



ACADEMIC PLAN

Promoting and Celebrating

Access to Excellence

Board of Governors Approved:
February 23, 2017

Access to
Excellence

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Setting the Stage

Hay tse'p q'u sii'em nu siiy e'yu 'i' tthuw mukw'
mustimhw, 'i' tetsul su thun'a Snuneymuxw Tumuxw.

Thank you my highly respected friends, to all of you,
my people, for arriving to Nanaimo territory.

Institutional Context

This *Academic Plan: Promoting and Celebrating Access to Excellence* builds on the work of the first Academic Plan that was adopted by Senate and the Board of Governors in 2010. Between 2010 and 2016, the first Academic Plan provided guidance and direction for institutional initiatives, budgeting and resourcing. In spring 2016, it was determined that the 2010 Academic Plan continued to resonate with faculty, staff and students; that it offered a firm foundation upon which the next stage of planning could be undertaken; and that, rather than set aside the 2010 Academic Plan and begin an entirely new Plan, the 2010 Academic Plan should be updated over the course of the next eight months.

As part of VIU's Comprehensive Integrated Planning Framework, the 2010 Academic Plan has been a key instrument in guiding Vancouver Island University as it has moved to a fully operational University. Of the 30 Action Items identified in the 2010 Academic Plan, 85% have been implemented and acted upon. Other Action Items (such as Action Item #22: Promote dynamic and contemporary cross-disciplinary themes) have long-term implementation considerations, so continue to be used to guide the work of Senate. Where such on-going Action Items are identified, they have been integrated into the 2017 Academic Plan.

As an Academic Plan Update, *Promoting and Celebrating Access to Excellence* builds on the 2010 Academic Plan and brings its content and direction in line with current economic, environmental and social issues and needs of the second decade of the 21st century. It also builds on the mandate and rich history of Vancouver Island University, the contextual implications of the coastal region of Vancouver Island and input from faculty, staff and students. In particular and central to this important time in Canada, are the implications of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, outcomes of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and the associated requirements for universities and society to align in a strategic and comprehensive way with the obligations set out in the work of the Commission. Those Truth and Reconciliation matters have also informed the development of this update.

Through VIU's Integrated Planning process, of which the Academic Plan is a central component, Vancouver Island University is able to create and implement a bold, visionary future for the University, the region, and British Columbia.

How the Update was Prepared

Over the course of eight months, a 15-person Advisory Committee provided guidance to the Provost, who was tasked with leading the update process. The Provost held 24 institutional meetings (approximately 450 participants across the three campuses: Cowichan, Nanaimo, Powell River) to provide input. On-line surveys were developed to seek feedback on the Values and Objectives contained in the 2010 Academic Plan. Two hundred and thirty-four faculty and staff completed the surveys. Student surveys were also conducted to identify student needs and feedback. A survey of VIU external partners was also completed.

In addition, an environmental scan was carried out to place the update within the context of new issues, conditions and realities that have developed during the past six years. As well, this document has built on the work that was undertaken for the first Academic Plan (Diagram 1).

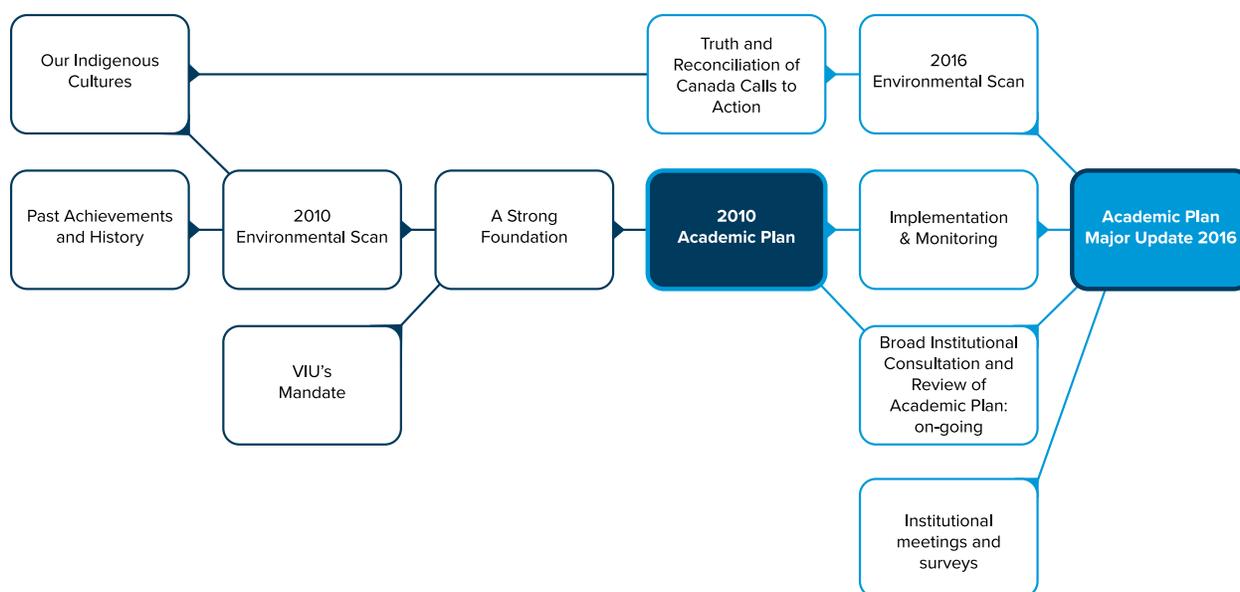


Diagram 1: The Building Blocks for Update of Academic Plan
 A draft of the Academic Plan, *Promoting and Celebrating Access to Excellence*, was reviewed with institutional community members in Cowichan, Nanaimo and Powell River.

Members of the Academic Plan Update Committee

Laura-Lee Bowers

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Senate

Chair: David Witty

Provost

Special Recognition

- to **Dr. Beth McLin** who tabulated the results of the 24 institutional meetings into themes and provided a synopsis of the linkage between the meeting themes and the Academic Plan.
- to **Dr. Sylvie Lafrenière** who summarized the values and objectives questionnaire results and provided a synopsis of implications



Building on Our Strengths

Over the past six years, VIU has built upon the guidance provided in the 2010 Academic Plan. During that time, the institution has continued to evolve into a fully functioning bi-cameral University with a mix of academic and technical programs, undergraduate and graduate studies and a range of certificate, diploma and degree offerings. Much of the success of VIU relates to a number of key foundational factors:

- Emphasis on open access to education
- Commitment to student and faculty success
- Support for student transition to employment or further study
- Recognition of our obligation to provide leadership related to Indigenous education and to address recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada
- Readiness to attract and support a student community with many diverse profiles
- Commitment to supporting and encouraging Indigenous student success
- Commitment to supporting and encouraging International student success
- Multiple program entry points, pathways and exit points that address diverse student needs
- Recognition of the significant contributions made by staff to the success of the institution
- Emphasis on teaching and associated faculty/student interaction
- Educational experiences that take place on a meaningful human scale, often involving local communities
- Educational experiences that directly involve the larger world
- Range of programs, including developmental, graduate, professional development, undergraduate, and vocational
- Programs that reflect and respect community cultural, developmental, educational and social needs
- Role as a window-on-the-world for Vancouver Island and coastal British Columbia
- Support for professional development and scholarship, research and creative activity

The World We Live In

In keeping with its mandate, VIU must recognize the public's expectations of higher education, as well as existing conditions in the region, and must plan its services accordingly.

Community expectations identify the need for:

- Proactive responses to the diverse needs of future students
- Recognition of the need to keep pace with evolving information and communications technology
- Transparent and accountable processes that demonstrate that publicly funded education is beneficial to communities
- On-going dialogues on community and regional services, infrastructures and development
- Leadership on emerging issues and needs, including the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada
- Support for facilitating economic and social transition across the regions that VIU serves

The following issues, among others, will be critical to communities on Vancouver Island and coastal British Columbia:

- Availability of multiple opportunities for access to higher education, including programs in developmental education, transfers and programs that ladder into credential programs
- Access to social and cultural initiatives that promote community vitality, lifelong learning and improved quality of life
- Productive partnerships among business, communities, education, Indigenous communities, government and industry that explore a viable future, such as by:
 - Developing a trained work force
 - Identifying partnership opportunities
 - Creating jobs for young adults
 - Developing a knowledge-based economy
 - Integrating emerging technologies
 - Understanding regional demographic changes
 - Identifying future health and human services
 - Understanding an aging population
 - Monitoring the impact of globalization on the region
 - Monitoring the condition of the natural environment
 - Determining regional effects of climate change





- Anticipating transition from fossil fuel dependence
- Encouraging aquatic agriculture and food security
- Promoting tourism and recreation
- Promoting high-quality, beneficial urban and regional development

Challenges and Opportunities

A number of key challenges and opportunities that will continue to inform VIU's work, Visionary Goal and Objectives are listed below.

Building on the past:

Preserve the character, achievements and community engagement inherent in the history of VIU, from its inception in 1936 through its successive stages of development.

Keeping pace with change:

Respond to changing educational needs and expectations, the life circumstances of future students, the ever widening frontiers of knowledge and evolving informational literacies.

Responding to the regional context:

Monitor and evaluate changing cultural, economic, environmental and social conditions in the external environment.

Responding to Indigenous considerations:

Identify, monitor and develop appropriate responses to the significant emerging Indigenous matters and issues arising from the recognition of Indigenous Rights and Title.

Developing a unifying vision:

Enable an inclusive shared identity by breaking down silos of activity and delivery and bridging diverse cultures that establish a defining presence in the world of higher education.

Promoting excellence and accountability:

Support excellence through planning and monitoring processes that lead to high-quality programs and excellence in research.

Addressing student support:

Plan and maintain effective student support with appropriate services and resources.

Promoting wellness:

Support wellness of faculty, staff and students through programs and operational systems and processes.

Maximizing use of resources:

In the face of on-going fiscal constraint, advance educational and institutional goals through innovative and adaptive processes.

Promoting sustainability and well-being:

Align VIU operations with the University's sustainability goals and promote sustainability and well-being within VIU and the region VIU serves.

Imagining Our Future

Introduction

The University Act sets out that Vancouver Island University (VIU) is “a special purpose, teaching university that serves a geographic area or region of the province.” The Act identifies VIU’s programming to be “adult basic education, career, technical, trade and academic programs leading to certificates, diplomas and baccalaureate and masters degrees.” Further, the Act states: “so far as and to the extent that its resources from time to time permit...applied research and scholarly activities to support the programs of the special purpose, teaching university” (10:47.1) are part of its mandate.

Mandate for Vancouver Island University

As a teaching university with a complementary research agenda, VIU provides a comprehensive range of programs – preparatory and vocational through graduate – that enables all learners to pursue rewarding careers and fulfilling lives. VIU is structured to offer a compelling approach to university learning by integrating teaching excellence, internship and co-op work experiences, civic engagement, open access and ladder educational pathways in vibrant scholarly environments intimately connected to the communities VIU serves.





The new universities are meant to balance an enduring commitment to broad-based education for a socially responsible citizenry with the immediate needs of individuals and society for career preparation and transferable skill development to address current and emerging labour market demand. VIU presents a positive future through its dedication to responsive and sustainable university education, knowledge development, innovative community connections and regional focus within a context of responsible bi-cameral governance which supports academic freedom.

While The University Act provides significant direction for academic planning and development, broader questions and issues suggest that our institutional community examine VIU's place within the new universities model in British Columbia. For instance, VIU has developed a strong reputation, as evidenced in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE); our geographic location is unique when compared to most other BC PSE institutions; and our previous history, as a college with a highly regarded trades component, sets us apart from many other institutions. Those factors have framed who we are and who we believe we are. As competition for students increases, available traditional student numbers from VIU's primary catchment area remain relatively flat, grant funding from governments continues to decrease, and global, national, and regional cultural, economic, environmental and social issues continue to frame post secondary education needs and wants, VIU must ensure that the culture of VIU, its sense of place and purpose and its identity are clearly understood, articulated and enhanced.

Response to Our Mandate:

Building upon the preceding mandate, a Purpose Statement has been developed that reflects the University's unique place in British Columbia. In addition, VIU's niche within the post-secondary educational community has been identified. As well, Core Values, a Visionary Goal and associated Objectives guide the work of the university.

Our Purpose:

As a leader in providing high-quality learning, Vancouver Island University supports the well-being of the people of Vancouver Island and coastal British Columbia by promoting a high quality of life for their communities through commitment to student success, community engagement and associated scholarship.

VIU's Niche:

Written in 2013, after consultation across the institution, the following Niche Statement was developed as a reflection of how we see ourselves, who we are and what we do:

Adjacent to the rugged coastline of the Salish Sea and within the traditional territories of the Coast Salish People, Vancouver Island University is proud of its unique history and culture as a teaching university that:

- *welcomes and celebrates learners, from local, regional and international communities, and non-traditional students, as the heart of the institution;*
- *supports and celebrates student success;*
- *provides high quality teaching, affordable high quality programs and multiple ways of knowing;*
- *promotes campus communities offering small class sizes that encourage rewarding faculty/student engagement;*
- *supports Indigenous learners and connections to Indigenous communities;*
- *fosters a global awareness within the campus and external communities; and*
- *promotes community engagement for students and faculty that fosters undergraduate and applied research.*



Core Values

Learning: we support student success, access to education, appropriate development and use of technologies, collaboration and engagement with communities, development of literacies, communication and exchange of ideas across disciplines and locations, exploration and application of new thought and pursuit of lifelong learning.

Respect: we promote respectful engagement and support for internal and external relationships, and are committed to promoting respectful, informed discourse about reciprocity and reconciliation as identified by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action.

Discovery: we promote respectful, ethical, transformative learning and research, scholarship and creative activity by fostering open inquiry that engages learners and supports contributions to knowledge.

Engagement: we value respectful on-going cooperation and collaboration that builds relationships with our partners in education, with communities in our region and with colleagues throughout the world.

Achievement: we believe in the potential of our community of learners and are committed to promoting the excellence and success of our students, faculty, staff and alumni.

Diversity: we value human diversity in all its dimensions and are committed to achieving and ensuring learning and working environments that are equitable, diverse and inclusive.

Celebration: we recognise and actively celebrate the achievements of all our students, faculty, staff, alumni and communities we serve.

Sustainability and Well-being: we foster sustainability in our institution through progressive sustainable operational practices, promotion of environmental awareness, delivery of supporting pedagogy, and provision for wellness in our employees and students.



Visionary Goal:

As a trusted educational partner in the promotion of sustainable cultural, economic, environmental and social well-being, we inspire our students, faculty and staff, our communities and the people of Vancouver Island and coastal British Columbia through our commitment to excellence in learning, student success, respectful discourse, Indigenous ways of knowing and personal well-being.

Objectives:

Building on the 2010 Academic Plan and the extensive 2016 institutional consultation that occurred by way of institutional meetings on the three campuses and on-line surveys, the following Objectives have been confirmed for the *Academic Plan: Promoting and Celebrating Access to Excellence*.

1. Student learning, engagement and success:

1. Promote student leadership, a place that fosters wonder, and the application of intellectual and practical skills to ensure the success of all our students
2. Promote complex thinking, the development of literacies and communication skills and Indigenous ways of knowing in our instructional programs
3. Enhance experiential learning opportunities and involvement, and community-based learning activity
4. Support undergraduate and graduate scholarship, research and creative activity
5. Provide effective student services that support programs, build the campus community and improve the quality of life of students
6. Support life-long learning





2. Academic community:

1. Maintain teaching as our priority in support of student learning and institutional identity
2. Support a breadth of Scholarship, Research, and Creative Activity by encouraging applied research, community-based scholarship, research of discovery, undergraduate and graduate research opportunities
3. Attract and retain faculty and staff with expertise that supports the institutional vision
4. Enhance academic support services in order to empower faculty and enable faculty teaching, professional development and scholarship efforts

3. Indigenous commitment:

1. Support the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
2. Support Indigenous ways of knowing pedagogy in VIU graduate attributes
3. Promote conversations about, and understanding of, Indigenous perspectives and matters, and law and legal orders across the institution and externally to our partner communities
4. Support community-based learning that builds on Indigenous protocols, ways of knowing, and facilitates bridging into VIU
5. Explore and advance ways to provide an Indigenous voice and vote on Senate
6. Foster understanding of Indigenous interests, opportunities, needs, rights, law and legal orders by working with and supporting Indigenous communities and leaders
7. Promote, enhance and sustain collaborative relationships with Indigenous communities in order to develop opportunities for, and promote the success of, Indigenous students

4. Program quality:

1. Maintain our commitment to a viable mix of high-quality academic, applied, developmental, experiential and professional programs
2. Explore, develop and deliver high-quality programs that enhance and promote collaboration and interdisciplinarity

across departments, campuses and VIU's sites, including Oceanside

3. Promote and support a culture of sustainability and programs with operationally sustainable services, quality learning spaces, technologies and facilities
4. Promote a culture of program assessment and continuous improvement
5. Support opportunities to build high quality scholarship, research and creative activity

5. Community engagement:

1. Sustain collaborative relationships, including research opportunities, with business and industry, communities, educational partners, governments and Indigenous communities in order to ensure suitable responses to regional cultural, economic, environmental and social needs
2. Foster awareness of global cultures, issues and conditions, and the role played by VIU in the region nationally and internationally
3. Develop innovative multi-disciplinary programs that address the issues and opportunities facing the region
4. Enhance opportunities as an open access university

6. Institutional effectiveness:

1. Ensure a culture of accountability, respect, safety, transparency and well-being
2. Continue to enhance and celebrate the value and contributions of VIU in our communities
3. Provide visionary administrative leadership that supports a value based institution
4. Support faculty, staff and student involvement in University leadership and governance as required by a bi-cameral governance structure
5. Build relationships with local, national, and international organizations, alumni, educational partners and friends who contribute to the reputation and success of the University



Into Action: 2016 and Beyond

This section identifies 35 recommendations that are classified as Action Items. These Action Items will provide the basis for institutional priorities and resourcing. The Provost is tasked with monitoring the implementation of the Action Items and reporting back to Senate and the institution on the status of the Action Items.

1. Student Learning, Engagement and Success

The recommendations below are intended to support the experience of students, affirm the principles underlying the institution, and ensure that appropriate services are provided to support both the student community and the interface between academic and student communities.

1. Launch an initiative to develop a comprehensive plan to implement Senate adopted Graduate Attributes.
 - As noted in the work leading up to the development of the Graduate Attributes, there is a need to ensure that our students graduate with the breadth and depth of skills and learning required to support their success during their time at VIU and after graduation.
 - Graduate Attributes will need to be implemented and measurable while recognising departments will explore and identify how their own pedagogy will inform specific attribute expectations.
 - An overall institutional endorsed Graduate Attributes Plan will help frame and guide those conversations and expectations.

Action: *Faculty Councils will explore this issue and report back to Senate by December 2017.*
2. Examine and identify the complexities inherent in supporting international student success.
 - International students provide a rich and diverse cultural experience for all members of the VIU community and their particular needs and requirements should be explored in detail so faculty and staff who assist them are well equipped to provide appropriate supports.
 - Given that English is not always the first language for international students and the Canadian cultural experience may be unfamiliar to them, in-class supports need special consideration to assist not only the International students but also the instructors so that all students experience a rich and rewarding education.

- As supporting all students' success is core to VIU's purpose, it will be important to explore International student required supports outside the classroom.
- Action:** *Faculty Councils are requested to explore the complexity of International Student success and report back to Provost Council by March 2018.*
3. Continue to explore and develop ways and means of enhancing education access for all.
 - As an open access institution, VIU embraces students from a diversity of backgrounds that may require enhanced supports.
 - VIU has pioneered several programs that support student access and are indicative of how VIU can identify and implement unique responses to unique needs.
 - A broader, strategic review to identify an array of additional tools and supports that will enhance access opportunities is needed to guide future decision-making.

Action: *A collaborative committee composed of Student Affairs and University Relations is requested to explore this subject and report back to the President with recommendations by spring 2018.*
 4. Engage in continuous dialogue with Indigenous Peoples to enhance the opportunities for student learning that include the education recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action.
 - While there is considerable discussion across Canada about appropriate mechanisms and processes to advance understanding about Indigenous pedagogical content, VIU needs to explore and develop its own responses framed by its geographic and Indigenous cultural context.
 - It is apparent that respectful conversations need to occur before such content change can be implemented: simply there is much to consider, understand and acknowledge.
 - Time is required to get this right, including required consultation time with Indigenous communities, Elders, faculty, staff and students.
 - This Action Item should be cross-referenced with Action Item #14.

Action: *The Office of Aboriginal Education is requested to continue to enhance the dialogues that foster on-going recommendations for action through relationships with Indigenous communities.*
 5. Develop a robust and innovative student scholarship, research and creative activity environment that will facilitate student success.
 - Student scholarship, research and creative activity are critical components of learning.
 - Such activity is multi-layered and often interdisciplinary in nature.
 - Frequently, external partners are critical to the success of such work.
 - A determination of potential opportunities, infrastructure supports and partnerships is required to explore this topic and identify requirements for successful implementation.
 - This Action Item should be cross-referenced with Action Item #12.

Action: *The Associate Vice-President Scholarship, Research and Creative Activity is tasked with implementing the Scholarship, Research and Creative Activity Plan.*

6. Complete a Student Services Plan for Student Affairs.
 - Future student services must be scaled and organised to provide optimal support for the scope of student services activity identified in the Academic Plan.
 - A strategic review of existing and future services is required.
 - The review should include representation from student service providers, students, faculty and administrative staff.

Action: *The Associate Vice-President, Student Affairs is requested to complete a Student Services Plan with resourcing requirements by January 2018.*
7. Continue to welcome and support students from around the world and enhance the diversity of their experience.
 - There are emerging new ways to welcome international students, assist them in their transition to VIU and Canadian society, and celebrate their contributions to the University that require consideration across the institution.
 - While the Faculty of International Education provides significant supports for international students, many students are away from home for the first time and need appropriate housing, counselling and daily living advice that may not be readily available or identified in the absence of a broad review of emerging best practice.
 - The opportunity to celebrate the contributions to campus life provided by international students should be further explored.
 - This work should inform Action #2.

Action: *The Dean of International Education, through the International Education Advisory Committee, is requested to lead an institutional conversation that identifies actions and programs to enhance the dynamic International Student experience*
8. Explore enhanced ways and means of supporting student recruitment and retention and success.
 - As student recruitment will continue to be challenging due to a number of documented factors, increased efforts will be needed to coordinate institutional assets that enhance recruitment.
 - An institutional focus upon retention reinforces the importance of continuing efforts to retain students who have chosen VIU as their post-secondary institution.
 - By increasing student retention across all programs, student success will improve, overall student numbers will increase and classrooms will be used more efficiently.

Action: *Beginning spring 2017, every two years the institution will complete and implement a Student Recruitment and Retention Plan that identifies resources, investments and outcomes.*

2. Academic Community

The recommendations outlined below are intended to support the character, achievements and strengths of our various teaching communities, affirm the principles underlying the academic community, and ensure that appropriate services are aligned to support academic activities.

9. Explore and promote a transition in faculty workloads to support faculty well-being, scholarship and institutional service.
 - Due to the strength of the ‘access to excellence’ approach of VIU and associated increasing individual student needs, faculty workloads should be assessed.
 - There exists inequity in workload assignments amongst some faculty and between Faculties.
 - There is a need to explore the potential to align all course credits into a common system.
 - There will be a need to provide a transition of workloads into other areas that support student success, institutional goals, and community engagement and scholarly activity.

Action: *The Provost will lead a discussion that explores ways and means of addressing workloads and completing a report of findings by September 2017.*
10. Continue to explore ways and means of encouraging and supporting inter-campus collaboration.
 - VIU has transitioned from a university with distinct regional campuses to an institution with three aligned campuses that are delivering academic programming to a variety of students, communities and stakeholders.
 - There is an opportunity to make better use of technology and the expertise of faculty within the three campuses to share course content, delivery and outcomes.
 - There are structural challenges to the seamless delivery of inter-campus courses that will need remedy.

Action: *The Associate Vice-President Academic will prepare recommendations, including preliminary resource and investment requirements, to the Provost for the enhancement of inter-campus collaboration by December 2017.*
11. Continue to evolve institutional academic support units, such as the Centre for Innovation and Excellence in Learning and the Writing Centre, by linking them more directly to the work of Senate.
 - The Centre for Innovation and Excellence in Learning (CIEL) and the Writing Centre have provided significant resources for faculty and students to enhance delivery of teaching, learning and associated supports.
 - Although the CIEL and the Writing Centre report to the Provost, there is a need to link their activity with the academic responsibility of Senate.
 - Develop a Senate-based assessment tool for CIEL and the Writing Centre.

Action: *The Office of the Provost will work with Planning and Priorities Committee of Senate to initiate an assessment of institutional academic units that support learning at VIU and report back to Senate, by Fall 2018. That work will examine how CIEL and the Writing Centre can be more integrated into the mandate of Senate and Senate can more directly comment on the work of CIEL and the Writing Centre.*

12. Develop and approve an Institutional Scholarship, Research and Creative Activity Plan.
 - It is essential that an Institutional Scholarship, Research and Creative Activity Plan be completed as soon as possible.
 - This Action Item should be cross-referenced with Action Item #5.

Action: *The Office of the Provost will work with the Scholarship, Research and Creative Activity Plan Advisory Committee to prepare this Integrated Plan for Senate consideration by spring 2017.*

13. Identify supports for enhancement of faculty scholarship, research and creative activity and service.
 - VIU faculty have continued to develop a breadth of scholarship activity.
 - With the expected adoption of the Institutional Scholarship, Research and Creative Activity Plan, systems and processes to support faculty scholarly activity will be required.

Action: *The Deans through their Faculties will identify specific, appropriate and meaningful supports that enable faculty scholarly activity.*

3. Indigenous Commitment

The recommendations outlined below are intended to provide direction and engagement for the VIU community to address the emerging dialogue related to Indigenous Rights and Title, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

14. Explore and promote Indigenous content, considerations, cultural understanding, perspectives, traditional knowledge, and ways of knowing into and across the Institution, including curriculum development.
 - VIU has long been an advocate for Indigenous matters.
 - The national debates and the implications of the United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous People and Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action require that VIU develop a concerted and carefully thought-out action plan.
 - The development of such an action plan requires new ways of considering program delivery and institutional responses.
 - To inform broad institutional dialogue, Faculty Councils need to take leadership in these conversations and support departments in the delivery of content.

- Action Item #4 should be completed in concert with this Action Item #14.
Action: *Faculty Councils will explore and develop strategies internal to their academic departments and disciplines that enhance the institutional commitments and actions to this important regional, provincial and national dialogue. Deans will report the results of that work to Planning and Priorities Committee of Senate on an annual basis.*
15. Recognise the United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous People and Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action in Education as foundational documents for informing Indigenous matters at VIU.
- These two documents are foundational precedent setting mandates and will need to inform the activities of VIU.
 - A rich, deep conversation across the Institution and region will need to be held to explore these matters.
 - Action Item #17 should be linked to this work.
Action: *VIU will explore the ways and means of addressing the implications of the United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous People and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action upon the operation of VIU.*
16. Continue to engage in local, regional, national and international dialogues related to promotion of Indigenous programming and content in governance, curriculum and community outreach.
- By partnering with others, such as the Shqwi qwal for Indigenous Dialogue, CBC Ideas and VIU's Indigenous Peoples Speakers Series, and the Fulbright Canada Jarislowsky Visiting Research Chair in Aboriginal Studies, VIU has been engaged in raising the profile of Indigenous matters within local, regional, provincial, national and international contexts.
 - To facilitate continued activity in this area, it will be critical to expand local, regional, national and international partnership opportunities that develop new funding sources to support activity development and community outreach.
Action: *Led by University Relations, VIU will develop relationships and explore opportunities to access funding and other resources.*
17. Provide support in matters related to the advancement of Indigenous rights, title and reconciliation.
- This will be an on-going requirement that will evolve over time, including partnerships and concerted effort to build appropriate internal institutional responses to emerging needs.
 - Action Item #15 should identify specific recommendations to advance this Action Item.
Action: *VIU will continue to work with Indigenous communities to understand and support their efforts in attaining their on-going efforts to achieve reconciliation.*

18. Explore structural opportunities to enhance Indigenous engagement within the Institution.
- Provincial legislation defines institutional body composition.
 - Exploring all options for Indigenous participation in governance bodies at VIU, including Faculty Councils, Senate, and the Board of Governors will require careful thought.
- Action:** *The University Secretariat will advise Faculty Councils, Senate and the Board of Governors on the options available.*
19. Build upon the Senate approved Aboriginal Education Plan and re-evaluate its content and recommendations as needed.
- The Aboriginal Education Plan was adopted by Senate in early 2016.
 - It provides the current basis for enhancing Aboriginal content within the Institution.
 - Since the Aboriginal Education Plan was completed prior to the issuance of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action, it will require on-going monitoring and reporting to ensure it remains relevant and timely.
- Action:** *Beginning in January 2017, the Office of Aboriginal Education is requested to provide yearly reports to the Planning and Priorities Committee of Senate on the implementation of the Aboriginal Education Plan.*

4. Program Quality

The recommendations outlined below are intended to identify the mix, expectations and priorities, and provide support for synergistic collaboration.

20. Maintain a viable mix of high-quality programs.
- The overall mix of programs should be operationally sustainable.
 - There should be a clear rationale for the way programs are included or excluded based on the outcomes of the cyclic Summative Program Assessment, Program Reviews and emerging new needs, such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.
 - There should be a general understanding of how changes in a program impact the performance of other programs.
 - There needs to be recognition that government, through the Degree Quality Assessment Board, is interested in the justification of new programs.
- Action:** *The Senate Standing Committee on Planning and Priorities will continue to guide and monitor the delivery of a sustainable mix of high-quality programs.*
21. Support and encourage collaboration across departments and campuses, including interdisciplinarity.
- The Cowichan, Powell River and Nanaimo campuses provide an opportunity to share resources and course content so that students in all three locations benefit from that collaboration, especially as technology supports enhanced content sharing.

- Students are coming to expect more opportunities for interdisciplinary activity.
- Many faculty members and several Faculties, such as Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences, are developing interdisciplinary offerings.

Action: *The Office of the Provost is requested to create a Provost Council Task Force to explore ways and means of enhancing inter-campus and inter-departmental collaboration and interdisciplinary activity, and to report to Senate on findings by October 2018.*

22. Explore and support the development and implementation of intercultural pedagogy.

- With a large number of International students and Indigenous students, VIU is well-positioned to offer intercultural experiences within its programming.
- There is growing evidence of intercultural experiences at other post-secondary institutions that could inform VIU.
- Such activity needs to be carefully explored for implications to course development, delivery and associated outcomes, as well as implications on faculty member workloads.

Action: *Working with Faculties, the Dean of International Education and Director of the Office of Aboriginal Education are requested to explore this topic, develop a process for dialogue to support specific actions that enhance intercultural collaboration on campus and develop a 'White Paper' for distribution to the campus community by the end of 2017.*

23. Promote dynamic and contemporary cross-discipline themes and ecosystems of creativity and innovation, including the integration of trades and degree program offerings.

- VIU recognises both its commitment to free inquiry and the need to address issues important to society and the region as framed by VIU's Visionary Goal.
- Some progress has been made in relation to enhanced trades and degree program collaboration.
- While this is an on-going action across VIU, there is a need to explore and update appropriate cross-disciplinary themes and areas of innovation and creativity so that Faculties and Departments are able to respond to Institutional ambitions.

Action: *The Senate Standing Committee on Planning and Priorities is requested to explore this Action Item and report back to Senate by spring 2018.*

5. Community Engagement

The recommendations outlined below are intended to build institutional capacity and effective relationships with local communities and with regional, national and international education providers.

24. Enhance the participation of Indigenous communities in all aspects of the University, including in-community program delivery.
- The development of supportive ‘transition’ educational opportunities will be important to encourage and assist Indigenous learners as they enter university programming.
 - Currently Hwulmuxw Mustimuxw Siiem provides a direct advisory link between the Institution and Indigenous communities.
 - Are there other mechanisms that VIU should explore to connect with Indigenous communities in meaningful ways?

Action: *This is the on-going work of the Office of Aboriginal Education.*

25. Support faculty classroom and applied research opportunities that provide benefit for communities, faculty and students.
- There are a large number of experiential learning opportunities for students across VIU.
 - As the Centre for Experiential Learning continues to build a variety of work integrated learning opportunities, many additional classroom and applied research experiences will take place.
 - Given the breadth of work in this area, it will be critical that there is an overall integrated approach that assists faculty and students to enhance linkages with the communities served by VIU.

Action: *The Centre for Experiential Learning will enhance this activity in association with communities, faculty and students, and report annually to the Provost on the operational plan established in 2017.*

26. Recognize and celebrate faculty, staff and student contributions to community well-being, development and interaction.
- Celebration is a central value of VIU that should inform how we recognise our people and activities.
 - The new ‘People Strategy’ should identify a new framework for the celebration of all employees.

Action: *By May 2017, the Provost, and the Vice-President Administration will continue to identify opportunities to celebrate contributions of people who work, study and serve at VIU.*

27. Respect the geospecific context and needs of each campus and site (Oceanside: Centre for Healthy Aging, Deep Bay Marine Field Station and Milner Gardens; and Paine Centre).

- While opportunity exists to increase collaboration across campuses and sites, there is recognition that each campus and site has its own cultural, economic, environmental, political and social makeup that creates a unique sense of place and frequently unique needs.
- In combination, campuses and sites can provide a unique depth and strength for VIU that can provide unique programming opportunities.

Action: *Each campus and site is encouraged to identify and develop geospecific responses, by way of updated plans of action, to their unique situation as informed by this Academic Plan and the Campus Master Plan.*

28. Recognise, encourage and support programs relevant to our region with a special focus upon coastal and island issues.

- There is a need to recognise the unique geographic location of VIU on the coast of British Columbia as that informs program development opportunities.
- VIU is a portal for highly qualified individuals becoming part of a talented regional workforce that is a high valued human resource that contributes to the region.
- VIU is positioned to engage in relevant research that has regional importance.
- VIU's niche conversations continue to inform the institution's relationship with, and place in, the region.

Action: *The Senate Standing Committee on Planning and Priorities is requested to continue to identify specific coastal and island themes that should help guide new program development while continuing to evaluate, monitor, identify and promote appropriate programs that are relevant to our region.*

29. Ensure robust communications and relationship building with partners in the regions that inform, promote and celebrate VIU's activities and partner engagement.

- There are many opportunities to communicate with our regional partners, many of which relate to faculty and student engagement in the region.
- Educational partners in the region are essential to VIU's institutional strength.
- Fund raising from external sources is essential to the fiscal health of the institution.
- As the work of the Centre for Experiential Learning continues to expand and more faculty and students engage in the region, a concerted plan to communicate that work will be required.
- Communication that promotes the institution, links to potential funders and demonstrates the value of the institution to the region and the province will be essential.

Action: *The Office of University Relations will develop strong communication plans and fund raising initiatives that highlight institutional strengths.*

6. Institutional Effectiveness

The recommendations outlined below are intended to empower institutional activities with timely and effective support building on the transparent and accountable administrative infrastructure of policies, procedures, Integrated Planning, organizational structure and services.

30. Recognise diversity-matters across the Institution.

- VIU celebrates its diversity and recognizes that diversity of its people is a strength.
- While there exists supports for some diversity activity, more can be done.

Action: *The Associate Vice-President of the Office of Human Resources is requested to complete the development of a 'People Plan' that includes specific initiatives that celebrate the diversity of the workforce.*

31. Continue to promote the long-term implementation of the Integrated Planning Process and associated Plans, including the Campus Master Plan and Update as needed.

- The Integrated Planning Process guides our work at VIU.
- The Integrated Planning activity needs to be continually reinvigorated and supported.

Action: *The Senior Management Group will continue to be guided by and promote the currency of the Integrated Plans.*

32. Continue to build institutional capacity and institutional advancement through institution-wide initiatives, such as technology renewal, the provision of high quality learning environments and systematic review of organizational structures.

- The health and well-being of the Institution rely on the capacity, health and resilience of institutional structures, systems and investments.
- As government grants decrease, there will need to be innovative ways to support investments and capacity-building across the Institution.

Action: *The Associate Vice-President of University Relations, the Chief Financial Officer and the Provost will continue to work closely together to explore, identify and recommend required investments across VIU to continue to support the dynamic evolution of VIU.*

33. Promote thrive-ability, wellness and associated holistic approaches to supporting faculty, staff and student well-being.

- As change continues to create need for adaptable solutions and responses to emerging needs, faculty, staff and students are sometimes challenged to also adapt and change to meet new requirements and processes and systems.
- Such change can be disruptive to individuals.
- As a value-based institution, VIU continues to believe that it is essential to invest in the well-being of its people.

- More and more across many post-secondary institutions conversations are being held and policies developed to address change, stress, mental and physical well-being and the ability to thrive in environments that are constantly adapting and changing.
- A concerted effort is required to explore the meaning, implications and responses to those emerging needs and issues.

Action: *The Institution will commit to promote and support wellness as articulated by acknowledging the Nuu-chah-nulth principle of Hishook is Tsawalk (everything is one, and all is connected) and as defined by the Well-being Framework.*

34. Continue to support high-quality professional development for faculty and staff.

- As a value-based institution, VIU continues to believe it is essential to invest in the professional development of its faculty and staff.
- There are a variety of supports that can be provided and it will be important to identify all new and existing supports and how they can be promoted and accessed.

Action: *The Chief Financial Officer and the Provost are requested to continue to work with employee labour relations groups and with our excluded staff to explore, identify and make available high-quality professional development for all our employees.*

35. Create accessible spaces and places that encourage interaction between and amongst faculty, staff and students and members of communities we serve.

- Students and faculty raised this need across many institutional conversations.
- While VIU has many older buildings that do not provide suitable, adaptable spaces for informal meetings and commons activity, there is an opportunity to identify such spaces in new buildings and to repurpose some spaces in existing buildings as they undergo change.

Action: *In the Campus Plan Update, led by the Associate Vice-President, Facilities and Ancillary Services, recommendations will be made that examine and identify commons spaces and interaction spaces across the Institution.*



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