

Research Support Fund 2025-2026

Institutional Investment Stories

RSF-2025-00069

Investment Story #1

Quality Research Services for AU Members

Athabasca University is dedicated to providing excellent research services for faculty and students; this is achieved with support from the Research Support Fund. Through this program, we are able to provide a range of services for our members. For example, with the assistance from a dedicated Research Grant Development Coordinator (RGDC) position, AU faculty members receive specialized and expert assistance in the development of their applications for Tri-Agency funding. Among the services provided to AU members are webinars and other training opportunities, such as multi-day grant writing intensives for annual funding programs, designed to share essential program information and educate applicants on the continuing evolution of the Tri-Agency grant ecosystem. For example, the RGDC and AU's Knowledge Mobilization Specialist held a joint, interactive workshop on the ongoing transition from the common CV to the Tri-Agency narrative CV style. Other essential services supported by the RGDC include grant prospecting and application planning, providing internal reviews of grant applications and budget eligibility, and constructive feedback based on past experience in previous competitions, as well as participating in multiple touchpoints and connections to address frequent and emerging questions, with the overarching goal of supporting faculty members in the development of application packages of high quality. The support services provided by the RGDC are possible due to the funding provided through the Research Support Fund.

Investment Story #2

Research with Reach

As part of an interdisciplinary university-wide knowledge mobilization initiative, Athabasca University created a series of videos titled "Research with Reach", aimed at highlighting research achievements at AU. We released the fifth installment ([Season 5](#)) of the series in this reporting period, which featured four original stories. Season five includes the story of Dr. Ali Dewan, a

researcher in the Faculty of Science and Technology, showcasing cutting edge technology and the use of AI to assess student engagement in online learning environments. A second video featured the work of Dr. F. Haider Alvi, from the Faculty of Business, on global equity and sustainability and the economic gap between the Global North and Global South. In the third video Dr. Kharah Ross demonstrated the use of community research to combat gender violence by putting knowledge in the hands of non-profit organizations delivering supports to women and children who are victims of violence. Finally, the fourth video highlighted the work of Dr. Lana Ray, our Canada Research Chair in Resurgent Methodologies for Indigenous Health, who is exploring how to revitalize Traditional Healing Systems to address the high rates of non-communicable disease that are a result of system inequities. We have tracked the series' reach and impact on traffic to our research news and evaluated, through survey data, its contribution to community perceptions of AU as a research-focused university. Traffic data has shown that, in the first three months since release, the 4 videos in this series garnered substantial attention, with around 334,000 impressions in social media, and 200,000 views to completion. When the series began in 2021, 6% of prospective students and 8% of employers/trainers strongly agreed that AU is research-focused. By 2024, these proportions had increased substantially to 18% and 15%, respectively. The *Research with Reach* series has been funded through the Research Support Fund, complemented by internal funding sources, and we will continue to develop content under this series to highlight AU's many high impact research programs.

