

 MOUNT ROYAL UNIVERSITY
Faculty of Continuing Education

Faculty of Continuing Education Strategic Plan 2023–2030

Leading Lifelong Learning



Mount Royal University is situated on an ancient and storied land steeped in ceremony and history that, until recently, was occupied exclusively by people indigenous to this place. With gratitude and reciprocity, Mount Royal acknowledges the relationships to the land and all beings, and the songs, stories and teachings of the Siksika Nation, the Piikani Nation, the Kainai Nation, the Îethka Stoney Nakoda Nation (consisting of the Chiniki, Bearspaw and Goodstoney Nations), the people of the Tsuut'ina Nation, and the Métis.

As such, Mount Royal University is committed to advancing the success of Indigenous learners and respectfully supporting Indigenous cultural identities and integrity, leading to a good life in all its aspects. Mount Royal will challenge settler colonialism and systemic racism and discrimination by addressing the legacy of broken promises and rebuilding the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. This includes those who now live at the confluence of the Elbow and Bow rivers, a place referred to by the Siksika Nation, the Piikani Nation and the Kainai Nation as Moh'kinstis, by the Îethka Stoney Nakoda Nations as Wícîspa, and by the Tsuut'ina Nation as Guts'ists'i. Mount Royal will meet these goals by committing to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and adopting and applying the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Introduction

The Faculty of Continuing Education and Extension at Mount Royal University is committed to the pursuit of lifelong learning, as the continuous improvement of knowledge and skills throughout one's life. Learning is a lifelong process, which is not restricted to a specific age or stage of life: it is a process that will occur in a variety of ways and environments. At Mount Royal University, we recognize the importance of lifelong learning as an essential mechanism in the acquisition of skills and knowledge for one's personal and professional development, as well as one's ability to stay relevant and adapt to a dynamic and rapidly changing personal and professional landscape.

Traditional degrees provide a solid foundation of knowledge in many disciplines and ensure individuals have the breadth and depth needed to become well-rounded professionals and citizens. Complementing traditional degrees, Continuing Education fills the crucial role of addressing specific needs and gaps before, during and after traditional programming. Continuing Education offers a bridge to learning opportunities that meet the diverse needs and wants of individuals and industry. This includes personal development in arts education for all ages, adults with developmental disabilities, newcomers to Canada, upskilling and reskilling in the workforce and offering pathways into other programming (see [Appendix A](#)).

Over the next six years, the Faculty of Continuing Education Strategic Plan will be our guide to leading lifelong learning and continuing to be the vibrant and successful organization that we are. Leading lifelong learning involves building relationships with instructors, other members of the MRU community, students and external partners. We will invest in our students, staff and instructors promoting a safe, healthy, and skilled work and classroom environment. We will build strategies that strengthen our connection to the needs of our diverse student population and workforce, continuing to evolve and adapt quickly. Most importantly, we will live and breathe the Mount Royal values of equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, indigenization and decolonization in everything that we do.

Vision

Leading Lifelong Learning

Our vision is a commitment to leading lifelong learning, where students and colleagues are empowered to embark on a continuous journey of personal and professional growth.

Mission

Connecting our diverse learners with transformative and lifelong learning opportunities.

Our mission is to unlock the full potential of individuals and communities by creating an inclusive, professional and dynamic learning ecosystem, where we enable positive change through transformative lifelong learning opportunities.

Values

Our values represent who we are as a faculty and provide purpose and direction. They guide our priorities, our programming, the work we do, the decisions we make and how we interact with others.

- **We value inclusion, accountability and respect for ourselves and our stakeholders.**
- **We value our students, colleagues, communities and partners.**
- **We value the development and delivery of flexible, accessible and relevant learning.**
- **We value professionalism, collaboration, innovation and relationships.**

Strategic objectives

The heart of this plan is our ten strategic objectives, which define the focus areas for faculty improvement and advancement over the life of this plan. The objectives are numbered, but are not in priority order.

Programming

Objective 1: Develop a clear programmatic mandate that defines our value proposition, informs our program planning initiatives, builds on our strengths, advances our financial position and aligns with MRU's Strategic and Academic Plans.

- Examine and analyse existing programmatic structures to understand the connection between these structures, program planning activities and the faculty financial position.
- Develop a programmatic mandate through the examination of existing program structures, emphasising our strengths and with mindful consideration of financial implications.
- Implement a strategy that enables our programmatic mandate to guide our program planning initiatives and our value proposition.

Objective 2: Generate awareness of our value proposition among both internal and external stakeholders while ensuring the alignment of our branding, marketing and communication strategies.

- Build a brand awareness that is distinctive from and yet complementary to the MRU brand.
- Develop website, communications and marketing guidelines that are aligned with our brand, value proposition and programmatic mandate.
- Tell our stories to our internal and external audiences, and develop strategies that leverage our MRU alumni community and instructors.
- Ensure continuing education program information and statistics are formally shared internally at MRU, including within the faculty.

Objective 3: Evaluate, optimise and expand our programming to better serve our learners and our broader communities, ensuring alignment with our programmatic mandate.

- In alignment with MRU's Strategic and Academic Plans, grow total registrations in non-ministry approved programs by 10%.
- Establish guidelines and a holistic approach for assessing existing programs and assessing new program proposals, ensuring alignment with our programmatic mandate and broad consideration of all impacts.
- Outline a strategy for assessing market demand and forecasting labour market needs.
- Establish and implement tested enrolment strategies that will assist and support program planning activities, as well as promote enrolment behaviours.

Objective 4: Advance equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility at Mount Royal and beyond.

- Regularly review and update curriculum to reflect current and evolving societal norms and universal design principles.
- Explore the opportunities and needs of the international communities and highlight areas where continuing education can assist with meeting the needs of our international learners.
- Create a plan that provides resources and training for instructors to support diversity and inclusion in the classroom and to enhance cultural competence and teaching practices.
- In conjunction with the EDI Strategic Plan, support the training of staff and ensure resources are provided to enhance diversity and inclusion in the classroom and workplace.
- Identify strategies that will systematically reduce barriers to affordable education.

Objective 5: Progress indigenization and decolonization initiatives within the Mount Royal community and externally.

- Regularly review and update curriculum to integrate Indigenous knowledge through partnerships with Elders and Knowledge Holders.
- Be an innovative partner for the delivery of indigenization programming across MRU and externally.

Partnerships

Objective 6: Strengthen and expand our internal relationships and collaborations and develop stronger awareness and understanding of our faculty throughout MRU.

- Create a plan that identifies programming opportunities and collaborations that will build on the expertise of other areas at MRU and within the faculty.
- Ensure Continuing Education is represented on applicable MRU committees and working groups to create a better understanding of the faculty, stay informed and create the opportunity to provide feedback.
- Develop a strategy that results in Continuing Education being recognized as an important partner in the offering of professional development for MRU employees.
- Collaborate internally with MRU partners to generate interest in continuing education programming among MRU alumni.

Objective 7: Strengthen and expand our relationships and programming with external communities in order to enhance our outreach, stay connected to evolving demands and better market our programs.

- Develop a plan to leverage our program advisory committees to ensure our programming is meeting the needs of our students and community.
- Create a marketing strategy that incorporates our program advisory committees, considering the inclusion of student representation and opportunities for external partnerships.
- Determine a strategy for reviewing, marketing, and expanding programs and funding opportunities with external communities or partners.

Processes

Objective 8: Review our organizational structure, job functions and skill levels to increase efficiency and foster a culture of excellence.

- Perform a review of the organizational structures of other continuing education units across Canada to gain knowledge and inform decision making.
- Align our organizational structure with the requirements of our programmatic mandate and faculty operational needs, ensuring the appropriate allocation of staff time and resources.
- Audit faculty space usage and recommend changes aligned with the organizational structure and faculty needs.
- Create opportunities for staff and instructor recognition, advancement, and professional development and training.
- Create a plan that continues to cultivate a workplace culture that attracts and retains talented staff and instructors and fosters an environment where individuals thrive, feel safe and are supported in their roles.

Objective 9: Improve processes, systems and resources to enhance the operational effectiveness of the faculty and improve the student experience.

- Review, update and document faculty policies and procedures to improve efficiency, provide support to staff and establish a structure that maintains the integrity and continuity of our operations and programming.
- Optimise the functionality of the various systems and technology available to support faculty strategic initiatives and operations.
- Audit job descriptions and roles to ensure alignment with the programmatic mandate, organizational structure and faculty operational needs.
- Establish faculty decision-making processes that support the operations of the faculty, including procedures and resources needed to support those activities.

Objective 10: Improve data collection and reporting to inform decision making and understanding across the faculty and the university.

- Formulate a strategy, relying on data collection, systems, reporting and communication channels to enhance our understanding of our students and their various preferences and needs.
- Establish a plan to offer services, program planning activities and enrolment strategies that meet the needs and preferences of students and other internal and external stakeholders.
- Share the data collection and reporting strategies and how they affect our decision-making processes with the faculty.
- Through a data collection strategy, engage in a multi-year faculty operating budget planning process, which includes considering faculty operating and capital budget needs, as well as repair and renewal of assets and improving the accuracy of our financial forecasting.

Next steps

This strategic plan is a living document that will grow with our faculty and guide our thoughtful and incremental evolution over the coming years. Our [strategic objectives](#) represent our priorities, and we will embody our [vision](#), [mission](#) and [values](#) throughout our implementation process. Our next steps include the following:

- Disseminate this document.
- Incorporate our vision, mission and values throughout our faculty, such that they remain top of mind.
- Prioritise our strategic objectives (some may run concurrently).
- Identify realistic timelines for each strategic objective.
- Create implementation plans for each strategic objective, which includes the participation of staff and instructors, as well as identifies realistic measures and metrics.

We look forward to continuing to create positive change and growth within our faculty and to be a model of success for leading lifelong learning within MRU and our external community.

Appendix A

