



Imagine:
**Transforming Lives,
Transforming Communities**

**Open, Flexible,
and Everywhere**

Our families, our jobs, our communities: the most important things in our lives are changing. To prepare for change, to lead it, we are driven to be more open, more flexible, and more adaptable — no matter who we are, how old we are, or where we live.



We are driven to learn.

A typical university, with its schedules and lecture halls, is closed to all but a fraction of us. This is because most of us don't live in the right place, we're not the right age, or it's not the right time.

We're bound by family commitments or we can't quit our jobs to travel to a campus and sit in classrooms.

Like the river with which it shares a name and a surging spirit, Athabasca University, Canada's Open University erodes obstacles. It dismantles the barrier between you and your ambition — your best future.

At Athabasca University, you do live in the right place. You are the right age. Your family makes you a better, prouder student. Please, study on your time. The only commute is to your device.

Some of Canada's finest professors choose Athabasca University for the same reason you study with us. They ensure your classes and degrees are rigorous and challenging and you can connect with them over the dinner table — yours and theirs.

Athabasca is for the leader who wants to build their community without leaving it. It is for the learner who could study on any campus or maybe already does but craves flexibility and control of their time.

It is for learners who were not ready for university when they were teenagers but are ready now.



You can create and contribute as you study.

This is how Athabasca University transforms lives and communities. The real world sees no separation between your education and the rest of your life. Neither does Athabasca.

Athabasca University was North America's first online university. Its open and flexible environment is built on leveraging technology to enable learning. Athabasca is re-imagining its founding spirit with new investments in digital education. Athabasca University will never stop striving to perfect it.

We pledge to:

- make your experience seamless and intuitive, so you can focus on what matters — your learning and your life;
- adapt our programs, courses, and services to fit the diverse needs and goals of our learners;
- adapt to changes in the new economy to prepare our focused and self-reliant learners for a world that demands digital literacy; and
- partner with employers and with other colleges and universities so Athabasca graduates aren't only ready to work — they're ready to lead.

And, always, we seek like-minded spirits in brilliant staff who share our mission of transforming lives and communities as a different kind of university — one that's open, flexible, and everywhere.



Athabasca University respectfully acknowledges that we are on and work on the traditional lands of the Indigenous peoples (Inuit, First Nations, Métis) of Canada. We honour the ancestry, heritage and gifts of the Indigenous peoples and give thanks to them.



We are pleased to present *Imagine: Transforming Lives, Transforming Communities*, Athabasca University's Strategic Plan. *Imagine* embodies who we are and who we aspire to become. The work of many hands, *Imagine* builds upon the strength and spirit of our entire Athabasca University community. *Imagine* also embraces our future, boldly charting a course that reflects our collective creativity, innovation, and drive to transform lives and communities.

Our *Imagine* plan comprises four primary components:

- AU's story, representing who we are and what we seek to accomplish.
- Our values, commitments, and foundations — the inherent drivers of all that we do, every day.
- Our four strategic themes — the compass points providing direction and focus to all we do.
- A strategic roadmap that sets forth our priorities over the next five years, including a description of how our plan will impact learners, research, and the Athabasca University community itself.

At Athabasca University, we find inspiration in our learners' journeys toward reaching their highest potential. Their stories inform and inspire our *Imagine* plan, and they fuel our own journey to transform lives and transform communities through the power of education and research.

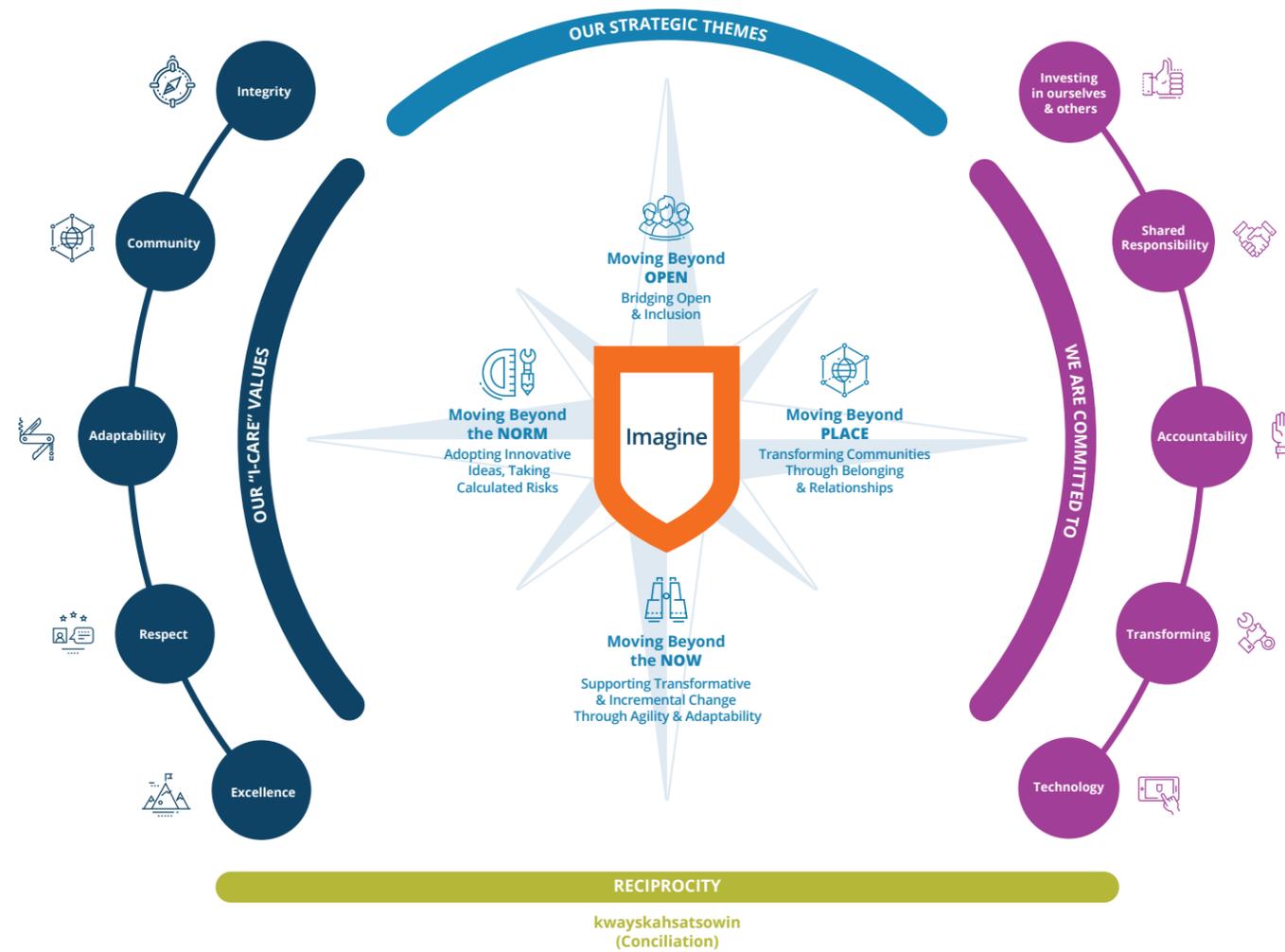
We are incredibly proud of Athabasca University's unparalleled capacity to elevate the social good through inclusive education and open scholarship. Our passion for transformation is shared by many around the world. *Imagine* sets out a pathway for our journey, so that others may follow.



NEIL FASSINA, PhD, CPHR, ICD.D
President
Athabasca University



MATTHEW PRINEAS, PhD
Provost and Vice-President Academic
Athabasca University



Reciprocity is the equitable maintenance of harmony and balance in the exchange of knowledge, ideas, services, and support between peoples, the land, and all our relations, including creatures and plants. Reciprocity is a way of being and a way of living, it is the central philosophy and tenet of Indigenous peoples worldview that ensures humility, respect, and honour.

We commit to learning from and working in partnership with Indigenous peoples, nations, and communities in our conciliation journey. As part of this journey, we seek to understand how we can more effectively support Indigenous learner success.

OUR "I-CARE" VALUES:

- Integrity**
We are guided by ethics, honesty, and fairness in all our actions, engendering trust within our University community.
- Community**
We are one University. We achieve more together. We embrace collaboration and connectivity among our diverse individual community members and their teams.
- Adaptability**
We are flexible. We respond to the changing needs of our University and its learners with courage and continuous improvement.
- Respect**
We foster respect by contributing to an environment in which every individual is valued.
- Excellence**
We ask bold questions, provoke new ways of thinking, and focus on those things at which we can excel to enhance the quality of all that we do.

WE ARE COMMITTED TO:

- Investing in ourselves & others**
We are committed to creating and supporting a growth culture that celebrates success, superior performance, action, and persistence toward our vision. We are purposeful in the training, development, and deployment of our employees throughout our University. We actively create and foster the culture we choose to have.
- Shared Responsibility**
Grounded in equity, we are committed to a cohesive community that shares the responsibility for the success of our University and all of our communities, recognizing that we are an active partner in a broader system.
- Accountability**
We empower action and mutual accountability through openness and transparency.
- Transforming**
In a global, complex, and increasingly fast-changing world, we embrace transformation through innovation to ensure that we foster a resilient and creative environment to achieve our highest potential.
- Technology**
Technology is an enabler for all that we do. We leverage emerging technologies and implement creative solutions to create value for our University; we use the power of digital data ethically and responsibly; and we build full digital literacy in both learners and staff.





Moving Beyond Open

Bridging Open and Inclusion

We are proud to be Canada's Open University. We lead the way in creating access and accessibility to quality distributed learning. We focus on issues that are important to learners and their communities. We are a flexible partner to learners so that they and their communities can achieve their greatest potential. We create strong connections and enduring relationships with diverse learners with equally diverse needs and goals. To move beyond open does not mean to leave it behind. Rather, we build on it to realize the full potential of bridging open and inclusion. We know that by being open, the quality and rigor of our learning environment is second to none.

By moving beyond open, we will transform lives and communities by:

- systemically removing barriers to create a culture of inclusion in which all learners are welcome;
- provide personalized and flexible opportunities that fulfill our learners' personal goals and optimize our social impact in communities;
- connecting and making available the knowledge, skills, abilities, ideas, and perspectives of diverse individuals through the highest quality teaching and open scholarship;
- supporting multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression in our teaching and research endeavours, and in our relationships with others; and
- leading the way in digital accessibility and inclusivity.

MARCIA TRUDEAU, MBA '16,
CEO of the 2017 North American
Indigenous Games



JEFF VALLANCE, PhD,
Associate Professor and Canada
Research Chair in Health
Promotion and Chronic Disease



Moving Beyond **Place**

Transforming Communities Through Belonging and Relationships

From its home in the town of Athabasca, our University shapes and enables mutually supportive communities, regardless of where those communities exist. We recognize that learning and research strengthen and are strengthened by the communities in which they are embedded. When a learner joins Athabasca University, they become lifelong members of our learning community. Through engagement with each other, learners and employees of Athabasca University create purposeful, meaningful, and safe communities. We welcome new members and engage with existing ones so that individuals and groups can grow and give back to their communities. We recognize and support a geographically diverse team and demonstrate leadership in connecting individuals and teams regardless of their location.

In moving beyond place, we will transform lives and communities by:

- building and fostering belonging and relationships regardless of location;
- engaging with and strengthening our own community, other educational institutions, and industry partners; and
- building collaborative and coordinated environments and networks to achieve excellence and greater understanding.



FRÉDÉRIQUE PIVOT, PhD,
Assistant Professor,
Physical Geography



Moving Beyond The Norm

Adopting Innovative Ideas, Taking Calculated Risks

Our future is limited only by our imagination. We build on our rich history by embracing new possibilities and streamlining our existing processes for the betterment of our learners, ourselves, and our partners. We continue to embrace emergent technologies in recognition that technologies enable us to create access and enhance open and distributed learning environments of the highest quality. We take risks, seek out ideas, and adopt innovations to create clearly defined value-added outcomes. A culture of innovation and creativity in action will be the norm. External communities will look to Athabasca University for leadership in accessible, inclusive, innovative, and digitally enabled distributed learning.

In moving beyond the norm, we will transform lives and communities by:

- embracing innovation and action grounded in creativity and teamwork;
- taking calculated risks and employing evidence-based decision making;
- celebrating our accomplishments as bold decision-makers and leaders in the global post-secondary environment;
- rapidly identifying, testing, deploying, supporting, assessing, and retiring technologies, processes, and ideas to build on what works - optimizing our impact on learners and the communities we serve; and
- harnessing our creativity and knowledge to reach new heights in inclusive and digitally enabled distributed learning and research.



SHAMSUDEEN BELLO, BMgmt '16,
Abuja, Nigeria



Moving Beyond The **Now**

Making Change through Agility and Adaptability

In the context of a globally connected and rapidly changing environment, our capacity to be agile and adaptable is fundamental to our success and the success of our learners. Excellence in our technology, operations, and support systems is essential to creating an institution that can respond to change quickly and effectively. Our community creates, monitors, and supports continuous improvement. Through meaningful partnerships, our learning and work environments will come alive and exceed the expectations of learners and our staff.

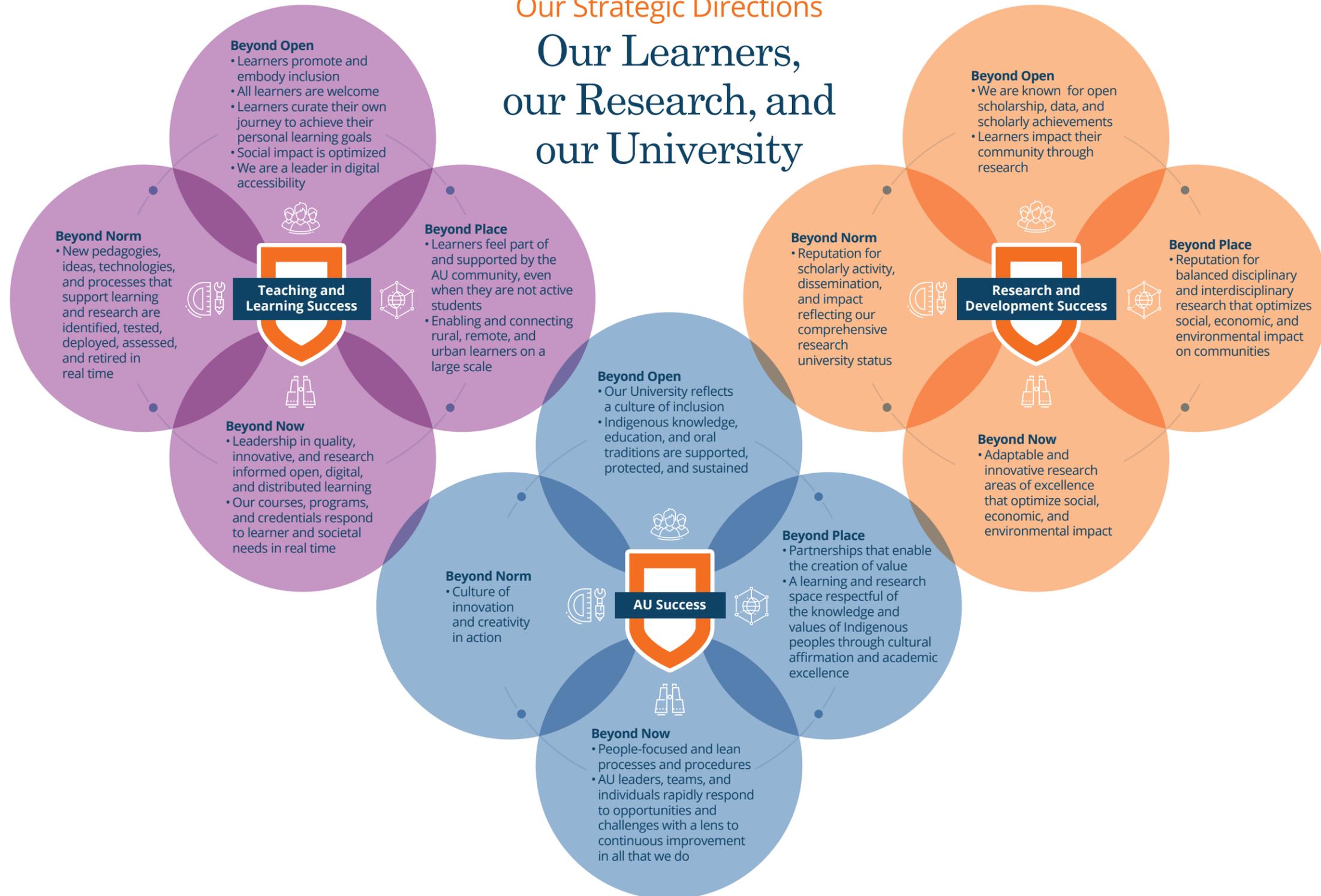
In moving beyond the now, we will transform lives and communities by:

- streamlining and embracing simplicity in our internal processes; and
- focusing on continuous improvement in all that we do.



Our Strategic Directions

Our Learners, our Research, and our University



Creating our Path: University Priority Outcomes



YEAR 4-5

2022
2021

Priority Outcomes



Adaptable and data-informed strategic & sustainable credential, program, and course mix that includes modularized and stackable learning outcomes in undergraduate and graduate offerings in both credit and non-credit environments grounded in the highest standards of quality and rigour

Adaptable & data-informed student services

TL

Personalized on-line and off-line learning model that is flexible, scalable, and affordable to the learner and to AU

TL

AU TL

Values-based culture that recognizes AU's I-CARE values along with a culture of inclusion, belonging, resilience, innovation, continuous improvement, and engagement

AU

Diversified, stabilized, and predictable revenue streams

AU TL RD

A consolidated and integrated data platform that enables real-time monitoring, decision making, and reporting

AU TL

Scalable and sustainable open scholarship environment for research data, scholarly activity, and dissemination that optimizes the peer and external adoption of AU research as well as optimizes social, economic, and environmental impact

RD

YEAR 3

2020

Priority Outcomes



Student environment that supports and connects students with diverse learning goals

TL

Diversified credit/non-credit learning opportunities, credentials, and complementary offerings

TL

Explored international enrollment growth

TL

nukskahtowin (meeting place)

AU TL

Technology optimization through configuration and interoperability of relevant core systems

AU TL RD

Campus Alberta partnerships that strengthen the system for learners and funders

AU TL

A 50th year domestic & international campaign

AU TL RD

Purposeful and supported semi-virtual organizational structure through technology, infrastructure, and social processes

AU

Optimized student affordability in new tuition, fee, and financial support model

AU TL

A scalable and sustainable open scholarship framework

RD

A business continuity environment for core elements of AU

AU TL RD

YEAR 2

2019

Priority Outcomes



A Teaching and Learning Framework that enables lifelong self-paced distributed learning

TL

National enrollment growth through pathways, credential completion, and non-credit offerings

TL

A sustainable and adaptable course, program, and credential mix based in a lean and data-informed development, renewal, and retirement process

TL

A data-informed, responsive, and adaptable student services framework

TL

Lean and people first processes and governance

AU

Technology, land, and real-estate plan that supports semi-virtual organization

AU

An Integrated planning, execution, assessment and accountability cycle

AU

Systems based coordination, collaboration, cooperation, and communication in our projects and activities

AU

A defined strategic human resource system

AU

An active values and cultural framework

AU TL RD

Enabled talent framework for employees and leadership

AU

A supported multi-stage innovation process

AU TL RD

Digital strategy

AU TL RD

Research strategy

RD

YEAR 1

2018

Critical Actions



Financial balance based on accurate and timely data

AU TL RD

Digital stability, reliability, security, and recoverability

AU TL RD

Rapid and responsive technology governance structure

AU TL RD

Baseline course and program mix

AU TL RD

Organizational communications framework

AU TL RD