



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

Deeper Community Partnerships

FOR DISCUSSION – CONGRESS

INTRODUCTION

Deepening our partnerships with businesses, community groups and civil society presents an incredible opportunity for the University of Calgary.

For our students, such partnerships could mean more internship and post-graduate employment opportunities, more current and relevant curricula, more exposure to industry or community experts – more out of their time at the university.

For our faculty, these partnerships mean funding, validation of research, access to the knowledge that rests outside of our walls and the opportunity to bring our innovations to the world.

For our broader community there is enormous benefit, as we take our academic research and bring it into the world as products, services and improvements to people's lives.

The Working Group on Deeper Community Partnerships has been tasked with making recommendations and facilitating a community discussion on how to best implement a new model of community partnership at the University of Calgary.

As we undertook our work, we looked to local, national and international examples. We were instructed by the partnership successes we already enjoy at the University of Calgary – as well as the challenges that have presented themselves along the way.

This research instructed us on the need to move carefully and thoughtfully to ensure our University's values are at the heart of any partnership decision. But our research also validated the value of these partnerships. They connect our scholars, alumni and city. They strengthen the University's position at the heart of society.

On behalf of the working group, we are happy to submit our thoughts on this important matter and we look forward to a robust discussion.

Janaka Ruwanpura
Vice Provost
Associate Vice-President (Research International)

Dianne Gereluk
Dean
Werklund School of Education

PROPOSALS / RECOMMENDATIONS

The Working Group on Deeper Community Partnerships have built upon the work of the Industry Partnership Task Force (August to September 2020) to develop the concept of “Purposeful Mega Partnerships”, the critical pieces of which are described below.

Purposeful Mega Partnerships

The Community Partnership Working Group strongly felt that conceptualizing the rationale for purposeful mega partnerships is warranted to ensure how the broader campus would be reflected in a modern university’s future-oriented aims in collaboration with external industry and community partners. The group focused on institutional and fully-integrated partnerships.

As such, this committee's recommendation would emphasize why mega partnerships are essential for the university's sustainability and vitality, together with setting the preconditions and principles for how we foster collaborative and conducive (positive) synergistic relationships.

The operationalization aspect of the committee would be developed following Congress, and in collaboration with the Industry Liaison Office (ILO) to align processes and decision-making officials.

Central to this working committee was an understanding and appreciation for mega partnerships. Timelines for implementation would follow consultation and engagement at Congress.

The Working Group gathered regularly to define and develop the following critical pieces for Purposeful Mega Partnerships:

1. Rationale:

- a. We mainly focused on the why and the what with the intent to bridge with other working committees (ILO, Interdisciplinary)
- b. We defined - Why partnerships are essential?

2. Definition of Mega Partnerships (MP): We then came up with a unique definition for “Mega Partnerships

3. Framework for Mega Partnerships: We defined a framework that included the fundamental concept of Trusted Partners and the pre-conditions from an internal and external lens for mutually beneficial trusted partnerships, four core principles and a criterion to choose areas for mega partnerships.

- a. The core principles: high impact, uniquely positioned, excellent initiatives and sustainable.
- b. The criterion for partnership focuses: We suggested a transdisciplinary model for MP that aligns with broader institutional priorities, plans, and strategies of UCalgary with clear desired outcomes and impact.

4. Testing area of focus: We tested the core principles on an existing internal partnership as a test case (e.g., We consulted with the principal investigators of an existing multi-collaborative project on concussion)

5. Existing External Models and Frameworks: We explored and compared other Mega Partnerships models and frameworks with other institutions, read published books and articles on successful university partnerships with external organizations.

Following are details of each of the above-mentioned critical pieces for purposeful MP.

1. Rationale

Why are partnerships essential for UCalgary?

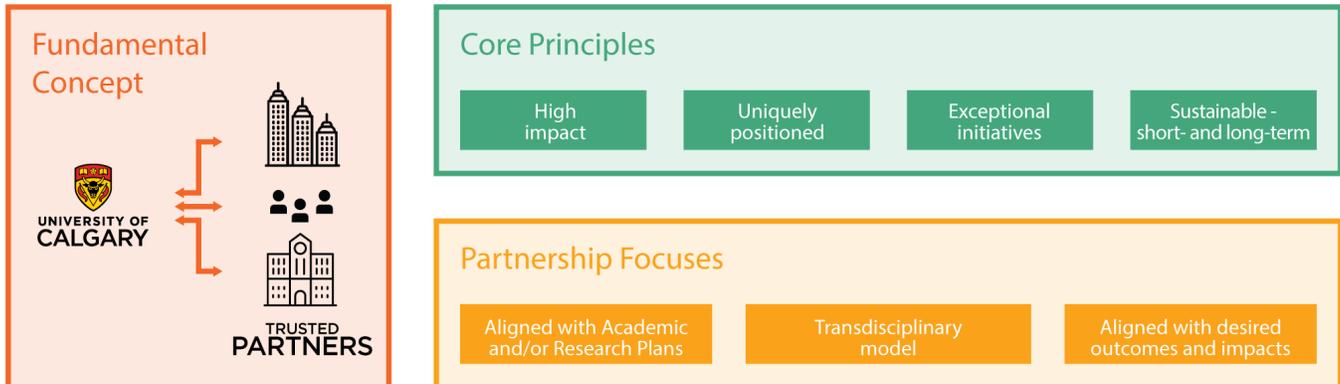
- to address wicked problems
- to participate in local and regional economic development
- to play on the global stage
- to enhance student opportunities and experiences
- to engage with a broader innovation ecosystem

2. Definition of Mega Partnerships

Mega Partnerships represent the incredible potential for academic, industry and community to work together on a shared mission and to rapidly advance practical, real-world solutions addressing wicked global problems and inspiring transformation for the benefit of society and the future of humanity.

3. Framework for Mega Partnerships

We defined a framework that included the fundamental concept of Trusted Partners, and the pre-conditions from an internal and external lens.



Fundamental Concept: TRUSTED PARTNERS

- Commit to mutual benefit
- Secures commitment from all stakeholders involved
- Reliable, aligned, and creates trust
- Embraces diversity, and ensure equity
- Follow through on what we said we will do
- Opportunity to maximize our impact on society

The following pre-conditions, both from the internal and external perspectives for the Fundamental Concept, are essential to build trusted partnerships:

- Internal lens - Partnership
 - UCalgary recognizes and values the engagement and expertise of our partner
 - We have the people, resources, processes, and functional management structure to support mega partnerships
 - We have clear and transparent core principles, focus, alignment, and criteria in selecting partners

- External lens – Partnership
 - External community partners recognize and value UCalgary’s expertise in areas of strategic importance and shared interest
 - Aligns with UCalgary’s mission and values
 - Adheres to UCalgary’s policies and procedures (code of conduct, collective agreement, and intellectual property policy)

Core Principles for MP

Then, we defined four core principles for the MP:

- High impact
 - Tackle complicated and complex challenges
 - Leverage complementary strengths for higher impact
 - Opportunities are multifaceted and demand regional, provincial, national, and global cooperation
 - Enhance our societies' quality of life
 - Create ecosystems that are sustainable
 - Impact quality of student experience
 - Potential for systemic change
 - Address Sustainable Development Goals

- Uniquely positioned
 - Making substantive and meaningful change in the world
 - Critical mass of thought leaders ready to take risks and engage in complex challenges
 - Proven track record of expertise at critical or foundational level (with external validation of current level and plans)
 - Scalability – national and international
 - Internal capacity and ambition
 - Demonstrated or emerging excellence
 - Organisational capacity

- Exceptional initiatives
 - New thinking and approaches to support university’s aspirations
 - Potential for multiple collaborative networks - nationally and internationally
 - Transdisciplinary collaborations
 - Geographical advantage

- Sustainable – short- and long-term
 - Academic ability to meet ongoing challenges with a reasonable likelihood of success that has a lasting impact
 - Organizational/operational ability to address short term challenges/issues, but necessarily attends to long-term complexities and opportunities (e.g. funding leading to long-term projects)
 - Growth potential

A criterion for partnership focuses

We came up with a criterion that has three parts to assess partnership focuses:

- **Aligned with Plans and Strategies:** MP should be aligned with academic and/or research plans and other institutional strategies and plans like global engagement plan, Indigenous strategy (ii' taa'poh'to'p), research themes and faculty plans.
- **Transdisciplinary Model:** MP must align with transdisciplinary model with collaborating faculties, centres, institutes and units.
- **Aligned with desired outcomes and impact:** MP should be aligned with the following desired outcomes and impacts.

Outcomes

- advance a complex societal issue or innovation
- further/elevate research excellence
- ensure community engagement
- enhance reputation
- elevate student experience

Impact

- advance new thinking, ideas, or innovations
- enhance economic and social impact
- make substantive contributions to individuals or society
- philosophically aligned towards the betterment of humanity

4. Partnership focuses

We identified a few partnership focuses and then tested the core principles on an existing internal partnership as a test case. We consulted with the principal investigators of an existing multi-collaborative project on concussion and applied whether the developed framework can be applicable.

5. Existing external models and frameworks

We explored and compared other Mega Partnerships models and frameworks with other institutions, read published books and articles on successful university partnerships with external organizations. The committee read, reviewed, and gained learnings from the following documents and resources:

- MIT'S Industrial Partnerships report of the Ad hoc Committee on Industrial Partnership review (2003)
- Building a Market-Smart Organizational Structure for University-Industry Partnership by the University Research Forum
- The US Digital Service - Digital Services Playbook - <https://playbook.cio.gov/>
- Strategic Industry-University Partnerships - Success-Factors from Innovative Companies (2018) Edited by: Lars Frølund and Max F. Riedel with case studies from BMW, Rolls Royce, DuPont, Novo Nordisk, IBM, Siemens, Schlumberger, Ferrovial (ISBN 978-0-12-810989-2)

- Developing Successful Strategic Partnerships with Universities by Lars Frølund, Fiona Murray, and Max Riedel (December 06, 2017), MIT Sloan Management Review, <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/developing-successful-strategic-partnerships-with-universities/>
- The MIT Climate and Sustainability Consortium launched with 13 company members to work with MIT on innovation in climate and sustainability¹

6. Engagement at the Congress

The committee would find three key areas of emphasis helpful for further refinement and transition from conceptualization of mega partnerships to that of the operationalization of this task. As such, we are looking for validation of the concept of trusted partners, the rationale for mega partnerships, and whether the core principles provide discernment in such decision making. Constructive feedback to see whether this resonates with the academic community is vital for this plan to be realized in practice.

Key open questions (see below section **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**) will help to attain this information and guidance from the broader academic community at UCalgary

PATH FORWARD

Consultation is essential to assessing the culture and ethos for the proposed initiative of Mega Partnerships. Following the Congress, it is warranted to examine areas of resistance, barriers, potential opportunities, and areas of growth. Dependent on this analysis, the committee expects to consider the following:

- Analysis of Congress' consultation
- Environmental scan of current and potential mega partnerships across campus according to the framework
- Alignment of an implementation plan in coordination/collaboration with ILO and Transdisciplinary Working Groups.
- Develop a governance structure for decision making at ELT or otherwise (dependent on cross analysis of task force groups)

¹ <https://news.mit.edu/2021/mit-convenes-influential-industry-leaders-fight-climate-change-0128>

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways can we enhance the definition of mega partnerships?
2. How can we improve upon the fundamental concept of “trusted partners”?
3. What are your thoughts about the pre-conditions to build a strong trusted partnership? (both from external and internal perspectives)?
4. How can we refine the core principles to articulate and discern practical, purposeful, real-world challenges on a large-scale?
5. How do we leverage current capacity to develop mega partnerships for broader meaningful impact to our communities and society?
6. What barriers currently exist for those partnerships that already exist?
7. What do you think the process should be in identifying mega partners and the relevant partnership focuses?

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS AND PROCESS

The *Working Group on Deeper Community Partnerships* was comprised of the following members of the University of Calgary:

- **Janaka Ruwanpura**, Vice Provost and Associate Vice-President (Research - International) (Chair)
- **Dianne Gereluk**, Dean (Werklund School of Education) (Chair)
- **Jim Dewald**, Dean (Haskayne School of Business)
- **Kate Hamilton**, Executive Director and Chief of Staff (Office of the President)
- **Steven Larter**, Associate Vice-President (Research - Innovation)
- **Andrea Morris**, Associate Vice-President (Development) and Chief Development Officer
- **Buffy St-Amand**, Director, Strategic Projects and Global Initiatives (UCalgary International)
- **Penny Werthner**, Dean (Faculty of Kinesiology)
- **John Wilson**, President and CEO (Innovate Calgary)

Members were charged with developing implementation plans for the ideas presented to the University of Calgary community in October 2020 town hall. Specifically, members were asked to seek out and take feedback received from the university community and other stakeholders, develop concepts and provide proposals that consider the opinions of our scholars, the strategic objectives of our university and the best thinking of group members.

Feedback was received from the University of Calgary community through email, anonymous online feedback and meetings between university leadership and various official and unofficial groups. Strategic direction came through the University’s approved strategic plan (Eyes High) and research plan, and from the University of Calgary Executive Leadership Team.