctoral research-intensive university, we continue to support excellence in research, scholarly work and other creative activities throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The university has been planning for the end of the pandemic since it began, with careful consideration for a safe return to campus underway. Post-COVID planning will remain a priority in the next 12 to 18 months while we continue to manage the ongoing impacts of the pandemic. We will:

- Continue to collect detailed perspectives from across the university to fully understand, from all perspectives, the impact of COVID-19 on teaching, learning, research, and university processes/operations.
- Use what we learned from our experiences during the pandemic to enhance delivery of academic programs, bolster creative activities and performance, rejuvenate research, and refine university operations. This will include implementing a university-wide digital strategy to support varied methods of learning, research, training, and working.
- Enhance our efforts to support the transition of new students into university life and study. Unlike their predecessors, high school graduates in 2020 and 2021 completed their high school studies virtually, with limited or no time at school. Designing a plan for students in these circumstances will be important in helping them achieve and sustain academic success.
- Promote faculty/staff development and wellness. For many people at UM, remote working, teaching, and research stalled career progression and/or learning and development. It will be important to create and sustain a supportive environment that:
 - Promotes wellness throughout the university.
 - Ensures that the impact of the pandemic on academic accomplishments is considered in tenure and promotion reviews.
 - Promotes extension of research funding as well as supports for researchers to succeed in securing external funds and recruiting high-quality graduate students.
 - Allows staff members to pursue their career goals through a range of diverse strategies such as mentorship, leadership development, and professional development opportunities.
- Reinforce a sense of community on our campuses by supporting a safe return to in-person engagement as well as enhanced digital tools for remote/hybrid activities.

2) ANTI-RACISM

The University of Manitoba is working with members of the UM community to develop an anti-racism strategy that clearly defines the various expressions of racism (including microaggressions), promotes respectful dialogue, and provides accountability for eliminating racism on our campuses. Recognizing the

systemic nature of racism, we are committed to closely examining our past, current, and future actions to ensure that we are working towards dismantling racism in all its forms. In the next 12-18 months, we will:

- Develop principles, recommendations, opportunities for community involvement, and next steps.
- Establish and share the framework for this strategy. It will encompass prevention (including education), resources, tools, and processes for addressing racism when it occurs.
- Evaluate the extent to which our Respectful Work and Learning Environment (RWLE) procedure is effective in addressing racism.

3) EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND ENHANCED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The University of Manitoba has a long history of using experiential learning (EL) as a pedagogical tool, and supports a broad definition of EL that includes curricular and co-curricular experiences. The university also recognizes that experiential learning integrates principles drawn from Indigenous pedagogies, including respect, reciprocity, and reflection, and is inextricably linked to Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing.

Providing both undergraduate and graduate students with more of these opportunities is a major tenet of our commitment to inspire through innovative and quality teaching and to fulfill the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action. Through EL, students put into practice their course and program content, cultivate professional and community connections, and adopt strategies to help them transition to university. Experiential learning also strengthens our university's connections with our community, helping ensure that graduates have the skills they need to succeed as global citizens in the evolving labour market and in complex research environments in academia, government labs, and the private sector.

We are committed to planning for the long term and devoting significant financial resources to this priority. We will:

- Undertake broad educational activities to inform the university community about EL opportunities and our approaches and initiatives, including EL typology, software supports, resources, and the results of ongoing EL evaluations.
- Focus on building an EL community of practice throughout the university. We will develop an EL office with two EL faculty specialists who will work with faculty members to enhance teaching practices without added bureaucracy.
- Ensure that a sufficient infrastructure is in place to establish and promote a robust range of co-curricular EL opportunities on and off campus. These opportunities will enable students to develop competencies, achieve personal and career-related goals, and overcome barriers to engagement.

- Incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing, support alternative teaching practices, and enable the sharing of knowledge across all faculties.
- Define and pursue options to enhance microcredential offerings. Through a variety of opportunities and communications, we will enhance understanding of microcredentials and alternative credentials across the university as complements to students' learning. We will look to unique microcredential opportunities to connect to university values such as global citizenship, sustainability, lifelong learning, and social mobility.
- Enhance our undergraduate research awards so students may take full advantage of learning in Manitoba's only research university.
- Ensure that faculty and staff have ample opportunities and tools to learn and develop—both personally and professionally. This may include collaborations with other research-based Canadian universities to train administrative staff, improving efficacy and service.

4) INDIGENOUS ACHIEVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

Underway is a university-wide effort to create a safe work and learning environment for Indigenous students, staff, faculty, and guests; to advance reconciliation; to fight anti-Indigenous racism; and to foster relationships with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities.

Beginning in 2020, under the leadership of inaugural Vice-President (Indigenous) Dr. Catherine Cook, six projects have been identified that address organizational and structural gaps/barriers across all the major UM portfolios. We have a shared responsibility to build on the decades of work started by Indigenous leaders, educators, and communities. This collaborative effort—involving Indigenous and non-Indigenous administrators, faculty, staff, and students—is guiding our progress on Indigenous achievement and engagement. As we continue to decolonize our institution—building on the work completed in the project teams—in the next 12-18 months, we will:

- Define Indigenous training for faculty and staff, supported by a comprehensive education and training plan.
 - Provide more opportunities for UM members to enhance their Indigenous competency through training on Indigenous history, Indigenous stereotypes and misrepresentations, treaties and Indigenous rights, Indigenous law, Indigenous-Crown relations, Indigenous research methods, and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as cultural norms, traditional values, and principles of engagement with Indigenous peoples.
- Enhance mental health and wellness supports for Indigenous students.

- Support efforts to recruit, retain, and develop Indigenous faculty and staff, and integrate Indigenous content and ways of knowing into university processes of tenure and performance review to retain our Indigenous employees.
- Support the development of faculty, department, and unit reconciliation action plans.
- Confirm and communicate the university's strong commitment to recruit Indigenous undergraduate and graduate students across all faculties and professional schools, and to support their success in various ways, including access to bridge programs at the unit level and across the university.
- Continue building partnerships with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, educational institutions, and industry. Such partnerships will provide Indigenous students with the opportunity to pursue their educational and career goals, create the workforce that Indigenous communities need, and enable Indigenous youth to be agents of change for their communities.
- Build on the work of the Ongomiizwin Research office (Indigenous Institute of Health and Healing) to expand the opportunities in Indigenous research through this central point of contact between university researchers and Indigenous communities. The office will expand our ability to connect community research needs with UM students and faculty scholars; it also will encourage public-private partnerships with Indigenous businesses and support undergraduate and graduate students in their research efforts.
- Apply an Indigenous lens to the university's other strategic priorities.

5) EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (EDI)

In June 2021, the university released the final report of the President's Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). The University is committed to advancing the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion, particularly among systematically disadvantaged and marginalized groups, which include Indigenous peoples, women, racialized persons, persons with disabilities, and persons of marginalized sexual identities, gender identities, and gender expressions.

Many on our campuses are already advancing EDI within their units to create an optimal working, teaching, research, and learning environment. Our actions in the next 12-18 months will be guided by the task force's recommendations, supplemented by community feedback. We will:

- Hire a senior leader to implement the final report of the President's Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. Along with building community involvement in decision-making, this individual will assess the university's needs in the longer term, provide overall leadership on the university's EDI initiatives, and conduct further analysis, as needed, on the issues raised in the task force's report.

- Engage with our community to develop strategies for hiring/retaining faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds. We will ensure that EDI is a key consideration in our hiring practices and plans, and that we progress steadily towards increasing diversity among our faculty and staff.
- Support researchers in understanding funders' requirements regarding creating and enhancing EDI principles in their research programs.
- Engage with our community to integrate EDI principles into the university's other strategic priorities.

CONCLUSION

The key strategic priorities outlined above reflect the university's needs in these challenging times. Fulfilling our goals for each will help us continue to serve the needs of our students and communities now and into the future. We invite all members of the UM community to join with us and work together to pursue our essential mission to the people of Manitoba, Canada, and the world.