

**DRAFT UPEI Academic Plan**  
**Office of the Vice-President, Academic and Research**

**Introduction**

UPEI aims to deliver a transformative learning experience that supports a holistic development of students. Ten faculties at UPEI offer a comprehensive range of programs for undergraduate, post-degree, and graduate students – Arts; Business; Education; Graduate Studies; Indigenous Knowledge, Education, Research and Applied Studies (IKERAS); Medicine (regional campus of Memorial University); Nursing; Science; Sustainable Design Engineering; and Veterinary Medicine. The Robertson Library is the province’s major academic library, playing an essential role in the University's teaching, learning, and research.

As detailed in the *UPEI Strategic Plan (2025-2030)*, the University is guided by the following vision, mission and core values.

**Vision**            *UPEI aspires to be a leader in transforming lives and communities through lifelong learning. With teaching and research at the heart of our identity, UPEI connects the Island and the world, enabling learners to explore, grow, and reach their full potential. Together, we share the purpose of making our world a better place.*

**Mission**           *The University of Prince Edward Island, founded on the tradition of liberal education, exists to encourage and assist people to acquire the skills, knowledge, and understanding necessary for critical and creative thinking, and thus prepare them to contribute to their own betterment and that of society through the development of their full potential. To accomplish these ends, the University is a community of scholars whose primary tasks are to teach and to learn, to engage in scholarship and research, and to offer service for the benefit of our Island and beyond.*

**Values**            1) *Academic Freedom*  
                         2) *Accountability and Integrity*  
                         3) *Continuous Improvement*  
                         4) *EDI and a Sense of Belonging*  
                         5) *Reconciliation*

The strategic plan has numerous specific goals that are organized around three themes: 1) thriving people and communities; 2) innovative and connected teaching, research, and scholarship; and 3) sustainability. The academic plan is situated within this strategic plan and aligned with its principles and goals. Together with the senior leadership team and Deans Council, the Vice-President, Academic and Research, has oversight of strategic decisions concerning allocation of resources to core academic priorities of the University. These decisions are guided by the strategic plan.

In addition, the *UPEI Strategic Enrolment Management Plan (2025-2030)* is a comprehensive plan to achieve and maintain optimal enrolments, recruitment, retention, and graduation rates. In this context, optimal is defined as enrolments that maintain a high quality of education and student success while reaching aspirational goals of academic units and sustainability in terms of available resources. The SEM plan has four overarching goals: 1) elevate student persistence and completion; 2) stabilize then grow enrolment; 3) strengthen graduate capacity and excellence; and 4) build SEM data and governance accountability. These goals are closely aligned with those of the university's strategic plan and will be cross-referenced with each other below under the themes of the present academic plan.

In order to align academic planning consistently with objectives of the strategic plan and SEM plan, this document presents an *Academic Plan* that reflects all academic related aspects of these two other plans. This alignment aims to ensure the academic initiatives are coordinated and effectively carried out. This academic plan serves as a framework for the implementation of action items in the SEM plan and prioritization as developed through a Prioritization and Implementation Subcommittee of the SEM Steering Committee. It is an actively evolving framework with ongoing updates alongside the implementation of the various initiatives in the university SEM and strategic plans.

### **Strategic Plan Pillar 1: Thriving People and Communities**

UPEI will foster an inclusive, healthy, collaborative, and supportive environment where our students, faculty, and staff can maximize their full potential, and contribute to their own and to the global communities. Goals and actions within this pillar that specifically pertain to academic priorities are listed below.

#### **1.1 Enriching student-centric supports, services, and experiences across our students' entire educational journey.**

- Build a Supportive First-year Experience that cultivates belonging, engagement, and academic confidence through structured cohorts and clear university norms.
- Elevate student persistence and completion by enhancing student preparedness and admission standards.
- Admit academically and holistically prepared students so they thrive from day one.
- Build one advising system with trained Student Navigators who will use clear steps to help students but adjust them as needed for each faculty member.
- Create a Student Experience Advisory Council (one for undergraduate and one for Graduate), providing continuous feedback on committee initiatives.

#### **1.2 Creating new ways of supporting the development, growth, and engagement of our students, faculty, and staff.**

- Implement an extended Welcome Week and missed orientation session linking students to their cohort and mentors all semester.
- Use timely data and proactive support to address emerging student challenges before they derail student progress.
- Use retention data to determine which Gateway and Summer Preparatory programs drive first-year persistence.
- Develop clear benchmarks for time-to-completion and implement checks to support graduate students' completion before the end of their funding.
- Strengthen academic advising and career development tailored to graduate students. Create opportunities for self-funded graduate students.

### 1.3 Demonstrating meaningful growth and connections with Indigenous communities.

Selected actions and activities under items 1.3 and 1.4 include, but are not limited to, those outlined as follows from the *UPEI Indigenous Strategic Framework and Initiatives* entitled: *Pesk'tek - The Path Ahead: The Journey to Reconciliation and Action Reform*. Extensive consultation with the Indigenous community, both internal and external to the University, was conducted in the development of the framework.

- Establish partnerships with Indigenous communities off and on reserve.
- Re-establish the Indigenous Advisory Council focused on governance and community engagement.
- Showcase Indigenous artwork in common areas throughout campus.
- Develop a calendar for Indigenous awareness days and activities.

### 1.4 Co-developing courses and programs to further build Indigenous Ways of Knowing within the University.

- Develop field and land-based pedagogy.
- Develop a diploma in Mi'kmaw language.
- Create in-service Indigenous teaching practices.
- Develop summer preparatory programs for Indigenous high school students.
- Establish professional development for faculty and staff on Indigenous issues.
- Re-create an Indigenous Advisory Circle focused on operational matters.
- Plan for a new Indigenous Teaching and Learning Site with broad cross-consultative input and collaboration.

## **Strategic Plan Pillar 2: Innovative and Connected Teaching, Research, and Scholarship**

Working together, we will make meaningful contributions to our world by fostering innovation and encouraging collaboration to address complex challenges by growing knowledge, ideas, and people. Specific academic goals and actions within this pillar are listed below.

## 2.1 Increasing internal entrepreneurship and innovation by engaging students, staff, faculty, and administrators in institutional initiatives.

- Conduct market analysis (domestically and internationally) to identify program trends and design micro-credentials and certificate pathways.
- Innovate our programs to align with our research priorities, drawing on interdisciplinary collaboration.
- Create new innovative opportunities within graduate programming (thesis-based; course-based; shorter specialized certificate programs, micro-credentials) and delivery frameworks.
- Restructure and expand the Faculty of Graduate Studies to streamline policies and services.
- Create TA positions and PhD student fellowships within UPEI to provide development and paid work opportunities for UPEI graduate students.

## 2.2 Utilizing innovative pedagogical and investigative approaches to enhance teacher, researcher, and learner experiences and interactions.

- Increase summer offerings to accelerate time-to-completion and promote part-time funding opportunities for students. Consider how summer programming can prepare first entry students for the transition to university.
- Create flexible and innovative graduate opportunities that align with UPEI's research strengths.
- Implement the curricular coherence policy at the program level to ensure program pathways are clear, logical, and easy for students to understand. This will help students see how their courses connect, reduce confusion about requirements, and support stronger retention and completion.
- Develop new course-based master's and certificate programs in areas of research excellence (e.g., Sustainability and One Health).
- Promote and create pathways into graduate degrees for existing undergraduate students, for example, the "Student as a Scholar" program can help build undergraduate research and develop future graduate students.

## 2.3 Further developing partnerships with industry, research institutions, government and non-government organizations, the not-for-profit sector, community groups, and other post-secondary institutions to pursue mutually beneficial education, research, and service initiatives of impact.

- Expand partnerships with local industry and organizations for the Study and Stay program, which supports international students to live, work, and stay in Prince Edward Island post-graduation.

- Support the Study Abroad program with partner universities abroad to allow students to visit, take unique courses in their field of study (or other electives), and gain independence and other life skills, while making new friends from around the world.
- Expand partnership opportunities with employers to expand student opportunities for Experiential Education and Work-integrated Learning.
- Increase student access to employer opportunities through Co-operative Education which combines classroom studies with practical work experience outside the university environment, and enhances students' learning by applying, testing, and observing classroom concepts in meaningful work situations.
- Innovate in academic programs through partnerships across units at the university to align with research priorities, drawing on interdisciplinary collaboration.

### **Strategic Plan Pillar 3: Sustainability**

UPEI will carry out its activities with a commitment to social, environmental, and financial sustainability. Academic goals and action under this pillar are summarized as follows.

3.1 Developing a digital transformation strategy to promote better connectivity for employees, and experiences for students.

- Diversify delivery models and align enrolment growth with flexible learning, for example, by developing online and hybrid programs using the *UPEI Online Learning Framework* and MPHEC guidelines to ensure quality and credibility.
- Leverage online delivery to reach new markets (internationally and domestically) and create flexible options for students, reducing pressure on space/campus capacity.

3.2 Improving data governance.

- Formalize a data governance framework outlining data stewardship roles, responsibilities, and delegated authority across Recruitment, Admissions, Registrar, Faculties, and Institutional Research.
- Establish clear access protocols to ensure transparent data sharing across units while safeguarding integrity and compliance.
- Embed data governance oversight into the SEM governance structure to align reporting and accountability.
- Develop a SEM data warehouse and dashboard, prioritizing recruitment funnel analytics, conversion rates, and retention indicators.
- Link SEM KPIs (applications, offers, enrolments, retention, satisfaction, student feedback) to a dashboard and create real-time monitoring.
- Increase staffing and training for data analysis and intelligence dedicated to SEM.
- Develop predictive modelling tools to forecast enrolment trends, student progression, and risk indicators.

### 3.3 Implementing strategic enrolment management to improve student recruitment, retention, and overall student success.

- Implement a roadmap to ensure the University can scale responsibly toward a target of approximately 6,000 students by 2030.
- Set international enrolment levels no more than 25% of the total student body while expanding access for underrepresented communities and building flexible delivery models.
- Institute annual retention/satisfaction, exit surveys, and program loss analysis to identify issues and inform interventions.
- Establish an early alert/early assist system, at the program level, triggered at GPA < 2.0, missed log-ins, or attendance flags with timely notification to relevant student advising teams.

### 3.4 Instituting a multi-year operational plan and revenue strategy.

- Develop a model that evaluates the ability of high-demand programs to expand and determine how to allocate resources properly.
- Evaluate under-subscribed programs and determine if they can be repackaged through an interdisciplinary partnership, or if not, recommend these programs be removed.
- Track internal and external data to improve under/over-subscribed program enrolments.
- Ensure existing programs evolve in innovative and relevant ways.
- Support the development and delivery of new programming to meet the needs of future undergraduate and graduate/PhD students.
- Expand graduate student funding and fellowship opportunities to attract and retain top candidates.

### 3.5 Expanding sustainability across the curriculum through program innovation, new forms of learning, and digital transformation aligned with student needs and workforce needs.

- Implement program and curricular modifications associated with enrolment projections in the SEM plan to stabilize and grow undergraduate and graduate enrolments.
- Position graduate program expansion as a critically important element in the building of UPEI's reputation and research funding.

## **Key Initiatives and Priorities for the Near-Term**

The Office of the Vice-President, Academic and Research (OVPAR) provides direction and support to academic units, student services, and the Robertson Library to achieve the above priorities and goals. The OVPAR strives to effectively align the university's resources with the academic priorities in the university's strategic plan. It is committed to continual improvement and delivery of high-quality academic programs across the broad range of disciplines at UPEI.

In the near-term over the next few years, the following key initiatives and priorities will be pursued under the academic plan. All of the areas will be pursued within the timeframe of the university strategic plan (2025 to 2030), however the priority attention in the near-term will be focused on the following initiatives.

<b>Pillar 1: Thriving People and Communities</b>	
1.1	i) Development of a new student advising model that coordinates the various services, supports and academic advising functions between Dalton Hall and academic units.
1.2	i) Use retention data to determine which Gateway and Summer Preparatory programs drive first-year persistence.
1.3	i) Establish partnerships with Indigenous communities off and on reserve. ii) Re-establish the Indigenous Advisory Council focused on governance and community engagement.
1.4	i) Launch of a new undergraduate major in Indigenous Studies in the Faculty of Indigenous Knowledge, Education, Research, and Applied Studies (IKERAS). ii) Develop field and land-based pedagogy. iii) Develop a diploma in Mi'kmaw language.
<b>Pillar 2: Innovative and Connected Teaching, Research, and Scholarship</b>	
2.1	i) Explore the potential of new graduate program offering(s) in the Faculty of Arts. ii) Restructure and expand the Faculty of Graduate Studies to streamline policies and services.
2.2	i) Review of curricular coherence of academic programs to critically and collaboratively examine the program curriculum to ensure alignment with desired learning outcomes and support the student success and progression to graduation.
2.3	i) Expansion of executive education and cross-faculty partnerships in the McDougall Faculty of Business, such as with Political Science and SMCS. ii) Explore and support the development of new programming, e.g., Nursing (LPN to BScN, PhD), IKERAS (Indigenous Studies), Engineering, Science (Agricultural Studies). iii) Explore the potential of an interdisciplinary program in health sciences, in partnership between the Faculties of Science, Medicine, and Veterinary Medicine.
<b>Pillar 3: Sustainability</b>	
3.1	i) Creation of a joint medical program through an innovative delivery model in partnership with Memorial University, tentatively by 2028.
3.2	i) Development of program-level retention analytics capability, including a dashboard with KPIs, data governance model, and data mapping of the student journey.
3.3	i) Using Moodle analytics capabilities, establish an early alert/early assist system at the program level.
3.4	i) Develop a model that evaluates the ability of high-demand programs to expand and determine how to allocate resources properly.
3.5	i) Expansion of the undergraduate DVM program in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine.

In fulfilling the objectives of this academic plan, the OVPAR is guided by the core values of the university's strategic plan including equity, diversity, inclusion, and Indigenous reconciliation.

The OVPAR is responsible for ensuring that the university's academic priorities are resourced and leading efforts to identify and secure funding streams to successfully carry out this academic plan. It fosters an environment of collaboration among academic units to achieve the goals and objectives of the plan.

### **Acknowledgements**

This academic plan has assembled the various academic aspects of the university's strategic plan and SEM plan. In this regard, the contributions of all who contributed to the development of those plans, particularly their steering committees and subcommittees, are gratefully acknowledged. Helpful input from Deans Council, APCC (Academic Planning and Curriculum Committee), VP Advisory Group, and the university community through feedback, meetings and consultation sessions. Thank you to all who contribute in significant ways to the development and implementation of the various initiatives of this academic plan.

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