



# **MaPS Feedback Tour**

REPORT

MaPS Executive Committee  
January 2020

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We would like to thank Gail MacKean for her assistance with data collection, analysis and report compilation and Fiona Boulet for her assistance with coordination of this initiative.

### **MaPs Executive Committee members**

Susan Arlidge, Member at large

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Robert Wensveen, Treasurer

## Executive summary

### Introduction and background

The MaPS Executive Committee (EC) exists to serve as the MaPS voice with the executive leadership team. In order to fulfill this mandate, the Executive Committee members sought input from the MaPS community through the Feedback Tour Initiative. The Feedback Tour consisted of several focus groups and interviews with interested MaPS participants during the fall of 2019.

### What the participants told us

What we learned through this initiative is summarized in four sections aligned with the topic areas explored through the focus groups and interviews: Positives; Challenges and Frustrations; Desired Future State; and MaPS Executive Committee Purpose. The themes which emerged in each topic area are reported in the respective section.

#### 1. Positives

*The major positive theme that emerged was the **nature of the work**.* Underlying this main positive theme were six overlapping sub-themes related to the nature of work which will be described in the body of this report. In addition to the nature of work and its sub-themes, the following four additional themes emerged: University community and culture; Immediate work environment, including personal team; Opportunities for ongoing learning and professional development; and Benefits and/or stability, including opportunities for career advancement

#### 2. Challenges and frustrations

*The major theme that emerged here was not **feeling valued**,* along with three overlapping sub-themes that will be explored in the body of the report. The following four additional themes related to challenges and frustrations emerged: Administrative structures and processes that primarily affect MaPS as employees; Administrative burden; MaPS identity; and Current climate.

#### 3. Desired future state

*The major theme that emerged when asked how to build upon the positives and/or address and challenges was the opportunity for the UofC to do more around **continuous learning and professional development**,* with four overlapping sub-themes identified which will be covered more fully in the body of the report. The following four additional themes emerged related to the desired future state: Connections, networking and mentorship; Changes to administrative processes; Resources to support work success; and Feeling valued, fairness and equity.

#### 4. The MaPS Executive Committee Purpose

The dominant theme that emerged here was that was the EC has an important role to play in helping **increase connections across the MaPS community**. The body of this report will outline in more detail specific suggestions regarding how the MaPS Executive Committee can best serve the community.

## **A Shared Vision for the Future**

Based on the information gathered from the focus groups and interviews, the MaPS Executive Committee has identified five domains of work to be considered for the future:

1. Improve Communications and Culture
2. Review and Refine Administrative Structures and Processes
3. Expand Opportunities for Learning and Professional Development
4. Improve Compensation and Support
5. Strengthen MaPS Community and Identity

The corresponding section of this report provides several actionable ideas that could support the five domains that we have identified.

### **Next steps**

The MaPS EC looks forward to working with MaPS members and the ELT to review, refine and prioritize the actions in a manner that might improve the future state for the MaPS community while supporting the success of the U of C more broadly. Building toward this future state will rely upon commitment, support and collaboration from the ELT and the MaPS community. The MaPS Executive Committee will endeavor to facilitate this collaboration and communicate progress back to the MaPS community.

## Introduction and background

Management and Professional Staff (MaPS) employees play important roles at the University of Calgary (UC)<sup>1</sup> and are embedded in all 14 Faculties and over 80 schools and business units. MaPS are not part of any bargaining agent nor have any recognized association status. The creation of the MaPS Executive Committee was intended to provide a voice for the community. In 2016 the MaPS Executive Committee formalized this mandate by developing a Mission, which is: *'To make a difference by taking every opportunity to listen to and communicate with the MaPS community and the University to work towards equitable outcomes on MaPS employment conditions and standards.'*

The MaPS Executive Committee, then, exists to serve as the MaPS voice with the executive leadership team. In order to fulfill this mandate, the Executive Committee members sought input from the MaPS community about what they feel are important issues for discussion with the leadership team, as well their thoughts about the Executive Committee and its role. A feedback tour was undertaken in the fall of 2019 to gather input from interested MaPS community members. This tour consisted of a series of focus groups and interviews.

## Methods

Five 90-minute focus groups were held at various locations across the University of Calgary's (UC) Campuses between October 30 and December 2, 2019. The focus groups were held at noon and lunch was provided to the participants. The focus groups were facilitated by a neutral moderator, and one or two MaPS Executive Committee members were present at each session to listen to the discussion and to answer questions about the Executive Committee that might arise. Permission to audio-record the sessions was obtained, and detailed notes also taken.

Individuals interested in providing input, but who were not able to make any of the five scheduled focus groups, participated in a short telephone interview. These interviews ranged in length from 20 to 45 minutes. Again, permission to audio-record the interviews was obtained, and detailed notes taken.

A semi-structured guide supported the facilitation of the focus groups and the conducting of the interviews. The questions in the guide were developed to explore four broad topic areas.

1. Reasons why these MaPS employees chose to work at the UofC, what they like about their work and what keeps them here
2. Any challenges and/or frustrations MaPS employees experience in their jobs
3. Ideas MaPS employees have about how the positives of MaPS roles could be built upon, and how any challenges and/or frustrations might be addressed

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report the term MaPS is used to refer to MaPS employees at the University of Calgary

4. Thoughts about the role of the MaPS Executive Committee and preferences for interacting with the Committee members

All notes were analyzed by the focus group moderator, an experienced qualitative researcher, with the goal of identifying key themes emerging across the focus groups. The preliminary data analysis was discussed with members of the MaPS Executive Committee, with the goal of confirming and refining the themes, assisting with data interpretation, and formulating ideas for discussion with the University of Calgary’s Executive Leadership Team.

### Findings

Participants included 39 individuals (35 women and 4 men) working in a MaPS role at the University of Calgary participated in one of these five scheduled focus groups. An additional 5 individuals (all women) participated in a short telephone interview; for a total of 44 participants overall. The participants were all between the ages of 30 and 69; with 25 (57%) being between 30 and 49 years old and 18 (41%) between 50 to 69 years old; one person preferred not to disclose their age.

These individuals came from a wide variety of faculties and departments across Campus, including: the Cumming School of Medicine, the Haskayne School of Business, the Taylor Institute, Continuing Education, Human Resources, Research Services, Student and Enrolment Services, Research Services, the Provost’s Portfolio and Advancement. Approximately half (n=23) of the participants had been involved in a MaPS role for five years or less, and the other half (n=21) for more than six years (see Table 1).

<b>Table 1: Number of years in a MaPS role</b>					
<b>&lt;1</b>	<b>1-5</b>	<b>6-10</b>	<b>11-15</b>	<b>16-20</b>	<b>20+</b>
1	22	10	9	2	0

With respect to their MaPS classification, approximately 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s (n=30) identified themselves as management and 1/3<sup>rd</sup> (n=15) as professional, research, technical professional or operational and administrative support (see Table 2).

<b>Table 2: MaPS Classification</b>				
<b>Management</b>	<b>Professional</b>	<b>Research</b>	<b>Technical professional</b>	<b>Operational and administrative support</b>
30	10	2	1	1

The findings from these focus groups and interviews are summarized here in four sections. The first two sections provide an overview of the positive aspects, as well as the challenges and frustrations of working in MaPS roles, respectively. Section three presents the key ideas that the participants shared about regarding how to build for a better future - accentuating positives and mitigating challenges. Finally, we outline the thoughts participants had about the role of the MaPS Executive Committees, and their preferences regarding interacting with the Committee.

Please note that the findings reported here represent the experiences and perspectives of the focus group and interview participants. If there are inaccuracies with respect to University policies and 'how things work', this may be useful in informing the development of a communication strategy.

### Positives

Recognizing that MaPS are a talented and diverse community and have skills that would allow them to work in many places, participants were asked what attracted them initially to the UofC, what keeps them here, and ultimately what they like most about working at the UofC. The responses and related discussion can be grouped under four overarching themes: nature of the work; the University community and culture; benefits and stability; and, the immediate work environment.

The major theme that emerged here was **nature of the work**, with six sub-themes identified: meaningful work; work that is challenging, complex, innovative and/or diverse; good fit with values and/or interests; freedom; being an agent of change; and, work-life balance and/or fit with lifestyle. See Table 3 for a brief description of these sub-themes.



**Table 3: Positives - The Nature of the Work**

Sub-themes	Brief description
<b>Meaningful work</b>	<p>Many spoke about the opportunity to participate in meaningful work as an important positive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>“Doing good work in the world is very important”</i></li> <li>- <i>“It has always been important to me to do work with societal impact.”</i></li> <li>- <i>“I enjoy the university because I feel like I can make a huge difference”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Work that is challenging, complex, innovative and/or diverse</b>	<p>Many liked the challenge, complexity and/or innovative nature of their work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>“I came for the complexity of issues at larger educational institution”</i></li> <li>- <i>“Love the innovation piece. University is looked to for being at the forefront of change, on the cutting edge...”</i> [engaged in research component]</li> <li>- Lots of diversity: <i>“no two days are the same”</i></li> <li>- Dynamic &amp; challenging aspects of the work: <i>“Every single day is a new challenge”</i>.</li> </ul>
<b>Good fit with values and/or interests</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Good alignment with value</li> <li>- Good fit with my university education &amp; interests</li> <li>- <i>“I wanted to give back to the student community, as I had benefited.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Freedom/Autonomy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In these roles can be great freedom to try new things, including freedom to build my own team</li> <li>- Academic freedom for non-academics</li> </ul>
<b>Being an agent of change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In MaPS position I am able to be that agent. To see the impact my role has on the lives of a lot of others</li> <li>- <i>“I came back to university after undergrad...came back to help solve problems that I faced so others would not struggle like I did”</i></li> <li>- Ability to contribute to building things here</li> <li>- <i>“Helping others to succeed”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Work-life balance and/or fit with lifestyle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Better work life balance, &amp; better fit with lifestyle [for some; &amp; this is being increasingly threatened with staff reductions] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It can be hard to maintain that balance in reality</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Being well supported by supervisors &amp; leaders when experiencing personal challenges is much appreciated</li> </ul>

In addition to nature of the work, four other themes emerged here about the positive aspects of working in a MaPS role at the UofC: the university community and culture; immediate work environment; opportunities for continuous learning and professional development; and, benefits and/or stability. These themes are briefly described in Table 4.

**Table 4: Positives - Additional themes**

Theme	Brief description
<p><b><i>The university community and culture</i></b></p>	<p>Many liked being part of the UofC community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Felt invested, having started at UofC as a student.</li> <li>- Wanted to be part of a U community again</li> <li>- Fitness, food, music, art, community events</li> <li>- People to interact &amp; collaborate with</li> </ul> <p>Some described aspects of the culture that drew them to and/or keep them at the UofC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attracted to UofC by the huge shift in culture within the past decade; in particular the deliberate increase in connection to industry &amp; philanthropy</li> <li>- Being able to work with &amp; be inspired by strong female leaders at U of C</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Immediate work environment</i></b></p>	<p>Many people love their colleagues, supervisors and local team and the work they do together</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>“I get joy from my team &amp; from the work I do.”</i></li> <li>- <i>“I love the people I work with”</i></li> <li>- <i>“What keeps me here is the direct team I work with &amp; the freedom I have been given to build my own team.”</i></li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Opportunities for ongoing learning &amp; professional development</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appreciate professional development opportunities</li> <li>- Positive comments about both UManage &amp; ULead. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunity to connect &amp; learn from &amp; with colleagues, to develop relationships with other MaPS, was a highly valued aspect of the ULead program in particular. Was difficult to maintain these connections, however, after the program ended.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Access to UofC courses, both academic &amp; continuing education</li> <li>- Opportunities to be involved in ongoing learning; including being involved in publications, courses &amp; other initiatives</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Benefits and/or stability, including opportunities for career advancement</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Good benefits (e.g., pension, maternity) &amp; stability; something mentioned particularly by people who had moved from either work in the non-profit sector or self-employment</li> <li>- The size of the University meant that there are opportunities for job mobility and career advancement</li> <li>- Stability of university is attractive as compared to non-profit where doing good has less stability: <i>“Needed some stability, good benefits, that was the lure.”</i></li> </ul>

## Challenges and frustrations

Participants were also asked about any frustrations or challenges they had experienced in their MaPS roles at the University of Calgary, issues that were getting in the way of people being more effective or successful, and happier or more satisfied in their jobs. The major theme that emerged here is **not feeling valued**, with three overlapping sub-themes identified: trust and respect; fairness & compensation; and transparency and communication. See Table 5 for a description of these sub-themes. The challenges and frustrations described in Table 5 build on each other and reinforce the perspective expressed by many of the focus group and interview participants that they often don't feel valued by the University as a whole. As one individual noted: *"MaPS just don't feel supported; you feel like you are dispensable."*

**Table 5: Frustrations and Challenges - Not feeling valued**

Sub-themes	Brief description
<b><i>Trust &amp; respect</i></b>	<p>Perceptions of not being trusted &amp;/or respected was reflected in the many comments made about some aspects of the University culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The culture of the U was described by some as a caste system, with MaPS being below TUCFA/faculty (e.g., not invited to faculty-only opportunities, including some kinds of committees &amp; some professional development opportunities)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>"Definitely there is a caste system, faculty have a coveted role at the university."</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>- Some directors (many who are academics with little management experience) seem to have little idea of what their managers do &amp; do not seem to value the role that managers play nor their skills</li> <li>- Managers are often the touch-point between Academics in leadership positions above &amp; AUPE staff below, with many academics not being well-suited to (or interested in) management nor having any training (e.g., faculty didn't have to do the "respect in the workplace" training; they need knowledge about staff wellness &amp; essential management skills)</li> <li>- Inflexibility inherent in some policies &amp; documents signals that the UofC doesn't trust their managers &amp; professionals               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>"I think that the policies &amp; procedures document is in place so they can clamp down on you. So nitpicky &amp; not treating us as adults. Just not respectful. Insulting. I am already working this hard, why do they need to put that in place for people that are professional staff."</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b><i>Fairness &amp; compensation</i></b>	<p>The perceptions of not being valued was reflected in the many comments made about compensation and fairness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Salary scale for MaPS is low compared to management and professional roles in other sectors</li> <li>- Salary freeze for 5+ years is a long time &amp; perceived by many as unfair</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>“Honorariums &amp; market supplements can go to faculty, but MaPS are not permitted. If there is no money then it should be no money for anyone [including ELT members who still get performance bonuses].”</i></li> <li>- <i>“I know we are all professionals &amp; should not compare. But AUPE staff in similar job role have soared ahead while we have stagnated. It is not fair or equitable.”</i></li> <li>- People in highly specialized roles may have nowhere to move to in the University in an effort to increase their salary</li> <li>- People getting closer to retirement are concerned about the lack of salary increases, since pension is based on 5 highest salary years</li> <li>- Having to fight for every salary increase (even pre-freeze)</li> <li>- The lack of a formal MaPS compensation framework that includes steps within bands, is viewed negatively by some</li> </ul>
<p><b>Transparency &amp; communication</b></p>	<p>These perceptions of not being valued, trusted &amp;/or respected were also reflected in the many comments made about transparency &amp; communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is a lack of consultation with MaPS: <i>“they don’t have to consult with MaPS but that doesn’t mean you shouldn’t consult”</i>; this demonstrates a lack of respect.</li> <li>- Many felt that the U needs to better communicate &amp; empower, &amp; this should come from many places (senior leadership team, ELT) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Who is moving to an AUPE role, why? Positions move in the background.</li> <li>- More transparency around recent layoffs</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Some felt a lack of open, honest &amp; transparent communication from ELT specifically. For example, many were not aware that the UPC government had extended the salary freeze. People asked how that had been communicated? Others said that the reasons underlying the reclassification of MaPS to AUPE had not been well communicated. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>“Lots of times we will understand if we know the information behind decisions, but we only get the decisions.”</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>- Some felt they didn’t know what’s happening in the Leadership offices, &amp; it’s important to their roles: <i>“I feel like we are in middle-management &amp; have to be in tune with what staff are thinking &amp; feeling &amp; at the same time implementing changes &amp; requests &amp; asks from the leadership team.”</i></li> </ul>

Four additional themes emerged under challenges and frustrations: administrative structures and processes that primarily affect MaPS as employees; administrative burden; MaPS identity; and, current climate. These themes are further described in Table 6.

**Table 6: Frustrations and Challenges - Additional themes**

Theme	Brief description
<p><b>Administrative structures &amp; processes that primarily affect MaPS as employees</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Going from a AUPE position to a MaPS position is often not a well-informed choice</li> <li>- Onboarding into a MaPS position is sometimes not well done</li> <li>- The MaPS “terms &amp; conditions of employment” document is poor and out of date</li> <li>- There is a real lack of consistency of roles, accountabilities &amp; responsibilities tied to MaPS roles (e.g., M1 needs to be consistent across faculties &amp; depts &amp; right now it’s not)</li> <li>- Workloads are often too high &amp; there are inadequate support staff to cover for MaPS person - which makes taking vacation, taking advantage of the flex program &amp; taking PLD days difficult               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Another contributing factor to the difficulty taking PLD relates to the long-term planning required, &amp; the need to take full days; a few people described positively a new pilot program for “flex” days that requires less pre-booking &amp; has the option to take ½ days</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Many wondered why participating in the flex program results in a loss of 3 PLD days; this was perceived as unfair There is a lack of attention to retention &amp; succession planning</li> <li>- Current policies deter internal advancement, meaning if you want to move up you have to leave the University</li> </ul>
<p><b>Administrative burden: Structures &amp; processes that primarily affect MaPS ability to do their work</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inflexible HR policies are a poor fit for this complex &amp; diverse environment, making the job of managing people far more difficult than it needs to be</li> <li>- Would like better, &amp; more consistent, HR support: Several participants described experiences where they had to deal with a number of different HR advisors, sometimes about complex situations, which meant that they felt they were starting from scratch &amp; often also got conflicting advice</li> <li>- There is no easy process to appeal HR decisions</li> <li>- Hiring process is very slow</li> <li>- Performance review process is outdated &amp; needs revising</li> <li>- Although there is a lot of talk about the value of entrepreneurial thinking, innovation and creativity, the internal processes at the UofC neither support entrepreneurial processes nor creativity               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The lack of entrepreneurial thinking and processes means that things often work slowly, and this hampers competitiveness</li> <li>- A University that prides itself on research and innovation should be able to “<i>breathe innovation into this culture re HOW things are done</i>”; with many MaPS in good positions to breed some creativity into this environment</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>MaPS identity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There has been an erosion of identity of MaPS over the last couple of years: “<i>What is an identity for MaPS? I don’t know what it means to be a MaPS.</i>”</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There has been a lack of communication back to this group; feeling left out, ignored, not respected, taken for granted.</li> <li>- What is an identity for MaPS? Don't know what it means to be a MaPS.</li> <li>- MaPS feel they have no agency as a group</li> <li>- As more MaPS positions are being converted to AUPE, we are losing strength at the bargaining table</li> </ul>
<b>Current climate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The current environment with staff lay-offs is challenging for many MaPS</li> <li>- The UofC can't expect things just to continue has they had been with this number of layoffs. Need to hear from leadership what their priorities are going forward, as cannot keep doing everything we have been doing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>"We are cutting positions &amp; need to cut services. There is no real strategy from leadership to make those changes."</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>- How work post lay-offs is being handled seems to vary across the University, in part depending on leadership</li> <li>- Not doing the Employee Engagement Survey in 2019, in the current climate, was perceived by some as having poor optics: <i>"You cannot stop doing this when things are bad."</i></li> </ul>

### Desired Future State

Participants were asked to reflect on both the positive and negative aspects of their work at the UofC, and to draw upon their experiences, and share their ideas about how the university could continue to reinforce and build upon the positive, as well as how they might address the negatives.

The major theme that emerged here was the opportunity for the UofC to do more around ongoing learning and professional development. Although this was described as a big positive of working at the UofC, participants felt there was less opportunity for ongoing learning and professional development than expected or desired.

Opportunities for an improved future state fell into 4 sub-themes: communication and active support of learning, mentoring, professional and career development opportunities and strategies; mobility & career advancement opportunities; UManage and ULead; access to University courses; and, professional accreditations and/or industry association membership fees. These sub-themes are summarized in Table7.

**Table 7: Ideas for ongoing learning and professional development**

Sub-themes	Brief description
<p><b>Active support of learning, mentoring, professional &amp; career development opportunities &amp; strategies</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encouragement &amp; support to take continuing ed &amp; professional development courses need to be integrated in the culture, &amp; actively encouraged &amp; supported. UNavigate is good, but need more resources need to be put into this. Many MaPS feel they just didn't have awareness, &amp; then the active support to take advantage of learning &amp; professional development opportunities. Rather the culture seems to be, if you can do this on your own time - go ahead.</li> <li>- Build taking time off work to take advantage of ongoing learning &amp; professional development opportunities into the system, &amp; the culture</li> <li>- Provide MAPS with professional development funds for conferences, education</li> <li>- Mobility &amp; career advancement: This is a large organization with opportunities to move around, gain new skill sets, &amp; opportunities for career advancement; the University could do more to actively support this within MaPS (e.g., increase opportunities for secondment).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Retention</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is a need to invest in this internal talent pool &amp; many feel this is becoming increasing important in these "tough times", in part because the cost of losing a MaPS is high in comparison with investing in retention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some had the impression that no-one cared whether they stayed or left, rather they should simply feel privileged to work here: <i>"It is my impression that you are here on your own volition because no one cares if you leave"</i></li> <li>- Many expressed concern that good people would start to leave</li> <li>- Support &amp; commitment from senior leadership is required to coordinate the development of staff</li> <li>- Ongoing transparency &amp; open communication, including from ELT, is a critical contributing factor to retention</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Given that many MaPS seek out careers at the UofC for ongoing learning &amp; growth opportunities, the U could develop a more organized approach to identifying MaPS that could be offered new challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>"To keep good people, you want to challenge those people."</i></li> <li>- Secondments were described by some as one mechanism for providing new challenges</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Purposeful succession planning for MaPS needs to be improved upon</li> </ul>
<p><b>Access to University courses</b></p>	<p>Improve access to U courses: Many described this as a positive, &amp; for some it was one of the factors that attracted them to the UofC; BUT a number of people also said they had difficulty finding time to take advantage of this <i>"I was excited about taking courses for free. But now I hardly have time to attend classes because of my workload"</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Undergraduate tuition credits could be increased or unlimited; more tuition</li> </ul>

	<p>support for family members: <i>“What about free tuition for our kids?”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Both better tuition support for post-graduate courses &amp; time release from work to complete a Master's or PhD</li> <li>- Increase access to U continuing ed courses for spouse &amp; family (e.g., so partners can take a “fun” course together)</li> </ul> <p>One specific suggestion regarding tuition support is: <i>Currently, the University of Calgary waives University of Calgary tuition fees related to undergraduate, direct-entry bachelor's level courses for senior citizens (this excludes programs that require prior additional education). Why can't this same benefit be extended to all MaPS and their immediate family members?</i></p>
<b>UManage &amp; ULead</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consider making UManage mandatory for anyone moving into a management role, &amp; make it accessible to people prior to moving into a management role</li> <li>- Although ULead was described very positively, many suggested that it be delivered more flexibly (e.g., ½ days are much easier for many people to manage than full days; expand eligibility to include M1's)</li> <li>- Need for U to really promote these &amp; really encourage &amp; provide opportunity for MaPS to take these programs: <i>“These kinds of PD opportunities need to be viewed not just as nice to have, but rather absolutely essential to the function of the U. Builds skills, confidence, consistency, &amp; helps retain us as we can keep learning.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Professional accreditations &amp;/or industry association fees</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cover professional accreditations and/or industry association membership fees in a more standard way; perhaps wellness \$'s could be used for this.</li> </ul>

In addition to this major theme of ongoing learning and professional development, several additional ideas emerged and are grouped under four themes: connections, networking and mentorship; changes to administrative processes; resources to support work success; and feeling valued, fairness and equity. See Table 8 for a brief description of these additional themes.



**Table 8: Additional Themes**

Theme	Brief description
<p><b>Connections, networking &amp; mentorship</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MaPS appreciate opportunities to connect with &amp; learn from their peers</li> <li>- Many desire the development of more formalized mentorship programs:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>“To have mentorship as I continue to develop my career as a professional. A little more formalized would be great. Not a hand holding, just someone to call for advice &amp; contacts.”</i></li> <li>- Perhaps mentorship could be integrated into ULead, for example: <i>“ULead was great. Learned a lot from other colleagues...Would have loved to have been paired up with someone 10 years ahead in their career to bounce ideas off as part of this program”.</i></li> <li>- Being connected with a mentor at the time of onboarding: <i>“Onboarding would have been easier with a mentor or contact for first year, there is so much to learn &amp; things I didn’t know about.”</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>- For MaPS in some roles, their peers are across the country with some face-to-face meetings an important part of their jobs; some concerns that cut-backs in travel will affect these important relationships</li> <li>- <i>“In an ideal world I would like to have a stronger connection between campus &amp; the external environment”.</i> Many students come to university to get a job, &amp; education is the means to get a job; we need to have a better understanding of what students do after their degree.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Changes to administrative processes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The <b>flexibility</b> that can come with MaPS roles is attractive, so policies that that support flexibility are important</li> <li>- There are so many diverse contexts &amp; roles in the U - making it very difficult to come up with ‘one-size-fits us policies. <b>Guidelines rather than rules might be helpful.</b> This connects back to the trust &amp; respect piece</li> <li>- Some felt that the university has too many rules, which threaten needed creativity &amp; effectiveness: <i>“We try to create policies for every single event or individual – the focus should instead be on treating all equitably &amp; not just fairly.”</i></li> <li>- More <b>flexibility</b> is required regarding how tuition and/or wellness credits can be used (e.g., use tuition credits for fitness classes)</li> <li>- Flexibility will become increasingly important in the future, as there will be a need for some <i>“purposeful abandonment”</i> to keep workloads manageable: <i>“What items/projects can we stop doing so that we can make the most of what we have for human resources, time...&amp; prioritize what we are good at.”</i></li> <li>- Managers need parameters to be flexible (e.g., encourage flexibility of work arrangements, including increasing opportunities to work from home on some days; permitting staff to be late &amp;/or work from home on snow days and/or when their kids are sick).</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The tendency to create policies for exceptions decreases flexibility: <i>“Don’t set up the whole system for those few people that might abuse it; this sets up a need to bend/break rules to make work happen.”</i></li> <li>- The U needs to do a thorough review of the MaPS roles across the organization; in response to the previously identified frustration <b>that there is a lack of consistency across similar roles, as well as a lack of understanding of what they are expecting people in these roles to do.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o This review should encompass the MaPS salary data, &amp; pay equity issues - including what bands people are hired into as well as the number of direct reports at different levels</li> <li>o <i>“They don’t seem to understand how much work really goes into managing people, particularly in a unionized environment. Don’t need education on “how to manage”; need a real tool &amp; not to be trying to manage too many people.”</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Resources to support work success</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Resources that could enable MaPS to do their work more effectively &amp; efficiently include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o New computers and sufficient office space</li> <li>o Access to technical support for Skype meetings with colleagues off-campus and/or at other campus sites</li> <li>o Mindful planning re physical location of offices (e.g., some described being isolated because of the physical location of their offices)</li> <li>o Holding more events at the HSC (e.g., health &amp; safety training), and/or arranging more shuttle bus transport to main campus events</li> </ul> </li> <li>- More training &amp; support around finance, including more accounting related training for admin staff</li> <li>- Have support for people returning from long term leaves (e.g., maternity); enabling them to ease back into their roles</li> <li>- MaPS need support, somewhere to turn, in this time of lay-offs; this could include following up with MaPS where there have been layoffs to check on workloads</li> <li>- <i>“Investing in mental health for employees is also huge. The folks who stay have increased workload &amp; survivor guilt, etc. Making sure the leaders &amp; managers have the support they need.”</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Feeling valued, fairness &amp; equity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Could do a better job of <b>being inclusive of MaPS</b> (e.g., if AUPE employees &amp; academic staff get Easter Monday off, then so should MaPS)</li> <li>- Salary freezes would be more acceptable if all the UofC treated all employee groups equally; a freeze across the board would be fairer than just a freeze for MaPS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o If salary freezes remain only for MaPS, then the U could consider increasing the % they contribute to MaPS pensions (e.g., from 50% to 60%)</li> </ul> </li> <li>- A change in communications/messaging, could improve MaPS sense of feeling valued <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Current communications tends to focus on MaPS as ‘supporting’ academic staff; rather messaging should reinforce that MaPS roles are diverse &amp; are critically important to the University &amp; a valuable component of the UofC team</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## The MaPS Executive Committee

The final topic explored was the role of the MaPS Executive Committee (EC), and how they would prefer to interact with the Committee. Given the time limitations of the focus groups, the interviews provided an opportunity to discuss this in a little more depth.

The dominant theme that emerged, was the role that the EC could play to **increase connections across the MaPS community**. This was discussed as one strategy to decrease the sense of isolation and improve the identity of MaPS as a group, as well as increase opportunities to collaborate with and learn from each other. Several the focus group participants in particular found that the act of coming together for a guided discussion with their colleagues to be both an enjoyable and a valuable experience. They wondered if a role for the MaPS EC might be organize regular, more formalized meet and greet sessions with topics for discussion. They expressed a need for more than the kind of networking that happens at Christmas meet and greets, for example. Some described this as a MaPS or a leadership “**community of practice**”, others called it a “*lunch and learn*”. Regardless of the label, participants described an interest in getting together to discuss topics of interest with their MaPS colleagues on a more regular basis, perhaps a few times a year. Some potential topics for discussion at these sessions were identified, and include:

- common struggles MaPS that experience when managing people, and any insights gained (e.g.; - how to handle a staff member who isn't showing up to work; how does an economic downturn affect staff, and how to you keep people motivated when they don't know what's going to happen with their job);
- strategies for growing your career as a UofC MaPS (e.g., how people changed their roles over time and advanced in their careers); and,
- a variety of topics and/or issues that you cannot readily discuss with staff, but it would be helpful to talk with peers/colleagues.

A few other potential roles for the MaPS EC were also raised in these focus groups and interviews; these include:

- advocate for resources to conduct an **environmental scan** of other post-additional education institutions across Alberta and Canada regarding how they compensate and support their MaPS;
- determine and share with MaPS what **protections and rights** they have (e.g., what happens when MaPS are laid off, including severance);
- reach out to other Alberta Universities MaPS, and discuss **advocating to/lobbying** government as a group;
- collaborating with the UofC Wellness Committee to develop a **mental health strategy** for people in MaPS roles; and,

- **provide information and support** around any changes to MaPS classifications (e.g., one interview participant person felt that the MaPS EC didn't step up in the recent shift for professional staff to AUPE).

Finally, many expressed thanks to the MaPS EC for representing them. It was recognized by many that being a member of the MaPS EC was a challenging volunteer role to play and participants appreciated the efforts of the EC.

### Interacting with MaPS

When asked how they preferred to interact with the MaPS EC, many said that they liked the feedback tour concept and enjoyed participating in the focus groups, but also recognize that this is not an efficient way to get regular input from MaPS. Many people said being communicated directly by email works best, as most people don't go to the website often - and many are not aware of it. Specific suggestions made include:

- perhaps one or two questions could be put out to the MaPS community on a regular basis via email, as issues arise that the EC would like MaPS to have input on;
- use the university "idea scale" type of process to get input from MaPS (<https://ideascale.com/casestudy/university-of-calgary/>)

### A Shared Vision for the Future

Many participants spoke with passion about their roles, what drew them to work at the University and what keeps them here, including: their desire to "**make a difference**"; being part of the University community; and loving the teams they lead and support. Yet, many also described not feeling valued by the University, nor trusted and respected; rather they felt "*dispensable*". They also feel they are treated unfairly and/or **treated inequitably** in comparison with other members of the University community (e.g., faculty and AUPE staff), and often **feel constrained in their work by inflexible administrative structures and processes**.

We heard that many MaPS are interested in opportunities to work with the MaPS EC, and with the University, to help improve the working conditions and culture. As was described in the last section of the findings, MaPS participants shared many ideas about how the UofC could continue to reinforce and build upon the many positive aspects of working at the University, as well as address some of the negatives. The key ideas presented here are drawn from this and are grouped under five broad headings: communications and culture; administrative structures and processes; ongoing learning and professional development; compensation and support; and, MaPS as a connected community.

### Communications and culture

Communications is an important component of shaping a culture. Many felt that communication with the MaPS community could be improved, and that this was an important vehicle for addressing MaPS perceptions of whether they are valued, respected, trusted and being treated fairly. Improved communication can mitigate the perceived lack of transparency. Thinking about communication and culture could the UofC develop and implement a communication strategy for MaPS? Such a strategy might include:

- More frequent and more transparent updates for MaPS community; and,
- Messaging to reinforce that MaPS roles are diverse, critical, and valuable in and of themselves versus as a “support” to academic staff.

### Administrative structures and processes

A large organization such as the U of C necessarily has many administrative structures and processes. We heard from these MaPS that some of these are overly cumbersome and inflexible, creating challenges for them to be more effective and efficient in their management and professional roles. Some of these also affect their own employment conditions and their ongoing learning and professional development. For example, the MaPS terms and conditions for employment document was described by many as inadequate and outdated. Thinking about administrative processes, possible next steps could include:

- Reviewing administrative structures and processes, including those in the areas of Human Resources and Finance, so that MaPS have the authority, autonomy and flexibility to be more effective and efficient in their roles
- Revision of the MaPS terms and conditions document, so that it is more inclusive and equitable, and better aligned with the academic and research plans on campus
- Review MaPS roles to improve consistency in levels of responsibility and remuneration across roles

### Continuous learning and professional and career development

Although continuous learning and professional development was described as a big positive of working at the UofC, something that initially attracted many MaPS to seek out a career at the University, in the experience of these participants there was less access to and opportunity for ongoing learning and professional development than expected. Some of this lack of opportunity was due to the view that although these opportunities might be available, in practice it was often not possible to take advantage of them due to heavy workloads and a culture that seemed to be that this was something that you did “*on your own time*” rather than something that was actively encouraged.

Many of these participants described themselves as lifelong learners and need change in their work to keep them motivated and excited about their roles. They spoke about wanting to work at the UofC

because it was a large and diverse organization, and as such offered the possibility of mobility, career development and advancement. Yet, in their experience it was challenging to realize this possibility.

Thinking about learning and professional development, possible actions include:

- Improve access to, and participation in, professional development opportunities such as UManage and ULead
- Actively encourage and support MaPS ongoing learning and professional development, with the goal of shifting the culture from ‘this is something you can do on your own time if you want’
- Support mobility and advancement, including providing more opportunities for secondments
- Consider a MaPS mentorship program
- Conduct an environmental scan of other post-additional institutions to learn about best practices for professional development

### Compensation and support

Compensation and benefits or supports came up in every focus group and interview and an area of concern, with several ideas shared about how this could be improved upon. Many participants had either worked at other post-additional institutions themselves, prior to coming to the UofC, and others had knowledge of compensation and benefits provided to MaPS through personal connections. As such, many shared some concrete examples of what might be possible here at the UofC. Realizing that the specifics shared could only provide a limited picture of what is done in other places, some suggested the idea of gathering information from other institutions. Considering compensation and support, possible action could be to conduct an environmental scan of other post-additional institutions across Alberta and Canada (i.e., U15 and other Alberta post-additional institutions), in order to better understand how they compensate and support their MaPS and how the UofC compares with their colleagues. Through such a scan, information could be collected about a range of topics, for example:

- Salary scales, and how their salary bands work;
- Existence of bargaining units for MaPS equivalents;
- Coverage for professional accreditations or industry association membership fees;
- Professional development opportunities;
- Retention and succession planning strategies;
- Career development strategies;
- University course tuition support for MaPS, and for their family members, both continuing ed and academic course; and,
- Other kinds of benefits these institutions offer their MaPS (e.g., SAIT offers bus passes).

### MaPS as a connected community and the MaPS EC

We heard a strong message across the focus groups and interviews that MaPS are interested in having an increased sense of community with more opportunities for networking, mentorship, learning and

growth. Thinking about creating a more connected community, several actions could be considered, including:

- Developing a MaPS community of practice (CoP), which would include supporting regular meetings at locations across Campus to discuss topics of mutual interest
- Developing a mentorship program
- Increasing the number of members on the MaPS Executive Committee. Having a larger and potentially more diverse representation from across campus might be something to work toward.

### Next steps

The MaPS EC looks forward to working with MaPS members and the ELT to review, refine and prioritize the actions that might lead to an improved future state for the MaPS community while supporting the success of the U of C more broadly. Building toward the future state will require upon commitment, support and collaboration from the ELT and the MaPS community. The MaPS Executive Committee endeavor to facilitate this collaboration and communicate progress back to the MaPS community.