



Royal Roads  
UNIVERSITY

# ACADEMIC STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2025

LIFE.CHANGING

## OUR VISION

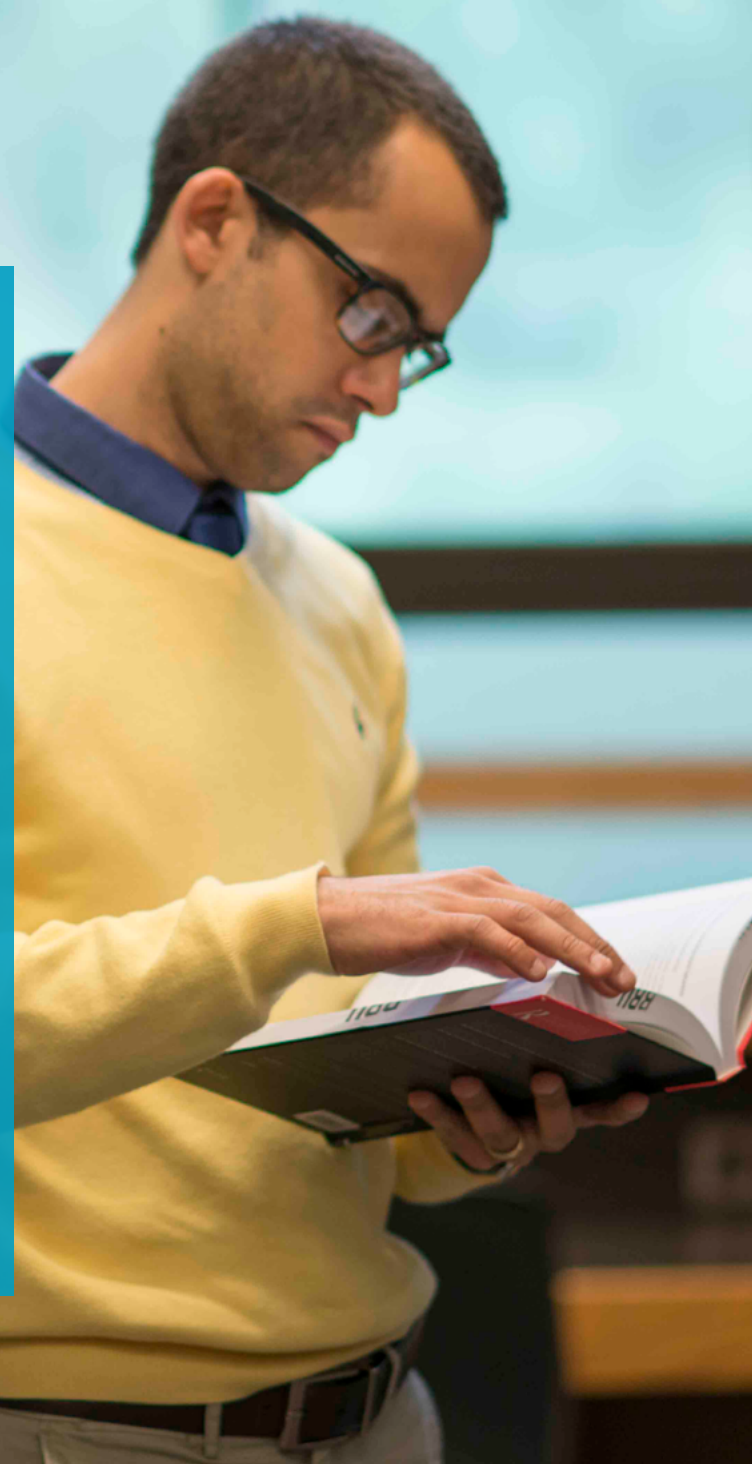
Inspiring people with the courage to transform the world.

## OUR VALUES

- **Caring** – A diverse and supportive community for our students, faculty and staff
- **Creative** – Innovation in all we do; we continually seek new and better ways to do things
- **Courageous** – Bold in our actions, we welcome challenges and take thoughtful risks

## OUR GOALS

- Any age, any stage, any place
- Explore, share, advance
- Invite in, venture out
- Vibrant and sustainable



## LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Royal Roads University acknowledges that the campus is on the Lands of the Xwsepsum (Esquimalt) and Lekwungen (Songhees) ancestors and families. With gratitude, we live, work and learn here where the past, present, and future of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, faculty and staff come together.

**Hay'sxw'qa si'em!**



## OUR COMMITMENTS

### WE HAVE 6 CRITICAL COMMITMENTS GROUNDED IN OUR GOALS AND ACTIONS...



- Build on our strengths in applied and professional programming, inter and transdisciplinarity and innovative delivery



- Grow our innovative and entrepreneurial culture, and respond quickly to changes in the workplace and society



- Enhance the inclusion and engagement of people of diverse backgrounds and ideas in all aspects of university life



- Implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and honour the spirit of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)



- Advance sustainability in all our academic programs and operations, with a focus on the UN Sustainable Development Goals



- Promote research and education to tackle the climate crisis, rapid advances in technology, and interconnected social, economic and political challenges



## INTRODUCTION FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT ACADEMIC AND PROVOST

To celebrate our 25th anniversary in 2021, Royal Roads University launched [Learning for Life: 2045 and beyond](#)—a strategic vision that aims to deliver life-changing education that will shape the leaders who will transform the world. Boldly aspirational, the vision concludes with a call to “get busy on the actions that will help us reach our goals.” This Academic Strategic Plan takes up that challenge.

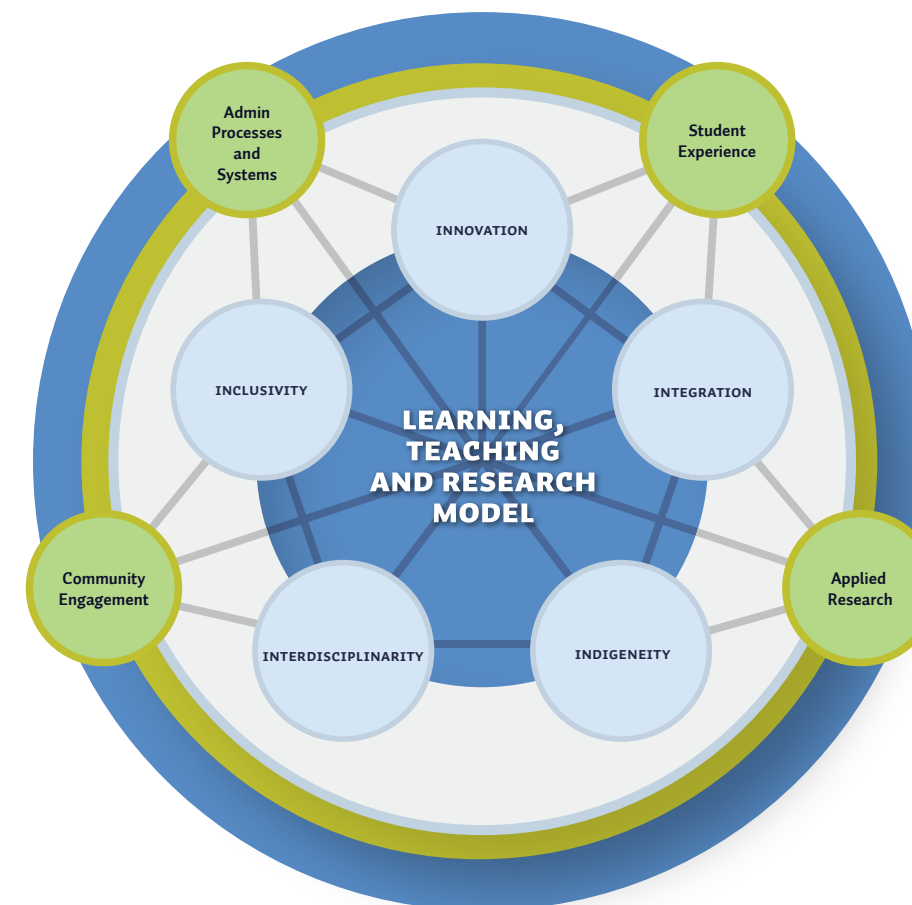
The Academic Strategic Plan focuses on the core work of RRU—achieving excellence in learning, teaching and research, and is designed to guide our work and establish our academic priorities over the upcoming three years. The Academic Strategic Plan will also inform a reorganization of the academic portfolio.

Through extensive and iterative engagement with students, faculty, associate faculty and staff, the Academic Planning and Reorganization Steering and Advisory Groups (see last page) identified five key themes to inform the plan:

- Interdisciplinarity
- Indigeneity
- Innovation
- Integration
- Inclusivity

As illustrated below, these five focus areas are interrelated, interdependent and deeply informed by Royal Roads’ [Learning, Teaching and Research Model](#), a signature pedagogy that is applied and authentic; caring and community-based; and transformational.

The Academic Strategic Plan sets specific goals and actions to advance these focus areas over the life of this plan to 2025.



The plan also builds on RRU’s strong history of academic excellence; exemplary student service; local and global community engagement; and entrepreneurial and responsive practice and process.

The Academic Strategic Plan will require a significant investment of financial, human and technological resources, and will guide focused decision making and resource allocations. A living and dynamic document, it will be renewed annually and refined to respond to emerging opportunities.

## RRU AND ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

RRU's Academic Portfolio is overseen by the Vice-President Academic and Provost, and comprises the College of Interdisciplinary Studies, the Faculty of Management, the Faculty of Social and Applied Sciences, Professional and Continuing Studies, the Registrar's Office, and Student and Academic Services, which includes the Centre for Teaching and Educational Technology, Indigenous Education, the Library and Student Services. Together, they are charged with the development and implementation of academic programs (credit and non-credit); academic quality assurance; academic and student support services; admissions, enrolment services, and registration services; and faculty appointments and faculty relations.

### Royal Roads University was established in 1995 to:

- (a) offer certificate, diploma and degree programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels in solely the applied and professional fields,
- (b) provide continuing education in response to the needs of the local community, and
- (c) maintain teaching excellence and research activities that support the university's programs in response to the labour market needs of British Columbia.

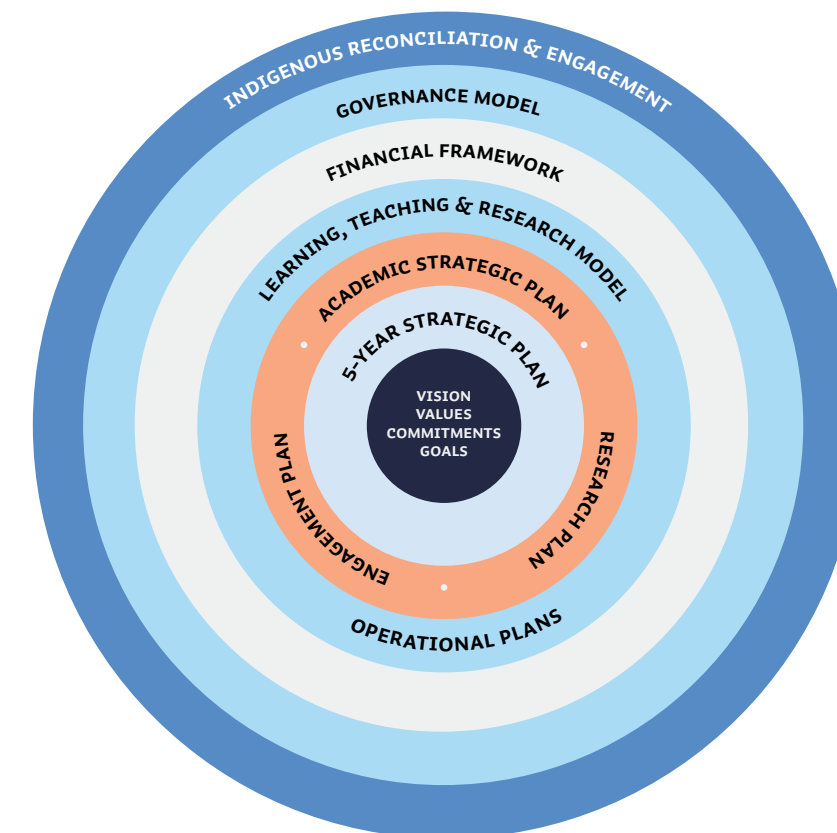
At Royal Roads, full-time students, working professionals and lifelong learners find opportunities and skills to create positive change in their careers and communities, and on the global stage.

We pioneered the blended learning model in Canada—a unique contribution to the post-secondary landscape that allows our students to learn at their convenience while staying connected to their communities. Our progressive model of applied education and practice meets students where they are, delivering online and in-person certificate and diploma programs along with professional graduate and undergraduate degree programs, and two applied research doctorates, one being the first of its kind in Canada.

In 2017, [Ashoka University](#) named RRU a Changemaker Campus, one of more than 40 dynamic global universities and colleges committed to social innovation at their own schools and beyond.

## RRU STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

RRU's Strategic Planning Framework identifies the core and operational plans across the institution and represents the integration and interrelatedness of those plans. The Academic Strategic Plan is guided by and supports the implementation of Learning for Life: 2045 and Beyond. As one of three core institutional plans, the Academic Strategic Plan is most closely linked to the Strategic Research Plan, both of which are informed by the Learning, Teaching and Research Model.



*The Academic Strategic Plan is one of three core plans that align with and inform other operational plans.*

## ACADEMIC STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS, GOALS AND PRIORITY ACTIONS

### INTERDISCIPLINARITY

Interdisciplinarity is a hallmark of Royal Roads’ pedagogy and is fundamental to RRU’s Learning, Teaching and Research Model. We place interdisciplinary discovery at the heart of all our teaching and research, understanding that the complex problems of our time require multiple lenses versus single-solution approaches, and our applied research and practice responds to global, national and community-based problems. And, we hold ourselves accountable to enabling new ways of integrating and collaborating across our interdisciplinary programming.

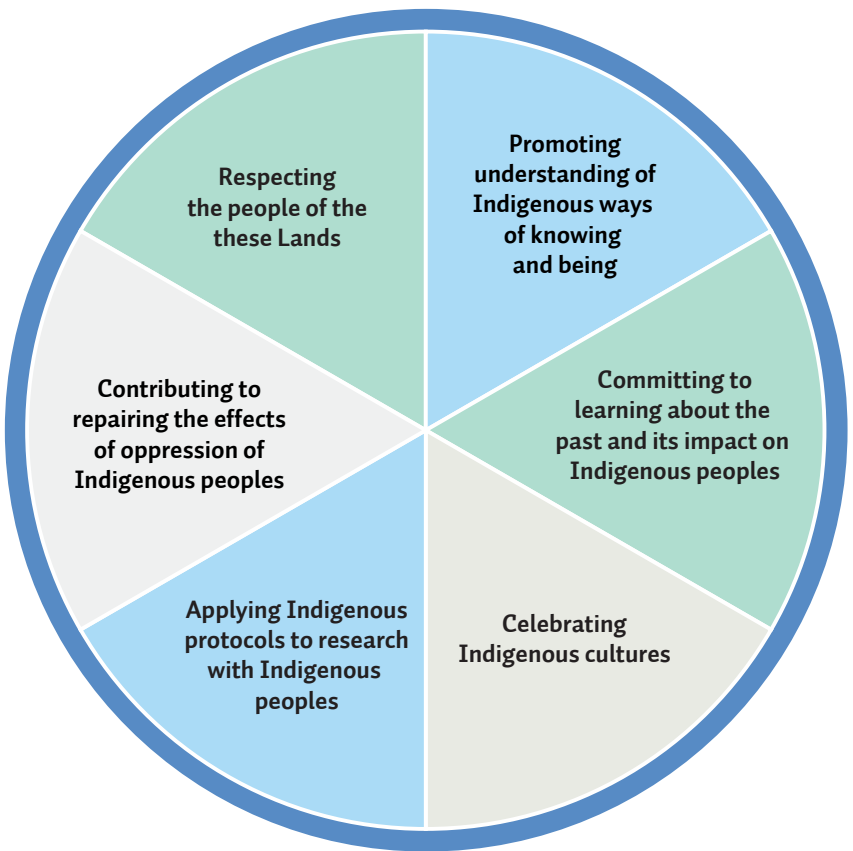
**RRU commits to investing in and expanding high-quality interdisciplinary learning, teaching and research across all of our academic and non-academic programming.**

#### Action Items

- Establish and continuously evolve a sustainable, complementary, responsive, adaptable suite of high-quality interdisciplinary credit and non-credit programs, which will inform strategic enrolment plans.
- Develop new and improve existing interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary curricula, research and practice, in support of institutional goals such as climate action; Indigenization; decolonization; anti-racism; Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and sustainability.
- Launch, deliver and expand Common Foundations within the community in which we are located (on RRU campus 2023; West Shore 2024, pending approval) to prepare students to enter RRU’s existing third- and fourth-year undergraduate programs.
- Design shared processes and systems to enable student flexibility across programs that amplifies their interdisciplinary learning experiences.

### INDIGENEITY

Based on broad community consultation including input from local Chiefs and Heron People Circle members, RRU created a planning framework in 2019 to deliver on RRU’s commitment to Indigenous Peoples. It is comprised of guiding principles and six core elements (see graphic below) that all have direct connection to learning, teaching and research. In our Learning, Teaching and Research Model, respect for Indigenous Peoples and traditions is embedded in the core category of transformational values.



There is much work to be done to walk in a new way with Indigenous Peoples, and many pathways we could travel on the road towards reconciliation that Truth and Reconciliation Commission chair Justice Murray Sinclair asks us all to travel. After much deliberation, we have chosen three areas of emphasis for our work during the three years covered by this plan. They are:

- 1. Deepening our understanding of ontologies:** We will work to identify the assumptions that underpin the colonized dominant worldview and examine how these relate to our understanding of Indigenous worldviews. We will begin by exploring the foundational Indigenous concept of relationship with the Land, including human and non-human relations, and how it manifests in identity and ways-of-knowing. We will actively engage with the Xwsepsum and Lekwungen families upon whose traditional Lands the university's campus resides to better understand our collective relationship and accountability to these Lands.
- 2. Deepening relationships with Indigenous Knowledges:** We will explore ways that those in our university community who are immigrants (or their descendants) can be guided to develop stronger individual relationships with Indigenous Knowledges, including situating ourselves in location and history, and appreciating the impacts of colonization on all peoples. We will advance our efforts to respectfully integrate Indigenous Knowledges in our curricula and learning experiences.
- 3. Building competencies to better serve Indigenous students:** This is dependent on the work we undertake in the first two areas of emphasis and relates to both individual and organizational competencies. Recognizing our responsibilities to self, family, community, and Nations, this work will benefit all students and the entire university. We will provide options for individuals to learn about and strengthen RRU's service to Indigenous Peoples. We will provide new avenues for Indigenous students to share their experiences in order to understand and remove barriers that impede learning. To that end, we will create an Indigenous peer-to-peer space where students, faculty and staff can gather to foster communal engagement, growth and relationships.

Action Items

- Applying Call to Action 63 of the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in our post-secondary context, we will:
  - I. Develop and implement curriculum and learning resources on Indigenous Peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools. Drawing from the Calls to Action and the Calls for Justice of the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls, topics will include:
    - i. Indigenous teachings and practices;
    - ii. Treaties and Indigenous rights;
    - iii. History and legacy of residential schools;
    - iv. Awareness about missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, and about the issues and root causes of violence they experience;
    - v. Skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism;
    - vi. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
  - II. Share information and best practices on teaching related to residential schools and Indigenous Peoples' histories.
  - III. Build capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect across the academic portfolio.
  - IV. Develop and implement an academic portfolio education and training plan, augmenting our current initiatives.
- Increase the number of Indigenous staff, faculty, and associate faculty within the academic portfolio, including hiring (at minimum) two Indigenous scholars, and launching the Emerging Indigenous Scholars Circle in 2022-23 and recruiting scholars to join the Circle in the following two years.
- Provide avenues for Indigenous students to share their experiences in order to evolve and strengthen academic services.

INTEGRATION

RRU’s Learning, Teaching and Research Model champions collaboration among learners, researchers, faculty and staff, and our pedagogical approach helps to create supportive and trusting relationships. The cultural norm of collaboration at every stage of the design and development process—from concept through to implementation, delivery, evaluation and refinement—ensures integration and alignment of our academic programming.

**We aim to strengthen connections among staff, faculty, and associate faculty, and better integrate processes, academic structure and systems to advance RRU’s signature, high quality programming and to offer seamless support of students across the student lifecycle.**

Action Items

- Develop and implement a comprehensive undergraduate strategy that considers holistic student academic and psycho-social support services.
- Reestablish and redesign an academic administrative leadership role for graduate studies.
- Streamline and harmonize program development and program reviews to enrich synergies, sharing and co-creation of curricula across programs.
- Support the creation of shared learning, teaching and research resource hubs, including the Climate Action Hub.
- Explore pedagogical and learning technology innovations to strengthen learning communities and to optimize scheduling and delivery modalities across programs.
- Share and harmonize best practices in sustainable, scalable, cross-functional administrative processes and systems.

INNOVATION

At Royal Roads innovation informs all that we do. We are renowned for our accessible, flexible and transformative applied learning, teaching and research, and as pioneers of blended learning, we continue to explore and design new ways of teaching, researching and disseminating knowledge. As a Changemaker Campus, social innovation at Royal Roads begins with our holistic, student-centred approach to flexible admissions and is inscribed in our university-wide Learning, Teaching and Research Model. Changemaking extends through our culture of mentorship and collaboration to create opportunities for students to not only learn but contribute to their fields with purpose and impact. As well, RRU continually identifies and advances innovative processes through all stages of the student lifecycle to improve staff and faculty support of the student experience.

**RRU will continue to lead innovation in higher education to increase accessible, flexible lifelong learning through new market-responsive applied and professional programming, multimodal program delivery, and collaborative learning processes.**

Action Items

- Develop new pathways and alternative credentials for new audiences of learners.
- Research, pilot and deploy emerging pedagogies, curricular reforms and learning technologies to foster more engaging learning and research environments.
- Develop nature-based, climate change-related learning and research opportunities with specific reference to respecting the peoples on whose lands we are located.
- Explore new ways of engaging in applied learning partnerships through community engagement in the West Shore and beyond.
- Invest in applied learning, teaching, practice and research innovations through a newly established innovation fund within the Office of the Vice-President Academic and Provost.

INCLUSIVITY

As reflected in RRU’s [Diversity Statement](#), diversity expands learning, advances knowledge and enriches community, which is shaped by our complex identities, life experiences, and perspectives.

**We strive to increase belonging, understanding, appreciation, and mutual engagement to help build compassion and strengthen the fabric of our communities. To that end, we commit to:**

- Creating educational experiences, research opportunities, and workplace environments that reflect and benefit from the diversity of our communities; and
- Fostering an environment that is open, inclusive, safe, respectful, and fair, in which a diversity of ideas are able to flourish.

RRU’s Learning, Teaching and Research Model further articulates: “Diverse and inclusive learning environments enrich the learning of all, creating a safe place for sharing experiences and community building, respectful of race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, different abilities” (17).

**We respect, welcome and invite diverse perspectives, and we will increase and improve inclusion in our learning, teaching and research.**

Action Items

- Build competencies and cultivate understanding of anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusivity among students, staff, faculty and associate faculty.
- Increase representation of marginalized voices throughout our curricula and research.
- Attract and retain a diversity of students, staff, faculty and associate faculty from equity-deserving groups.

ALIGNMENT WITH RRU GOALS AND PLANS

Any age, any stage, any place Explore, share, advance Invite in, venture out Vibrant and sustainable	Implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and honour the spirit of the United Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)	Interdisciplinarity	Learning, Teaching and Research Model
			Strategic Research Plan
			Anti-Racism Action Plan
			Climate Action Plan
		Indigeneity	Learning, Teaching and Research Model
			Indigenizing Royal Roads - Wassenas Report
			Anti-Racism Action Plan
			Climate Action Plan
	Promote research and education to tackle the climate crisis, rapid advances in technology, and interconnected social, economic and political challenges	Innovation	Strategic Research Plan
			Climate Action Plan
			Learning, Teaching and Research Model
			Strategic Research Plan
		Integration	Anti-Racism Action Plan
			Indigenizing Royal Roads - Wassenas Report
			Learning, Teaching and Research Model
Build on our strengths in applied and professional programming, inter and transdisciplinarity and innovative delivery	Inclusivity	Climate Action Plan	
		Anti-Racism Action Plan	
		Strategic Research Plan	
		Learning, Teaching and Research Model	
		Climate Action Plan	
Advance sustainability in all our academic programs and operations, with a focus on the UN Sustainable Development Goals	Grow our innovative and entrepreneurial culture, and respond quickly to changes in the workplace and society	Strategic Research Plan	
		Learning, Teaching and Research Model	
		Climate Action Plan	
		Anti-Racism Action Plan	
Enhance the inclusion and engagement of people of diverse backgrounds and ideas in all aspects of university life		Strategic Research Plan	
		Learning, Teaching and Research Model	
		Climate Action Plan	
		Anti-Racism Action Plan	

ACADEMIC STRATEGIC PLANNING AND REORGANIZATION PROCESS

In early 2021, the Office of the Vice-President Academic and Provost engaged with students, staff, faculty, and other stakeholders to develop an academic strategic plan to support RRU’s new [vision](#) and renewed Learning, Teaching and Research Model.

The consultation process was intentionally iterative and overseen by a steering group and an advisory group (see members below). The steering group met regularly to plan, review input, and draft the academic strategic plan. The steering group was supported by an advisory group that provided advice on the planning process and drafts of the academic strategic plan and reorganization as it emerged. Both groups played central roles in ensuring an appreciative, inclusive, and forward-looking process.

On May 31, June 4 and June 8, 2021, three Appreciative Inquiry (AI) sessions were held. All members of the Vice-President Academic and Provost portfolio community, including faculty, staff and associate faculty, were invited, and approximately 250 people attended. A simultaneous student survey attracted more than 130 responses. Between May 2021 and February 2022, the steering group held six meetings, and the advisory group held eight meetings. Approximately 200 members of the academic portfolio participated in two additional open feedback sessions.

A purpose-built Moodle collaboration space was also available to facilitate continuous feedback on the new academic strategic plan.

APPRECIATING OUR STRENGTHS: AI FEEDBACK

During the consultation process, participants were asked to reflect on rewarding learning, teaching and research experiences that they had either witnessed or participated in at RRU. Following are the highlights of their responses:

- There is an overall sense that what they do is rewarding and fulfilling, and a widely shared sense of connection: to students, colleagues, the university, and to learning itself.
- RRU staff, faculty, and associate faculty are committed to student-centeredness and feel deeply fulfilled by interacting with, supporting and celebrating students.
- RRU keeps students’ best interests top of mind in decisions regarding their academic experience and seek the student perspective via surveys and feedback loops.
- RRU has long been known for accessibility to mid-career, international, and, in recent years, Indigenous learners. The LTRM exemplifies the culture and attitude of student-centeredness that, as one participant noted, “sets students up for success.”
- Participants cited the value and benefits of RRU’s flexibility for students in their academic situation, and for staff and faculty in their work arrangements.
- Participants expressed appreciation for experiential learning opportunities, combining personal growth with learning.



RRU STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

ASPR STEERING GROUP

VPA and Provost (Chair)	Veronica Thompson
Dean, Faculty of Social and Applied Sciences and Interim Dean, College of Interdisciplinary Studies	Brigitte Harris
Interim Dean, Faculty of Management	Robert Mittelman
AVP, Student and Academic Services	Roberta Mason
AVP, Professional and Continuing Studies	Zoe MacLeod
Director of Admissions and Registrar	Peter Dueck

ASPR ADVISORY GROUP

VPA and Provost (Chair)	Veronica Thompson
Dean, Faculty of Social and Applied Sciences and Interim Dean, College of Interdisciplinary Studies	Brigitte Harris
Interim Dean, Faculty of Management	Robert Mittelman
AVP, Student and Academic Services	Roberta Mason
AVP, Professional and Continuing Studies	Zoe MacLeod
Director of Admissions and Registrar	Peter Dueck
Faculty member – Faculty of Social and Applied Sciences	Jennifer Walinga
Faculty member – Faculty of Management	Charles Krusekopf
Faculty member – College of Interdisciplinary Studies	Shelley Jones
School Director	Zhenyi Li
Program Head	Geo Takach
Associate Faculty member	Alice MacGillivray
Administrative staff members	Angella Wilson
	Jacalyn Raby
	John Stewart
	Janine Hughes
	Emma Hodges
	Amar Singh
Undergraduate student	Jordon Ozero
Graduate student	



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## **ACADEMIC STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2025**

**royalroads.ca**

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