



Integrated Strategic Planning Emerging Themes

INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING DOCUMENTS
Prepared by Dr. James Mandigo
Provost and Vice-President Academic

ufv.ca


**UNIVERSITY
OF THE FRASER VALLEY**

Institutional Planning Documents

EMERGING THEMES

1. Access, Flexibility and Responsiveness
 2. Integration, Collaboration and Multi-Disciplinary Approach
 3. Citizenship, Intercultural Competency and Sense of Belonging
 4. Active Engagement, Community Building and Shared Responsibility
 5. Health, Human Development and Environmental Sustainability
 6. Technological Innovation, Student Learning and Applied Research
-

1. Access, Flexibility and Responsiveness

Learning Everywhere: The UFV Education Plan began with a visioning exercise in recognition of the dramatic changes transforming the landscape of post-secondary education in Canada and around the world in 2015. *UFV 2025: A Vision for our Future* discussed some of these factors that had or were in the process of changing: learners; learning; faculty; the discipline-based organization of universities; funding and the university business model, the impact of information technology and digitization; locally, globally, and online; growing expectations by students, parents, governments, taxpayers, and more for ever-higher degrees of accountability and quality assurance. In particular, universities are being asked to provide assurances as to the quality of the education and services they provide and to account for what students are learning. Shifting the locus of control¹ for *learning* to the learner, it identified 2 related goals:

- **Prioritize Learning Everywhere** - UFV values the learning of faculty, students, staff, and community no matter when, where, and how it occurs. Courses, schedules, programs, and administration put the journey of the learner first. UFV recognizes that our **learners are diverse; this necessitates diverse learning options and settings**. UFV works to create learning opportunities in communities both inside and outside of UFV.

- **Commit to Flexibility and Responsiveness** - UFV recognizes the importance of **agility in its programs** and administrative units to enable us to **adapt and respond to the diverse learning needs of our students**, faculty, staff, and community. We will streamline organizational procedures and practices that limit creative problem solving.

Promoting student's academic success by improving access to students from differing backgrounds, having flexible programming and learning options, and being responsiveness to best fit the diverse learning needs of students was foundational to:

- *Beyond Local: UFV Internationalization Goals* - **Increase access to and participation in international mobility experiences.** We will do this by raising the awareness of the opportunities available, streamlining the process of credit recognition, and striving to remove financial barriers to studying abroad. UFV will encourage and support our faculty in developing collaborative relationships with faculty from partner institutions as a means of strengthening partnerships and **increasing student mobility** (Goal 1)

The Strategic Enrolment Management Plan responds to the unanticipated growth in international student enrolment at UFV. To guarantee that UFV is able to integrate international students into the university community, ensure their success, as well as maintain the high quality of its programs, the university identified placed a focus on internationalization and increasing Aboriginal participation as most notable in terms of enrolment management and planning. However, enrolment targets also reflected an **increasingly diverse student body** – increasing retention (especially after first year) for current students, adding a qualifying studies entrance stream and increasing **opportunities for students to transfer**, international and Indigenous students – and offered greater opportunities for graduate-level programming, experiential and workplace learning and **supported growth** in the program areas of Health and Wellness; Agriculture and the Environmentally-Responsible Development of the Fraser Valley; and Digital Media Technologies.

The goals identified in the Budget Plan reflect UFV's "commitment to its students and to an increasingly diverse student body." Referring to UFV's internationalization goals **to increase access and participation** in international experiences, a new position was added to **encourage and support outbound mobility and international experiences** for our students." As part of a multi-year Technology Plan, it

acknowledged the importance of technology to the future of learning and to **responsive and flexible delivery of services**. In addition to access and flexibility, the Budget Plan also laid out a foundation to **support students at risk** and provide services, programming and activities that encourage domestic and international students to achieve their goals. There are also investments in additional resources to **facilitate teaching and learning** will be added in the Academic Success Centre, the Library and Supported Learning Groups. **Expanding peer mentoring, particularly for international students, will support students in their transition to studying at UFV.**

2. Integration, Collaboration and Multi-Disciplinary Approach

Although efforts to integrate experiential learning both inside and outside of the classroom, develop opportunities for collaborative and interdisciplinary work and support a multi-disciplinary approach to program development are clearly articulated in goals 3 (**Collaborate Across Boundaries**) and 5 (**Integrate Experiential Learning**) of *The UFV Education Plan*, they also appear in:

- *Beyond Local: UFV Internationalization Goals* - **Support the development of strategic partnerships**. UFV has the good fortune to have partnerships with a variety of institutions the world over. These agreements may involve student mobility, credit transfer, research interests, or other joint initiatives. Going forward, we will work toward an inventory of these partnerships and a database of opportunities so that departments can promote the relationships that best align with their goals. On both the local and international level, we will **collaborate across boundaries** (Goal 5)
- *The Strategic Enrolment Management Plan* is to “offer more **experiential and workplace learning opportunities** to students” and “In the context of relatively static enrolments...highlights three broad areas for new and existing program development [that] are not tied to any particular department or Faculty and therefore the intent is for these **programs to be multi-faculty or interdisciplinary**” (Goal 6)

The *Institutional Accountability Report* highlights the Centre for Experiential and Career Education (CECE) launched this past Spring, which:

realigns units and staff involved in career planning, **experiential learning, co-op placements, internships, practicums, mentoring, and co-curricular experiences into one department.** Following with our Education Plan goals, this **moves experiential and career education from the periphery** of the student learning journey to a place where it is **integrated** into our core academic activities. This also creates a single portal into the university for industry and community who want to **engage students in experiential learning, work integrated learning (internships and practicums), and co-op education.**

The *Budget Plan* also invests in “**learning both in and outside the classroom**, and disciplinary schools.” Under **Student Experience and Success** (a specific investment priority), the budget added resources to “enhance experiential learning,” increasing the “coordination of practicum and internship placements and programming. This provides opportunities for students to get employment experience and also creates opportunities for the university to engage with the community.” It promotes interdisciplinary collaboration as one of **its strategic investment priorities** using as examples that “**will offer students greater interdisciplinary opportunities and immersive experiences:** (1) a new School of Agriculture, Geography and the Environment (SAGE), housed in the Faculty of Science, established to bring together programming and the Food and Agriculture Institute; and (2) two new schools being established in the College of Arts – a School of Creative Arts and a School of Global Engagement & Social Justice. “New Directors in each school will provide leadership and build programming supported by the **collaborative and interdisciplinary structure of the schools.**”

The *Strategic Research Plan* targets five research themes, which are broad enough to **support multi-disciplinary approaches**, and each is connected to UFV’s strengths and the values and interests of the people of the Fraser Valley. The plan focuses on six routes to encourage research and scholarship, of which goals 4 and 5 are particularly relevant:

- Supporting and enabling research and scholarly **activity grounded in and relevant to the University’s regional setting** - Prioritizing research options and scholarly activities that serve the cultural, social and environmentally sustainable development of the Fraser Valley; Cultivating applied and collaborative research opportunities with regional industry, government and non-profit agencies; Developing and supporting research in the scholarship of teaching and learning.

- Developing **multi-disciplinary and collaborative research programs** - Increasing institutional support for research themes consistent with established research programs, institutional goals and/or strategic enrolment management; Identifying and actively pursuing collaborative research opportunities; Strengthening the role and capacity of the University's research centres, institutes, and laboratories as practical vehicles for interdisciplinary collaboration.

3. Citizenship, Intercultural Competency and Sense of Belonging

In *Changing Lives, Building Community: UFV's Strategic Plan* (see *Institutional Accountability Plan*), the communities of the Fraser Valley are described as a **rich tapestry of different histories, cultures, and religions**. It notes that "UFV prides itself on **serving this diverse society by offering widespread access** to postsecondary education" and "tries to prepare students for a lifetime of career success and **productive citizenship**." Recognizing the University's scope as both **local and global**," it welcomed "the increased international activity and the growing number of international students support **UFV's strategic goal of bringing the world to the Fraser Valley, and the Fraser Valley to the world.**"

Developing and modelling civic engagement, nurturing global awareness and embracing intercultural diversity appears in the *Institutional Learning Outcomes* (Goal 9 – Contribute Regionally and Globally), *the UFV Education Plan* (Goal 4 – Develop Local and Global Citizenship), and *the Budget* (Strategic Investment – Local and Global Citizenship Development), which also placed an emphasis on **Intercultural competency** as an important consideration in the new student support positions that will help address the **high student load** on counselling services and the **diversity of clients** they support. The Strategic Research Plan identified **community, justice and cultural engagement** as one theme to **support multi-disciplinary approaches**, whereby "UFV recognizes and values the diversity of the peoples of the Fraser Valley and will continue to partner with various communities and organizations to pursue research in the areas of culture, citizenship, peace and justice, and human rights. This will involve, among others, the faculty and students involved in the Centres for Social Research, Global Development, Indo-Canadian Studies, and Peace and Conflict Studies.

At the base of *Beyond Local: UFV's Internationalization Goals* are two challenges: (1) how the University should respond to the increasing complexities around globalization; and (2) how UFV and communities need to prepare to work within an international context. To guide its understanding of UFV's

current position on the internationalization spectrum, the committee worked from a definition of internationalization as “...the **intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education...**” After an initial overview of internationalization efforts undertaken by UFV International, the group conducted a preliminary analysis of key UFV documents and plans – Strategic Directions, Education Plan, Strategic Enrolment Management Plan – to identify 3 priorities aimed at **developing global citizenship**, expanding the **cultural diversity** of the UFV community, and providing services and an environment that **foster a sense of belonging**. Inherent within each were goals related to the acquisition of **intercultural competencies** and providing a **welcoming space to people** from a variety of backgrounds.

- **Expand the cultural diversity of the UFV community.** UFV will continue to be a welcoming place for students, faculty, and staff of diverse backgrounds. We will aim to broaden the scope of current recruitment activities and promote the acquisition of intercultural competencies. With the student population, we will continue to promote events and activities that attract attendees from diverse backgrounds. (Goal 2)
- **Design and deliver programs for a rapidly evolving global context.** UFV will ensure that its programs are relevant in developing global citizenship. This could mean the inclusion of an intercultural element in programs. It could involve a modification of program structure to accommodate international learning experiences. It could also be achieved through the inclusion of international and intercultural content within specific course material. The idea of **using technology to collaborate across boundaries** was discussed. (Goal 3)
- **Provide services and an environment that foster a sense of belonging.** UFV recognizes and honours the contribution that Aboriginal people have made – and continue to make – to our community. Just as the Stó:lō people welcome us, we must ensure that UFV’s services and spaces are welcoming to people from a variety of backgrounds. With that in mind, UFV will strive to foster a sense of belonging in everything that we do — from the development of our teams, to the design of physical spaces, to the creation of our policies. (Goal 4)
-

4. Active Engagement, Community Building and Shared Responsibility

UFV not only demonstrates its commitment to local and global citizenship, but it **models engagement and responsibility to our communities** (Budget Plan). The notion of providing a welcoming space can be traced back to *Indigenizing the Academy*, which meant “to make the academy both **responsive and responsible** to the Indigenous peoples’ goals of self-determination and well-being.” While the vision of physical space and framework for inclusion of Indigenous Studies at UFV – to accommodate Indigenous learners, staff, faculty and community, and provide context and visibility to the larger community – was deemed critical as UFV indigenizes, it also **proposed creating of a culturally safe educational environment and foster a sense of belonging** for Indigenous learners. Under the core values of **respect and balance**, this was a **shared responsibility** placed among all members of the UFV community to recognize, appreciate and develop an understanding for the historical processes and indigenous reality of the traditional territory in which they are learning (rather than one that falls solely on Indigenous peoples).

Following the Truth and Reconciliation Committee’s Report outlining 94 Calls to Action, the idea of a *Lálém ye mestíyexw*, or “**House of the Peoples**” emerged as a **main theme to address a new purpose**. *Lálém ye mestíyexw* provides a home for Indigenization in which people come together to strengthen their presence and relationships. The response from the community in the Fraser Valley, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, demonstrated the **leadership role** that UFV can play. One of the main conclusions reached was that it is important to **move away from a hierarchical/traditional organizational structure to adopt instead an Indigenous organizing structure**. *Lálém ye mestíyexw* makes reference to **Indigenizers**, which is meant to **evoke this shared responsibility** of all members at the University and take a decentralized approach to Indigenizing at UFV.

A commitment to Indigenization (and Indigenous Students) feature in *the UFV Education Plan* (Goal 1 – Prioritize Learning Everywhere and 4 – Develop Local and Global Citizenship), the *Strategic Enrolment Management Plan* (Goal 6), *UFV’s Strategic Plan*, and the *Institutional Accountability Report*. The *Budget Plan* also lists **Indigenization** as a specific investment priority that would “see Indigenous students and communities reflected in UFV and embrace and fulfill our commitment to Aboriginal Peoples.” To answer the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Calls to Action* and to take a **leadership role in education for reconciliation...**

In this context, and with Indigenization as a priority, the university plans to implement *Lálém ye mestíyexw* (*House of the Peoples*, as translated from the Halq'eméylem). This would build on our already existing Indigenous Student Centre and the Office of Indigenous Affairs. Programming initiatives include the BA Indigenous Studies Major and Minor as well as **intentional efforts to integrate Indigenous ways of knowing** into many academic programs. There is a need, however, for greater coordination and integration of initiatives. *Lálém ye mestíyexw* envisions a home for Indigenization at UFV, **strengthening Indigenous presence and relationships** within UFV and creating a connection to Stó:lō people and communities – the stewards of the land where UFV resides. To foster these efforts, a new position will be added to provide dedicated support to Indigenization. To further our Indigenization efforts, the initial focus for a new Special Advisor to the President will be hiring and retaining Indigenous faculty and staff. Funding for new faculty positions has been designated for Indigenous hires. (Budget Plan)

Active Engagement, Community Building and Shared Responsibility features into another strategic investment priority – **Community Engagement and University Relations** – of which six new positions have been added. This reflects an “Investment in **community engagement** [and] will support raising the profile of UFV in its endeavours to **connect with students, community partners, industry partners, governments, research agencies, and donors**. *The Institutional Accountability Report*, which refers to UFV as bringing “**together the people living in our communities and provides them with opportunities for development and self-actualization.**” The report provides several examples of this: bringing students and civic problem solvers together through CityStudio; offering a special lecture series on diverse topics such as peace and literacy and the work being done in the revitalization of the Indigenous languages, among others; and **connecting with our communities** through special forums on topical issues, including author readings, health fairs, theatre productions, guest speakers, the Art of the Book, Valley Fest, etc.

5. **Health, Human Development and Environmental Sustainability**

Indigenizing the Academy listed a set of core values – such as respect, balance of mind, body and spirit, continuity of life, personal and cultural identity, patience, taking care of others, living carefully and more – which can be characterized as **holistic** and **interconnected**. In *Lálém ye mestíyexw: Re-envisioning a Structure for Indigenization at UFV*, “*part of being a UFV citizen also involves responsibility to our*

communities and environment.” In addition to the UFV Education Plan, links between **Health, Human Development, and Environmental Sustainability** also appear in the:

- *Institutional Accountability Report*, which states UFV’s commitment to “**improving the health and well-being of our community and leading the stewardship of our environment**” and bringing “**together the people living in our communities and provides them with opportunities for development and self-actualization**”
- *Strategic Enrolment Management Plan*, which supports growth in **Health and Wellness**; Agriculture and the **Environmentally Responsible Development** of the Fraser Valley; and
- *Budget Plan* which lists **Health & Wellness** – To develop strategies and supports that encourage good health and wellness for students and employees at UFV – as a specific investment priority.

The *Strategic Research Plan* also “prioritizes research options and scholarly activities that serve the cultural, social and environmentally sustainable development of the Fraser Valley” and identifies the **Environment and Sustainable Development**, and **Human development, health and well-being** as two of five research themes that both fit UFV’s mission as identified in its strategic and education, and is connected to UFV’s strengths and the values and interests of the people of the Fraser Valley:

Environment and sustainable development - The Fraser Valley has a diverse and still a comparatively healthy natural environment. It is also one of the most important agricultural regions of the country due to its relatively mild climate and fertile soil. At the same time, as agricultural production has intensified, the valley’s population continues to be one of the fastest growing areas in Canada. This raises important challenges in terms of sustainable development and the protection of the natural environment, which makes research in the relationship between agriculture, social and economic development, sustainability, and food and water safety and security mandatory.

Human development, health and well-being - Human health and wellness will remain a priority research area for the University. This will build on current research programs in Kinesiology, Nursing, Psychology, Social, Cultural and Media Studies, Early Childhood Education/Child and Youth Care, Social Work and Human Services, the Centre for Education and Research on Aging,

and, the Centre for Social Research, and will be supported by both the existing Tier II Chair in Food Security and the appointment of a Tier I Canada Research Chair in Health and Community.

6. Technological Innovation, Student Learning and Applied Research

The Institutional Accountability Report draws attention to UFV's "emphasis on applied research results in varied opportunities for student researchers," including international study abroad programs – which bring students to the Fraser Valley from around the world while allowing students from the Fraser Valley to study overseas – **Indigenous-oriented programs** [which] not only help Indigenous students learn in a way respectful of their traditions and values, **but also educate non-Indigenous students** on those same traditions and values, creating a bridge between cultures, as well as the continuing studies and academic upgrading offerings make learning a lifelong experience. In addition to **applied research**, it highlights the fact that "UFV successfully applied for funding of additional student spaces related to the technology sector. As a result, new programs will begin this fall in coding, digital fabrication, and graphic and digital design. *The Institutional Accountability Report* notes that our Capital Plan reflects UFV's **commitment to technology**, particularly as it affects the training and education of our students. To support the University in its **learner-centered vision**, "our **prime capital priority is beginning the work of updating and improving technology infrastructure on campus**" (see also Capital Plan).

The *Strategic Research Plan* refers to UFV as a teaching university, but one which sees **teaching and research as interconnected**. Recognizing the **importance of active research and scholarship**, the plan identifies 6 goals to encourage research and scholarship, 4 of which are relevant to innovation, technology and the connection between teaching and research:

- **Facilitating the integration of research and teaching** and increasing the number of research opportunities for students (Goal 1)
- Promoting and supporting the research, scholarly and creative activities of faculty members; through cooperation with industry, community partners; research made possible by **technological change or revolution** (Goal 2)
- Enabling research and scholarly activity that is **imaginative, innovative and/or entrepreneurial** (Goal 3)

- **Cultivating new directions** in research and scholarly activity that build on existing expertise while **responding to changing economic and technological contexts** (Goal 6)

The Strategic Research Plan also lists 2 of the 5 major strategic themes to develop its research capacity, output and impact, which demonstrate this recognition of the **importance of technology to the future of learning and interconnectedness between teaching and research**:

- **Teaching, learning, and cognition** - UFV attaches great importance to the scholarship of teaching and learning. Student involvement in inquiry learning and research provides unique opportunities for students to develop and acquire essential skills including analytical thinking, critical thinking, an ability to relate practice to theory, and communication skills. Gathering evidence of the effectiveness of new pedagogical methods and technologies is essential for achieving the University's strategic goals.
- **Technology, modelling and applications** - Technological innovation and adaptation have always been important social, economic and cultural drivers, but especially so with the development of the internet and digital revolution in computing, visualization, and three-dimensional modelling. Electronic communication is a global phenomenon, complicating traditional concepts of boundaries and the ways in which classes, genders and cultures interact with one another. Computer modelling is revolutionizing the creative arts and the physical sciences, and the information highway is the digital encyclopedia accessible by anyone.

The Budget Plan describes the future of learning at UFV as “**learner-centred, individualized learning, integrative learning, flexible, learning everywhere, experiential, connected.**” It calls for “UFV to **embrace the role technology** plays in the future of learning in order to be the innovative, learner-centred university it aspires to be.” Guided by *UFV's Strategic Direction: Changing Lives, Building Community*¹ and by *Learning Everywhere: The UFV Education Plan*, the *Budget* lists **Technology & Business Transformation** as one of its strategic investments, which reflects the university's commitment to **embrace digital technologies that transform teaching, learning** and business practices in higher education. Also included is funding for the first year of a **multi-year Technology Plan** acknowledging the **importance of technology to the future of learning and to responsive and flexible delivery of services**.

¹ Locating control within the learner formed the basis of UFV's Institutional Learning Outcomes, which sought to shift educators' gaze squarely onto the aspirations of the learner. Such learner-centred education entails using emerging technologies and flexible approaches that cut across traditional boundaries to allow learners to shape their own education. Developed in 2012 – after Indigenizing the Academy (2007) and before the UFV Education Plan (2015) - UFV's Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILO) project reflected a subtle shift in emphasis on the **nature of knowledge transmission in education**. Rather than focusing primarily on what teachers have taught to students, the ILOs focus on the students and what they have learned and absorbed. Thus, the ILO project helps UFV move towards a learner-based approach to education.