

SCHOLARSHIP AT THE HEART OF THE CITY

A Strategic Plan for Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity
at MacEwan University, 2017-2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MacEwan University is an urban and metropolitan institution. As one of the anchor institutions in Edmonton's newly revitalized urban core, MacEwan University employs over 2,000 people and educate over 19,000 students annually. In our research, scholarly, and creative activities, we collaborate and partner with all levels of government, community groups, health care organizations, businesses, and schools to address needs, develop assets and strengths, and enrich the cultural and social fabric of our city. This Strategic Plan for Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity at MacEwan University, 2017–2020, is a commitment by faculty to scholarship at the heart of the city, as an 'Engaged University'—student-engaged, community-engaged, and globally-engaged—, embracing our unique identity and role as Edmonton's only downtown University.

STUDENT-ENGAGED

MacEwan University is a learner-centered institution with a mandate to provide undergraduate teaching and student-engaged research. This research plan supports the development of a unique academic environment, as envisioned by the University's Integrated Strategic Plan. Critical to this objective is an integrated knowledge model, according to which research, scholarship, and creative activity support our primary mission of undergraduate teaching, that is, *knowledge creation* and *knowledge transmission* are mutually supportive endeavours.

Student-engaged research and transformational learning experiences emerge and thrive especially where knowledge creation and knowledge transmission intersect. The scholarly teacher—as the keystone of a quality undergraduate education—is committed not only to excellence in research but also to excellence as an educator and mentor. Consistent with our learner-centered mandate, MacEwan University will continue its long-standing commitment to supporting and disseminating pedagogical research.

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED

At MacEwan University, our researchers embrace the vitality of a complex urban reality to solve complex problems and to create transformational learning experiences for students—learning experiences that encourage the development of students as engaged citizens and public intellectuals, who make a positive impact. As drivers of applied research, MacEwan University recognizes the need to encourage community-engaged and collaborative models of scholarship to support economic and community development in Edmonton and northern Alberta. We are committed to building, sharing in, and contributing to the growth and prosperity of Alberta's Capital Region.

GLOBALLY-ENGAGED

Edmonton is one of the most rapidly growing and ethnically diverse cities in North America. Internationalization that fosters intercultural awareness and locally embedded global citizenship is essential for maintaining and growing competitive advantage, developing best practices, and expanding opportunities for knowledge creation and transmission.

MacEwan's Strategic Internationalization Plan, approved in 2016, lays out the strategies to create a platform for academic structures and opportunities that foster global engagement, interdisciplinary collaboration, and education; connect international players around campus; and, provide internationalization at home options for all students, staff, and faculty.

FIVE GOALS TO MAKE AN IMPACT

In the coming three years, Research Council and the Research Services Office will focus on five goals with the overarching purpose of reinforcing our emerging status as a first choice University for undergraduate student learning and research, at the heart of our city. These five goals are closely aligned with the University Pillars and the Integrated Strategic Plan.

1. Recognize and Promote Excellence in Research and Scholarship

Faculty, through their Departments, Schools, and Faculties, ultimately define excellence, in accordance with the Collective Agreement and discipline-specific standards. Complementing such definitions, Research Council promotes excellence by nurturing and developing the research culture, encouraging, on the one hand, discipline-specific scholarship and knowledge mobilization and, on the other, supporting and celebrating the scholarly teacher, whose contributions are realized in the success of students and alumni. A significant growth in our culture will be the application for a Canada Research Chair that will catalyze research clusters and promote training of student researchers at all levels.

2. Provide Guidance and Opportunities for Student Research

In keeping with two prominent and formative University Pillars, Students First and Student-Engaged Research, MacEwan University is building a research culture that links the learning experiences of our students with the scholarly and creative activity of our faculty. Student research opportunities include participating in classroom-based inquiry and problem solving, developing and practicing research skills through innovative pedagogy, involvement and mentorship in faculty projects as research assistants (or in other roles), and designing and leading their own faculty-supervised projects. In all these cases, students are integral to the advancement of research, scholarship, and creative activity at MacEwan.

3. Promote Evidence-based and Research-informed Teaching

The importance and even primacy of disciplinary research for faculty is the essential foundation of higher education. Pedagogical research, however, helps bridge gaps between faculty and student. Such research can take a variety of forms, including discipline-based educational research (DBER) and the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). DBER focuses on factors that impact learning in particular disciplines while SoTL involves systematic inquiry into the impact of specific pedagogical interventions on student learning. Research Council and the Research Services Office is committed to supporting the dissemination and integration of pedagogical research throughout the institution so that it impacts teaching.

4. Achieve Excellence in Community-engaged Scholarship

At MacEwan University, we are committed to responsive and transformational community-engaged research. Our goal is not only that faculty and students are engaged in outreach and active in our community but that MacEwan University, itself, is a hub for community-based research, a place where people with diverse interests and backgrounds come together to seek and apply knowledge that contributes to growth and prosperity "for all of us" (kîyânaw).

5. Increase Collaborative and Interdisciplinary Research

Larger in scope than community-engaged scholarship or student-engaged research, but encompassing both, collaborative and interdisciplinary research is critical to expanding and developing research excellence at a learner-centered institution. By intentionally supporting collaboration within and beyond the institution, our researchers and scholars can share their expertise and play significant roles in research projects with greater scale and complexity.

Research clusters and new funding envelopes can help researchers pool resources, build capacity, and cultivate areas of research excellence, while external collaboration can enable access to physical, human, and information resources for research and scholarship, and open up new learning opportunities, internships, and assistantships for students. Collaboration is a key to unlocking our research potential.

Through success in each of these goals, the research community at MacEwan University will act on our institutional mandate and make a positive impact as an anchor institution in Edmonton's revitalized urban core.

CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

The success of this research plan depends on intra-institutional and community support. Through the collegial governance process, our faculty and administration has assented to the goals encapsulated in this document. Collaboration is key. Research Council and the Research Services Office will work cooperatively with our many stakeholders and partners. We invite external funders and businesses to share in our vision of scholarship at the heart of the city.

GOAL 1.: RECOGNIZE AND PROMOTE EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

In its evolution and development as an institution, MacEwan University has cultivated a research culture in which inquiry, discovery, and creativity are driven by our most basic human impulses to solve problems, discover new knowledge and frontiers, and express ourselves. This culture informs and enhances our ability to provide transformational learning experiences that activate and tap into the creativity and inquisitiveness of our students, and our ability to contribute to the growth, prosperity, and sustainability of our society.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- ✓ Recognize (and promote) excellence in research and scholarship, by faculty, staff, and students, through awards, grants, and media
- ✓ Celebrate faculty and staff who mentor other faculty and students in research
- ✓ Explore innovative ways to expand and improve (or simply improve access to) research facilities and infrastructure
- ✓ Explore and if feasible, initiate an application for a Canada Research Chair

GOAL 2. PROVIDE GUIDANCE AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENT RESEARCH

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- ✓ Provide more financial support for student research projects and dissemination
- ✓ Advocate for research skills development as essential to a MacEwan education
- ✓ Encourage the development of more research-intensive classes
- ✓ Promote (and support) the creation of student-led peer review and support networks
- ✓ Invite successful alumni back as keynotes at MacEwan Student Research Day to talk about how their research experience enhanced their career and life skills

GOAL 3 PROMOTE EVIDENCE BASED AND RESEARCH INFORMED TEACHING

In our Pillars and Integrated Strategic Plan, MacEwan University affirms its government mandate to provide quality, learner-centred education. Excellence as educators lies in the willingness of faculty to continue learning. In the context of higher education, this willingness is expressed through a commitment to evidence-based and research-informed teaching, or put more simply, scholarly teaching

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- ✓ Celebrate teachers who draw on pedagogical research and who guide, train, and empower students to acquire the skills to conduct sound and ethical research
- ✓ Support, as appropriate, evidence-based pedagogical interventions that contribute to research skills development within courses or programs of study

GOAL 4 ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY BASED SCHOLARSHIP

At MacEwan University, we are committed to responsive and transformational community-engaged research. Our goal is not only that faculty and students are engaged in outreach and active in our community but that MacEwan University, itself, is a hub for community-based research, a place where people with diverse interests and backgrounds come together to seek and apply knowledge that contributes to growth and prosperity “for all of us” (*kîyânaw*).

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- ✓ Enhance the civic contributions, public profile and reputation of MacEwan University by supporting innovative and pioneering community-engaged scholarship
- ✓ Demonstrate commitment to the social, cultural and economic advancement of the broader community, particularly Indigenous and Métis communities
- ✓ Engage industry, community and alumni networks to create and expand opportunities for student internships and fellowships
- ✓ Investigate and, as feasible, implement potential models for improving coordination and facilitation of community-engaged scholarship and outreach initiatives

GOAL 5

Larger in scope than community-engaged scholarship or student-engaged research, but encompassing both, collaborative and interdisciplinary research is critical to expanding and developing research excellence at learner-centered Baccalaureate and Applied Studies Institution. By intentionally supporting collaboration within and beyond the institution, our researchers and scholars can share their expertise and play significant roles in research projects with greater scale and complexity.

At MacEwan University, collaboration is a key to unlocking our research potential.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- ✓ Support collaborative multi-year research projects by providing more grants exclusively targeted to such research

- ✓ Develop and expand opportunities for collaborative research with Indigenous and Métis communities and community organizations
- ✓ Foster collaborative research opportunities with industry, business, government, and other academic and research institutions
- ✓ Champion the creation of research clusters to promote collaborative research within and across disciplines
- ✓ Monitor and report on research output in the research clusters with a view to identifying emerging strengths, growth areas, and efficient allocation of resource

ACCOUNTABILITY AND OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

This Strategic Research Plan has been recommended by Research Council and approved by Academic Governance Council (Motion AGC-02-10-24-2017).

The five goals, and related implementation strategies, are operationalized through an annual business plan, developed by the Research Services Office and approved by Research Council. Research Council reports annually to Academic Governance Council.