

UBC

**STUDENT
STRATEGIC
PLAN**

2021-2026



2021



2026

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With gratitude we respectfully acknowledge that the UBC Vancouver-Point Grey academic campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), and UBC operations in Vancouver more generally are also on the territories of the Sk_wx_wú7mesh (Squamish) and sə'ilwətaʔɬ (Tsleil-Waututh). We respectfully acknowledge that the UBC Okanagan academic campus is situated on the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of the Syilx Okanagan Nation.

We acknowledge that UBC's activities take place on Indigenous lands throughout British Columbia and beyond.



Our Focus on Students

All institutions work hard to serve their students as effectively as possible, but few have taken the step of articulating and implementing a university-wide strategic plan centred around students.

The Student Strategic Plan represents multiple firsts at the University of British Columbia (UBC). Students are at the centre of all that we do at the university, and this is the first plan developed expressly to connect, amplify, and celebrate those activities. The Student Strategic Plan is one of the first initiatives of this magnitude driven through a coordinated cross-campus process, providing a model for collaboration in support of the student experience and other priorities at UBC. Moreover, the timing of the plan's introduction coincides with a point in history that itself is a first: the convergence of a global public health pandemic, collective social awakening to systemic racism and the effects of colonization, and the intensifying climate emergency.

At this unique juncture in UBC's history, the Student Strategic Plan will be critical to leading, and supporting, work that is integral to the academic mission and public mandate of the university.

UBC has many strengths in our service to students, but we recognize that there are areas where we can, and need to, improve. We take accountability for the goals and strategies outlined in this plan and will work hard to address any shortcomings. All faculty and staff have a role to play in these efforts: supporting our students and bringing the Student Strategic Plan to life.

Students can be confident that the plan has the full commitment of the leaders of the university. We are honoured that our students have chosen UBC, and we will do our best to continue to earn the trust that they have placed in us.

Tuum est.



Santa J. Ono
President and
Vice-Chancellor



Lesley Cormack
Deputy Vice-Chancellor
and Principal, UBC
Okanagan

Introducing Your UBC: Student Strategic Plan

We are thrilled to share UBC's Student Strategic Plan. The development of this plan is a significant step, bringing an integrated student focus to other plans and initiatives across the university and supporting the consistent application of the student lens when decisions are made at UBC.

A result of extensive engagement with students, faculty, and staff from late 2019 to early 2021, the plan outlines our commitments to all students at UBC. We are extremely grateful for the contributions and counsel from those who were involved in this important process. More than 65,000 students attend the university, from more than 150 countries around the world. No matter which campus they study at, all are UBC students, and one of our main goals is to foster a sense of connection across our faculties, campuses, and learning sites around the province.

We aspire to a future in which students can access all that the university has to offer, grow as individuals, and build the capacity to make a difference in the world around them. We know that students have options and that their expectations of UBC are high. The Student Strategic Plan creates a framework through which we can understand and strive to exceed those expectations.

The plan represents our shared purpose and priorities in fostering an outstanding student experience grounded in learning, development, and fun: one that prepares students to lead in work and life beyond university. It inspires and guides our collective efforts over the next five years to help our students achieve these outcomes. We are excited to work with our students and campus partners in fulfilling our ambition of ensuring that every student at UBC can engage and thrive in all aspects of their lives at university and beyond.



Ainsley Carry
Vice-President,
Students



Dale Mullings
Associate Vice-
President, Students,
UBC Okanagan

How
**WE GOT
HERE**



How We Got Here

The Student Strategic Plan builds upon our relative advantages as a university, while also addressing the challenges our students face. We know that several of these elements are important and motivating to all our students. We also know that some of the challenges are unique to specific campuses or student populations, and addressing these issues and inequities is a priority. The plan is structured around the areas of collective interest, recognizing that our approach to implementation will necessarily be more targeted to meet specific needs across the university.




The Student Strategic Plan reinforces—and is reinforced—by the important work being done throughout the university to provide exceptional student experiences, both within and outside of the classroom. It does not seek to duplicate this work, but instead to support all our student-focused initiatives, from those in academic units to UBC-wide priorities. The plan champions the student perspective in a collaborative, coordinated way across the Vancouver and Okanagan campuses.

The Student Strategic Plan is being launched at an extraordinary time. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant effect on us all. In addition to an abrupt shift to remote learning, our students have had to navigate online student services, travel restrictions and time zone differences, and reduced campus and community connections. Many are also grappling with acute personal uncertainty and

difficulties. Technology has become even more pervasive, both adding value as a powerful tool for connection and increasing the potential for irresponsible use. This plan will help guide the university in its responses to these various complexities and build on the innovations that, driven by necessity, have made a positive difference for students and our work. While we initiated the process of developing the Student Strategic Plan well before the outset of the pandemic, its importance has only been heightened by the crisis.

The plan was informed and shaped by student input, and we know that the needs and priorities of students will change. Our intent is that this is a “living plan”. Even as we begin our work to advance its ambitions, we will continue to develop and refine the Student Strategic Plan through collaboration with, and across, the UBC community.



The plan shines a spotlight on the student experience at a time when wellness, inclusion, and connection are more important than ever, and it seeks explicitly to confront issues of racism, colonialism, and inequity embedded in the fabric of our society that directly impact our students.

The **STUDENT STRATEGIC PLAN** *in* **OUTLINE**



The Student Strategic Plan in Outline

This document introduces and describes the elements of the UBC Student Strategic Plan. Reflecting the critical themes emerging from our planning process, the foundational components are the student proposition, student mission, and student commitments.

STUDENT PROPOSITION

Living and learning for a better world

STUDENT MISSION

Working together to advance and foster an equitable environment that supports holistic personal growth, inspires purposeful contribution, and removes barriers to full participation

STUDENT COMMITMENTS

Transformative learning reinforced through local and global engagement
Wellbeing for people, places, and our planet
Connections within and across university campuses and communities

The plan also articulates a set of **student outcomes** that represent our hopes for students at UBC. These — together with the proposition, mission, and commitments — create the framework for the student strategies that will guide our work over the next five years.

The university's values of excellence, respect, integrity, academic freedom, and accountability inform and anchor the Student Strategic Plan.

More broadly, the plan aligns with UBC's institutional focus on its people, on education and research, and on societal impact. In many ways, the Student Strategic Plan is a student-centric representation of the university's strategic plan: *Shaping UBC's Next Century*.



Why **UBC?**



Why UBC?

As a public institution, we are proud to play a pivotal role in shaping and participating in the development of the people, society, and economic growth of British Columbia. At the same time, UBC is a globally renowned university, contributing world-leading research, providing distinctive excellence in teaching and learning, attracting outstanding people domestically and internationally, and collaborating with pre-eminent universities and organizations around the world.

Students choose UBC for many different reasons, but the ones that are consistently at the top of the results from our surveys and discussions are academic excellence, campus and community life, and inspiring locations. Students also tell us they are drawn by the university's commitment to social and climate innovation, as well as the diversity of the student body and breadth of opportunities.

Reflected in these student perspectives is the university's vision of inspiring people, ideas, and actions for a better world. In his introduction to *Shaping UBC's Next Century*, President Santa Ono comments that "(t)his is our moment to harness the energies and strengths of an extraordinary institution to affect sustainable and positive change, both locally and globally." This extends the charge to UBC students that is encapsulated in the university's motto, Tuum Est: It is Yours. In part, the message to students is that it is up to them to define their UBC experience and that they have a responsibility to protect and improve our world. It is an invitation for students to develop their purpose. Through our conversations with students, we have come to understand that they define their experience through a contemporary version of UBC's motto, which we have captured in our **student proposition**:

Living and learning for a better world

As an institution, it is our responsibility to address the discrimination and other injustices that make doing so difficult for some of our students, and to make all students see themselves able to "live and learn for a better world". This is not something that any one part of the university can achieve on its own.

The **student mission** is the shared responsibility of the faculty, staff, and university leaders who serve our students:

Working together to advance and foster an equitable environment that supports holistic personal growth, inspires purposeful contribution, and removes barriers to full participation



Some of the challenges that students face are ones through which they learn. But it is our hope that the joys of discovery, friendship, and place are what truly characterize their time at UBC. To develop as people, scholars, and global citizens, students need to be able to be themselves, access what the university has to offer, and engage in ways that help them fulfil their personal aspirations. It is our mission to support them through their journeys.

What **STUDENTS** **CAN EXPECT** *at* **UBC**



What Students can Expect at UBC

In addition to our vision and relative advantages as a university, students are motivated by UBC's values. These are the enduring principles that guide our decisions and underpin all that we do. They signal to students how they will be treated, and how the university expects them to act and interact as members of the UBC community.



The values are as follows, with these definitions adapted by the university from the Oxford Dictionary:

EXCELLENCE

A profound and aspirational value: the quality of striving to be, and being, outstanding

INTEGRITY

A moral value: the quality of being honest, ethical, and truthful

RESPECT

An essential and learned value: regard felt or shown towards different people, ideas, and actions

ACADEMIC FREEDOM


A unique value of the academy: a scholar's freedom to express ideas through respectful discourse and the pursuit of open discussion, without risk of censure

ACCOUNTABILITY

A personal and public value: being responsible for our conduct and actions and delivering upon our respective and reciprocal commitments

These tenets pervade the UBC Student Strategic Plan. We seek to cultivate a student environment that inspires and fosters excellence. We aspire to uphold integrity and respect in all student interactions. We embrace the diverse views of our students and work to create opportunities and forums for them to share and explore their perspectives as citizens of the world. Perhaps above all, we hold ourselves accountable to our students – and we hold them accountable as partners in their education and experience.



The background features a large, dark blue circle in the center, surrounded by abstract shapes in orange and cyan. A smaller dark blue circle is positioned in the upper right corner.

... above all, we hold ourselves accountable to our students - and we hold them accountable as partners in their education and experience.

Our **COMMITMENTS** *to* **STUDENTS**



Our Commitments to Students

There are three areas where we must focus our work if we are to advance the student proposition and mission. They represent what matters most to students at UBC: education, personal and socio-ecological health, and community. They reflect the changing and challenging world in which we live today. They align with the myriad student-centred activities taking place across our campuses and within and across faculties, schools, and departments. Moreover, each has relevance to students during their time at UBC, as well as in helping prepare them for work and life after university.



Through the Student Strategic Plan, we will channel and connect our collective efforts to build a university that consistently delivers upon these **student commitments**. They articulate our shared vision for how all students—in five years' time—will both understand and experience UBC.

TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING REINFORCED THROUGH LOCAL AND GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

The breadth of opportunities and diversity of students at UBC foster discovery and development. Course-based, work-integrated, and community-engaged learning, both local and global, provide students with the tools and experiences to relate knowledge to real-life contexts. They build resiliency and skills to navigate their futures and contribute to evolving industries and societies in a more connected world.

WELLBEING FOR PEOPLE, PLACES, AND OUR PLANET

UBC promotes social justice and wellbeing by infusing inclusion, health, and sustainability into all aspects of the university experience. Students feel supported in their quest for personal growth, building the capacity to care for themselves and one another, their communities, and our world. They have the conviction and understanding to thrive as healthy global citizens and to serve as agents of change.

CONNECTIONS WITHIN AND ACROSS CAMPUSES AND COMMUNITIES

UBC is home to a diverse set of inclusive and inter-connected communities and activities. From orientation to graduation and beyond, students are part of many academic and social cohorts through which they develop perspective, competences, and a sense of belonging. They have the capacity to build significant relationships and to celebrate and learn from the differences that enrich our world.

Our **HOPES** *for* **STUDENTS**



Our Hopes for Students

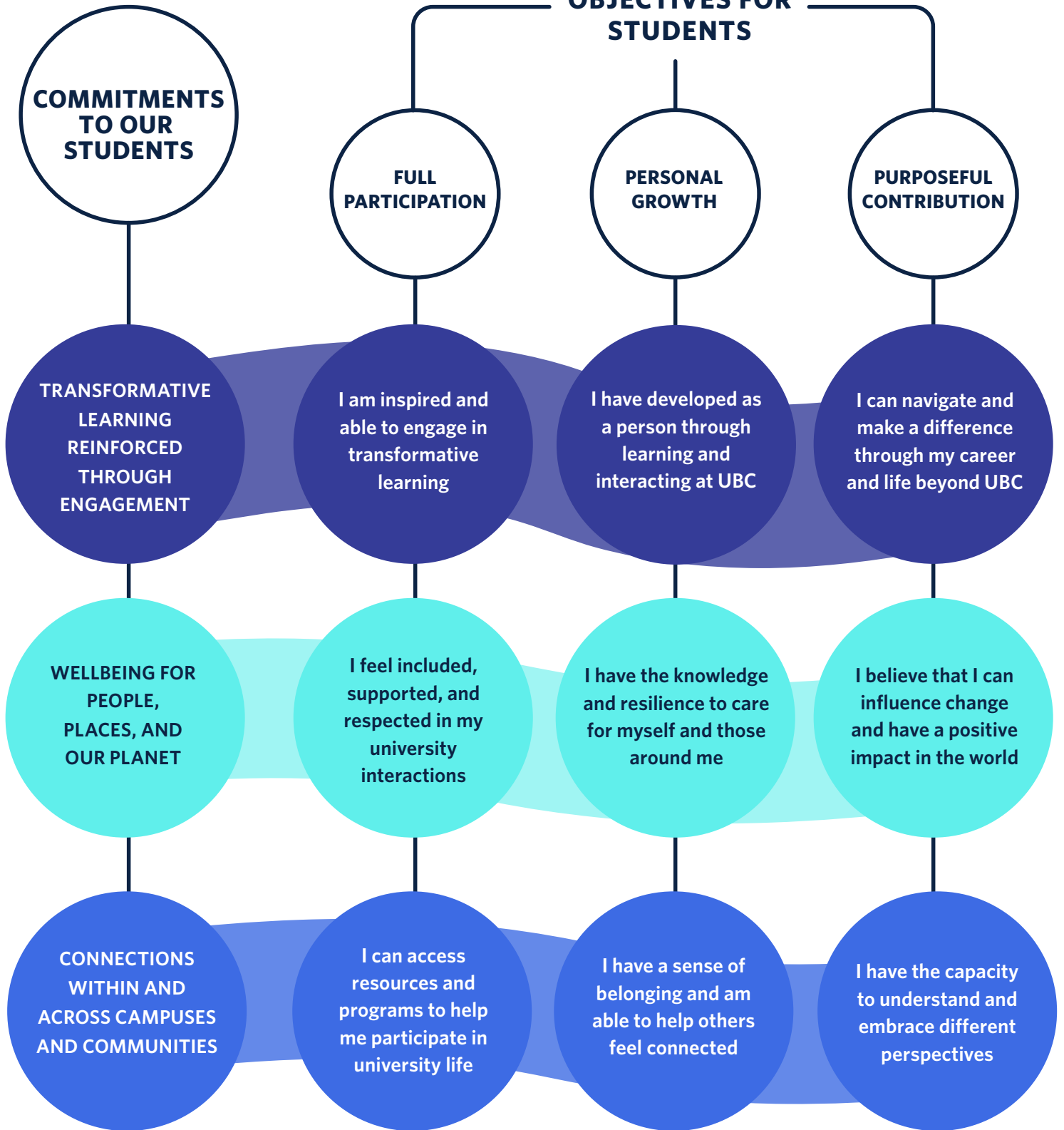
Our overarching goal in the Student Strategic Plan is to establish an environment in which students at UBC can access all that UBC has to offer, develop in personally meaningful ways, and build competencies that enable them to improve the world. These **objectives for students** are highlighted in the student mission: full participation, personal growth, and purposeful contribution. Each is critical, and they are interdependent.

Combining these objectives with the student commitments, we have articulated nine **student outcomes** that will serve as a dashboard for the university in assessing our progress in the Student Strategic Plan. The extent to which UBC students generally believe that their experience is consistent with these desired outcomes will reveal how far we have come.

We will track progress against these outcomes over time and by student population. This will help us identify where students are feeling positive, where there are concerns, and if these sentiments are changing over time. In our ongoing engagement with students and others across the university, we will do our best to understand and find ways to address gaps, as well as learn from and celebrate successes.



OBJECTIVES FOR STUDENTS



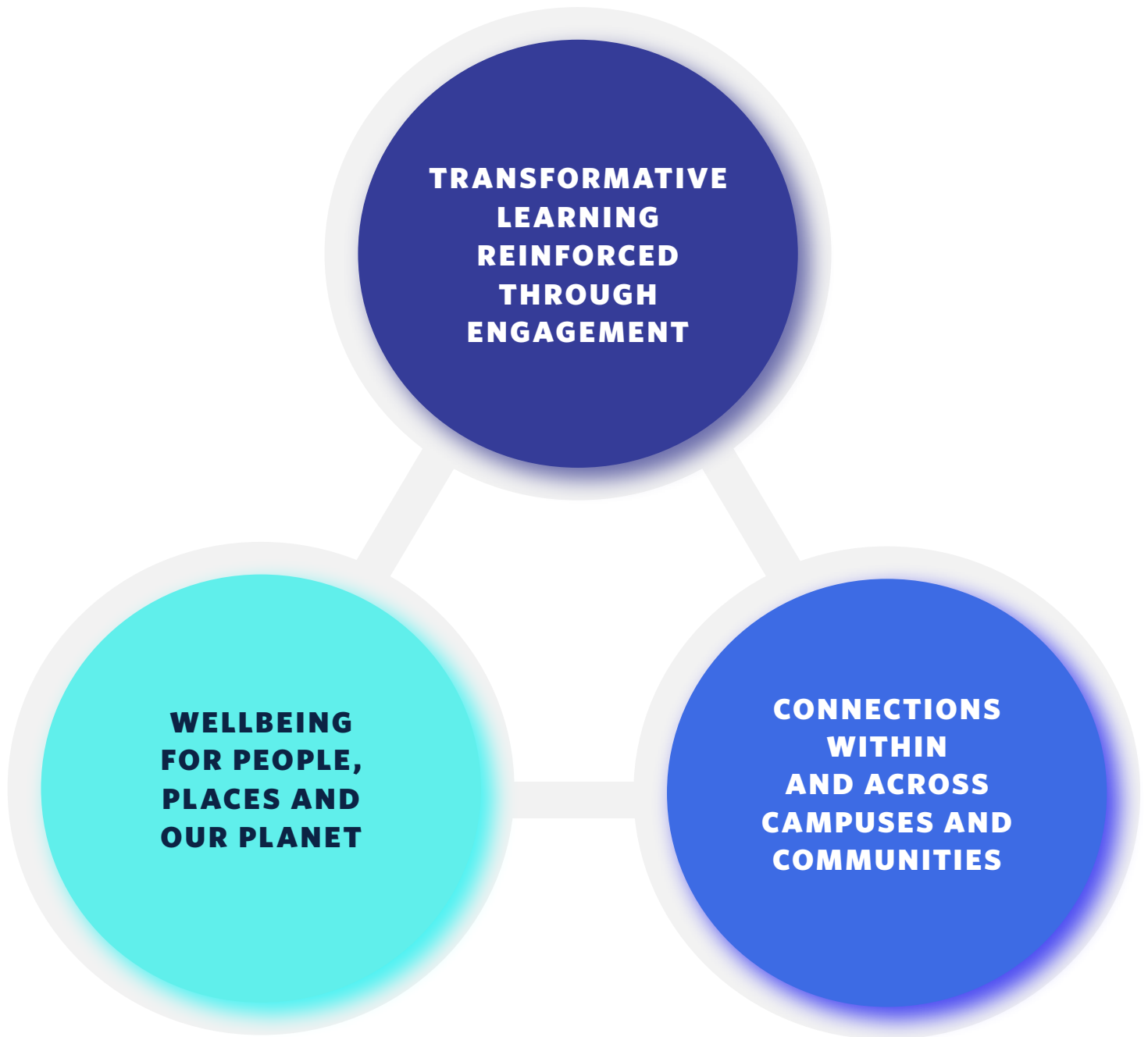
WORKING *for* STUDENTS



Working for Students

For students to realize the outcomes identified in the previous section, the university must provide the environment required for them to do so. By connecting the dimensions of desired outcomes, existing UBC efforts, and student needs, we determined and defined the university-wide student strategies that will guide our work. This holistic approach is something we believe sets UBC apart.

**OUR STUDENT COMMITMENTS
ARE ALL INTERCONNECTED AND
TOGETHER THEY UNDERPIN A
UBC STUDENT'S EDUCATION**



TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING REINFORCED THROUGH LOCAL AND GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

- **Academic delivery and program renewal.** Our faculty deliver courses and programs that equip students with disciplinary expertise and interdisciplinary perspective, and regularly update what and how they teach to reflect the changing needs of learners and society.
- **Student advising and career preparation.** We provide coordinated and personalized programming and support for students in navigating academic and career pathways, helping them make the most of their time at university and build the skills for agility and success beyond UBC.
- **Local and global experiential learning.** We place “learning-by-doing” at the core of the educational model, especially through student research, giving students varied opportunities to reflect and reason based on real events — a process we know enriches and deepens learning.

WELLBEING FOR PEOPLE, PLACES, AND OUR PLANET

- **Advancement of social justice through anti-racism and sustainability.** We strive to examine and remove systemic barriers to inclusion and engagement, promote equity, and advance climate action with and for students, reinforcing UBC’s commitment to leadership in these key areas.
- **Student health and wellbeing.** We promote health and wellbeing for students, work hard to prevent and respond to threats to student health and wellbeing, and offer dedicated and accessible programming and services that embed and support holistic student health, consistent with the Okanagan Charter¹.
- **Indigenous engagement and decolonization.** We endeavour to understand and address inequities in support and access for Indigenous students, advancing UBC’s vision of becoming a leading university globally in the implementation of Indigenous peoples’ human rights.



CONNECTIONS WITHIN AND ACROSS CAMPUSES AND COMMUNITIES

- **Access to student experiences.** We are intent on identifying and reducing economic, social, and physical barriers to a UBC education, with an emphasis on affordability, which is foundational to student wellbeing and success.
- **Student life and communication.** We sponsor student-focused and student-led activities that help create an unparalleled experience and strong sense of community and we endeavour to ensure that students feel informed and connected through communications that span the university.

- **Physical and virtual spaces development.** We renew campus and online spaces to promote and facilitate student learning and access in ways that advance sustainability and operational excellence, working also with the province to address challenges in housing and transportation.



Most of the strategies are enabled and extended by technologies that contribute positively to student experience, equity, and cross-campus connectedness — whether through online or blended learning, remote access to student services, or digital student networking. Some represent activities that have characterized a UBC education throughout the university’s history — notably, our academic excellence. Others represent areas of growing focus as we recognize new and critical areas of student need, such as mental health, affordability, and experiential learning. And still others

align with commitments that define UBC at the highest level: Indigenous engagement, sustainability, and social justice.

All the strategies have relevance across the university, but there will be some differences in the actions taken on each campus, consistent with the different contexts and priorities of our students. Perhaps most importantly, while each of the strategies is anchored in one of the student commitments, all are interconnected, and none can be neglected. Together, they underpin a UBC student education.



¹Jointly established by educational institutions and health organizations from more than 45 countries at the UBC Okanagan campus in 2015, the Okanagan Charter: An International Charter for Health Promoting Universities and Colleges calls upon post-secondary schools to embed health into all aspects of campus culture and to lead health promotion action and collaboration locally and globally.

Moving **FORWARD**



Moving forward

Although the development of the Student Strategic Plan was led by the Vice-President, Students and Associate Vice-President, Students, it would not have been possible without collaboration with students and colleagues from across the university. Implementation will be no different. The only way for UBC to succeed fully in advancing this plan is by working together.

While there are certainly problems to address, this plan is not about quick fixes. It is about our commitment to real and steady progress in strengthening the experience of all students at UBC. We will need to be courageous in challenging long-held ideas and changing how we do things. And we will need to be agile in response to evolving student needs.

While the portfolio of the Vice-President, Students will lead some of the activities associated with the Student Strategic Plan, many will be led by faculties or other university partners, with the (VPS) team partnering or supporting these efforts. *The Indigenous Strategic Plan, Inclusion Action Plan, 20-Year Sustainability Strategy, Wellbeing Strategic Framework, UBC Okanagan Outlook 2040, Okanagan Charter, and Global Engagement Strategy* are institutional commitments that are especially interlinked with the Student Strategic Plan.

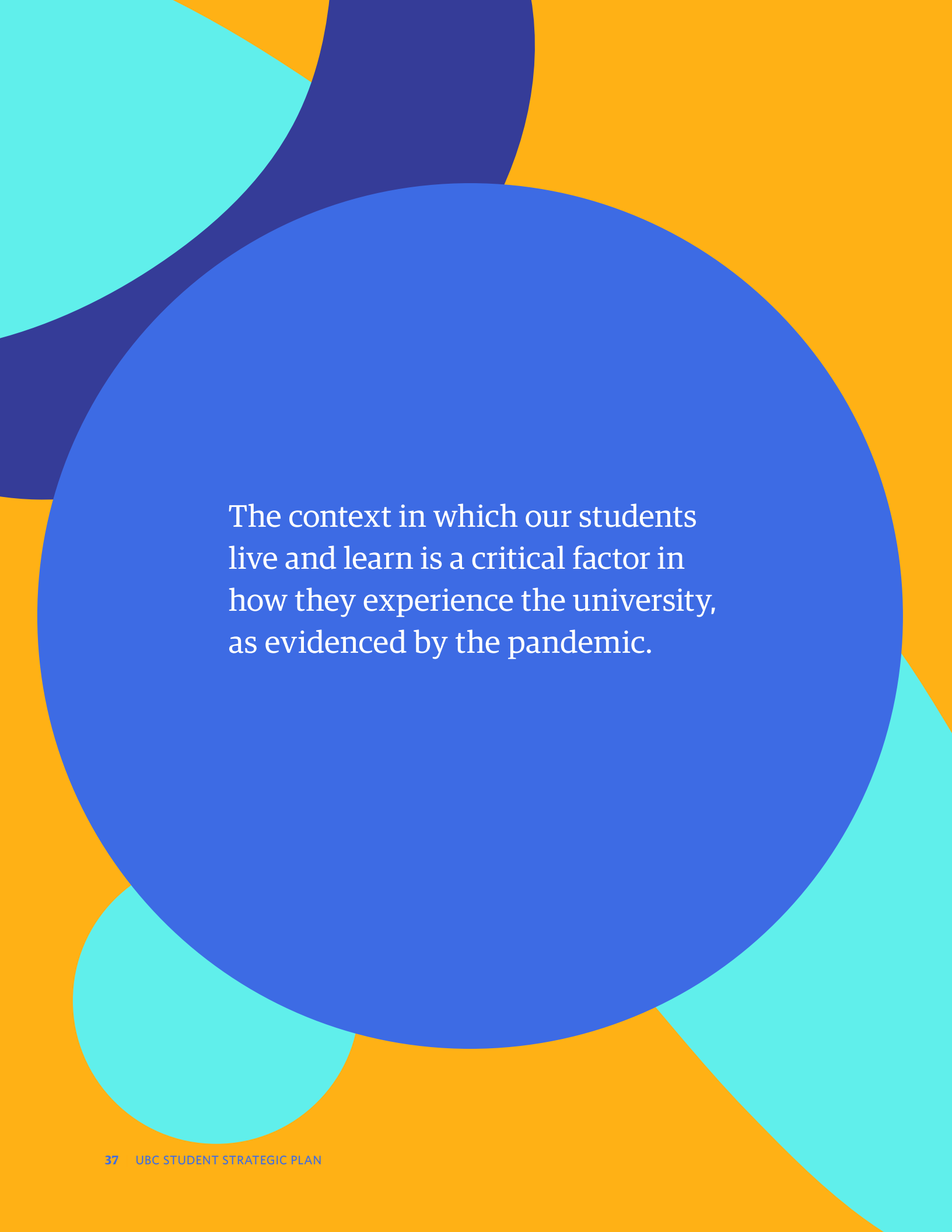
As a university, we will hold ourselves accountable for what is outlined in this plan, and we will share the successes and challenges with the UBC community through annual action plans that reflect our student priorities for each successive year, including deliverables and resourcing. These will provide a mechanism through which we can track our progress. We will also measure how student perceptions against the outcomes defined in this plan change over time. These data will help us guide university actions and investments as we move ahead.

In addition to sustained focus on teaching, learning, and student life, our engagement process highlighted key areas for urgent action in the first two years of implementation. These include



anti-racism, Indigenous engagement, mental health, affordability, and student communications. These priorities align with both long-standing and recently heightened areas of student focus. They also reflect student perceptions of relative UBC shortcomings, as well as concerns related to the regional cost of living at both campuses. Associated elements such as student infrastructure in the Okanagan and graduate student funding across the university represent important priorities for populations within our student body.

These will not be the only priorities of the university with respect to students, but they do represent areas of collective and concerted attention. We will continue to engage regularly with students and across the university to understand how our efforts are impacting students and how their needs are changing. The context in which our students live and learn is a critical factor in how they experience the university, as evidenced by the pandemic. As we monitor how events are unfolding outside of UBC, we will consider how our priorities and approach may need to shift in response.



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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA