

Athabasca University's Student Services Strategic Plan 2018–2023

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Transforming the Student Experience

In *Imagine: Transforming Lives, Transforming Communities*, Athabasca University sets out a leading-edge, best-in-class vision for a digital-first university. It lays the foundation for a university that recognizes and celebrates the diversity of its community. It recognizes that learners come to us with personal learning goals that arise from their unique backgrounds and experiences, and pledges to provide a seamless and intuitive experience as learners pursue their unique learning journeys. *Imagine* reflects our commitment to creating and supporting a growth culture that celebrates success, superior performance, action, and persistence toward our vision.

To achieve this vision, the Student Services Strategic Plan that follows flows from the *Imagine* plan and contributes to the institution's integrated planning framework. This foundational plan informs the strategic and operational directions that will be taken in support of learners throughout the institution. It builds on the passion that our academics, tutors, academic experts, and student services staff share for removing barriers to university-level education and envisions a student experience that is welcoming, affordable, flexible, seamless, consistent, and well-supported at every stage of the learning journey. It commits Athabasca University to implementing standards of service that use data to meet our learners' changing needs across a lifetime of learning.

We look forward to working with our learners and all of the Athabasca University community in not just re-imagining the student experience but bringing that experience to life.

Sincerely,



DR. MATTHEW PRINEAS
Provost and Vice President Academic
Athabasca University

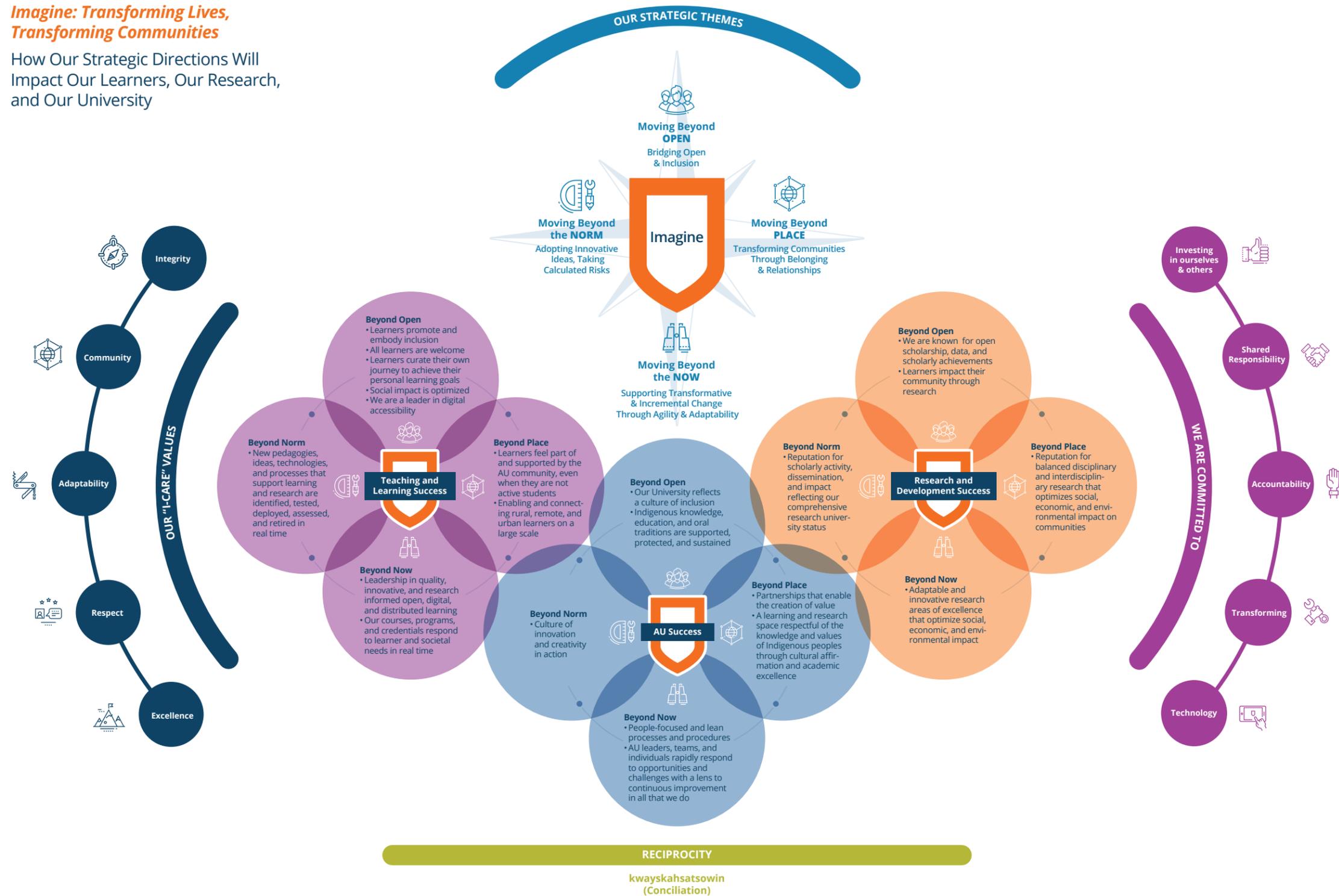


DR. ALAIN MAY
Associate Vice President,
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Athabasca University



Imagine: Transforming Lives, Transforming Communities

How Our Strategic Directions Will Impact Our Learners, Our Research, and Our University





Student Services Strategic Plan (2018-2023)

The Student Services Strategic Plan sets out a bold student service vision that will guide Athabasca University's investment in student services for the next five years. The vision is learner-centred, quality-driven, and community-based.

The plan is driven by the strategic themes in *Imagine: Transforming Lives, Transforming Communities*, envisioning student services that move Athabasca University:



... **beyond OPEN** by systematically removing barriers and being intentional in creating a culture of inclusion in which all learners are welcome. It will result in a suite of diverse, comprehensive, and adaptable student services that provide the tools and supports that learners require to curate their journeys and achieve their personal learning goals.



... **beyond the NORM** by prescribing purposeful actions in the training, development, and deployment of our employees throughout the university and actively creating and fostering a student service culture that supports and adapts to our unique learners.



... **beyond PLACE** by shaping and enabling mutually supportive communities, regardless of where those communities exist. This plan is based in our commitment to a cohesive community that shares the responsibility for the success of the institution and our learners through open and transparent action.



... and **beyond the NOW** by embracing innovation and ensuring that we foster an agile, resilient, creative, and adaptable environment that supports our learners throughout their learning journey.



Student Services Strategic Plan (2018-2023) (continued)

As a foundational plan in Athabasca University's Integrated Planning Framework, this Student Service Plan sets out a student service vision that enables the achievement of the ambitious strategic objectives laid out in the *Imagine* plan. Through the goals and strategies that follow, this vision will guide a transformation of our student services – one that builds on existing strengths and delivers leading-edge programs, services, information technologies, policies, and processes in support of our learners.



Student Service Strategic Directions

This plan is comprised of two overarching goals.

Goal 1

The first is to deliver student services that welcome learners throughout their experience with Athabasca University. This goal supports one of the *Imagine* plan's strategic directions: ensuring that all learners are welcome. Welcoming learners is about much more than just inviting them in. It is about making learners feel welcome at every step of their Athabasca University experience – in their first experiences of enrolment and registration, in obtaining the tools, resources and supports they require along their learning journey, and as they complete their current journeys and consider their next. Delivering student services that welcome learners implies consistent, seamless, and integrated services that are clear and easily accessed. It means student services that highlight Athabasca University's nearness to the learner.

Goal 2

The second goal is to deliver student services that provide the tools and support that learners require to curate their own journeys to achieve their personal learning goals. Athabasca University is currently helping over 40,000 students achieve their personal learning goals; this means that there are over 40,000 unique learning journeys in progress at AU. This student service strategic plan imagines a comprehensive package of data-informed and people-focused programs and technologies that enable Athabasca University to respond to, support, and engage each of our students in unique and appropriate ways as they curate their own journeys and achieve their personal learning goals.



Goal 1: Student services that welcome learners throughout their experience with Athabasca University.



Strategies

S1

- S1.1 Deliver welcoming, flexible, and seamless institutional processes throughout the student lifecycle**
 - S1.1.1 Ensure that student services are streamlined, transparent, and consistent, and supported by appropriate and clearly defined service standards
 - S1.1.2 Deliver consistent, seamless, and flexible application and registration experiences that support all learners
 - S1.1.3 Deliver a consistent, affordable, and flexible exam experience
 - S1.1.4 Deliver transparent, effective, and efficient student awards and financial aid support services to decrease financial barriers to learning
- S1.2 Ensure an inclusive learner environment by delivering data-informed student supports that recognize, welcome, and support learner diversity**
 - S1.2.1 Provide data-informed leading-edge accessibility supports which focus on accessibility and inclusion for all learners
 - S1.2.2 Recognize and support inclusive gender identification
 - S1.2.3 Deliver a student experience that recognizes the importance of culturally appropriate mental health and wellness in support of academic achievement
 - S1.2.4 Working with Indigenous learners and communities, deliver culturally appropriate student services in support of personal learning goal achievement
- S1.3 Deliver a reimagined and personalized welcoming program that prepares learners for their digital university experience by providing access to and information about essential tools, processes, policies, and resources**
- S1.4 Enhance the delivery of quality and adaptable student services through the deployment of a student services talent management program**

Measures of Success

M1

- M1.1 Learner perception of access**
- M1.2 Learner perception of welcome**
- M1.3 Percent of Indigenous learners**
- M1.4 Percent of applications who enrol in first course**
- M1.5 Average number of courses per learner**
- M1.6 Percent of students who report that they are Very Satisfied with student experience (Student Experience Survey)**
- M1.7 NSSE Supportive Environment Rating**
- M1.8 Number of student complaints per registration**
- M1.9 Percent of learners with self-identified learning barriers**



Goal 2: Student services that provide the tools and support that learners require to curate their own journeys to achieve their personal learning goals.



Strategies

S2

- S2.1** Ensure that learners experience a consistent, affordable, and quality learning environment through the effective and efficient curation, creation, control, and distribution of learning resources
- S2.2** Deliver effective and efficient learning accreditation pathway processes that align with the Learning Framework and recognize and adapt to the diversity of experiences learners bring
- S2.3** Deliver data-informed support for academic achievement by Athabasca University's unique learner population
 - S2.3.1** Ensure that students-at-risk are identified and provided appropriate support to regain academic standing
 - S2.3.2** Ensure all learners understand and are provided the supports necessary to achieve success in their academic endeavours

Measures of Success

M2

- M2.1** Learner perception of success in relation to personal learning goals
- M2.2** Percent of program students who complete credential
- M2.3** Percent of students who complete course
- M2.4** Percent of students who are in Good Academic Standing
- M2.5** Percent of students on Academic Probation
- M2.6** Percent of students on Academic Probation returning to Good Academic Standing
- M2.7** Alumni perception of success in relation to personal learning goals
- M2.8** Average time to completion
- M2.9** Number of learners transferring credits to AU programs
- M2.10** Number of learners achieving alternative learning accreditation

OUR VISION

Transforming Lives,
Transforming Communities

OUR MISSION

Athabasca University is dedicated to the removal of barriers that restrict access to and success in university-level study and to increasing equality of educational opportunity for adult learners worldwide. We are committed to excellence in teaching, research and scholarship and to being of service to the general public.