

STUDENT AND ENROLMENT SERVICES

# WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

[February 2024]





# REPORT SUMMARY

To better understand SES' alignment with the University's Strategic Plan, Ahead of Tomorrow, and to aid in the development of SES' own mission, vision, and values, Shift Consulting facilitated five sessions with SES staff in November 2023. These sessions served as a platform for SES employees to provide feedback and suggestions, shaping the future direction of the department through the development of the SES Strategic Plan.

The sessions, held on November 8, 15, and 16, 2023, saw active participation across SES, totalling 107 attendees. Employees engaged in reflective discussions on various aspects of SES operations, including pre-survey reflections; vision, mission and values discussions, and an examination of SES strategic priorities. The insights gathered throughout offer a comprehensive overview of SES' strengths, challenges, aspirations, and areas for improvement, serving as a foundation for strategic planning and organizational development.

## Pre-Survey Reflection

SES boasts a diverse and robust array of skills, encompassing research abilities, strategic foresight, and a profound understanding of student issues. Notable strengths included empathy, compassion, and a steadfast commitment to student wellbeing. The team exhibited strong communication and collaboration skills, fostering an inclusive work environment despite facing challenges such as heavy workloads and resource limitations.

## Vision

Employees emphasized the need for adequate resources and strategic planning to effectively contribute to university goals. Professional growth opportunities, staff that reflect the population we serve, and breaking down silos were identified as crucial areas for improvement. Enhanced communication methods, increased emphasis on and resourcing directed to accessibility, and data-driven approaches were proposed to better serve students and align with UCalgary's vision.



## Mission

SES is undoubtedly committed to supporting student success during their university journey and beyond. The mission discussion underscored SES' role in equipping students with essential skills, providing basic needs support, and fostering personal and professional development. Recommendations included enhancing internal collaboration, developing an integrated network of care, and addressing barriers to student success to fulfill SES' mission effectively.

## Values

Key values identified throughout the sessions included respect, kindness, empathy, authenticity, and collaboration. These values guided interactions with students and colleagues, fostering inclusivity and mutual support within the SES community. Additionally, other values such as integrity, curiosity, and learning were highlighted as essential for optimal work performance and fulfillment. Employees actively demonstrated these values in daily operations, aiming to create a supportive environment for all stakeholders.

## Strategic Priorities

Employees appreciated the people-centric nature of SES' strategic priorities, particularly emphasizing staff and student wellbeing. However, clarification and additional focus were sought on priorities such as excellence and staff development. There was unanimous agreement on treating Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) and Indigenous Engagement as distinct priorities, with recommendations to embed these principles into SES services and enhance Indigenous representation.

## WHAT'S NEXT FROM SES LEADERSHIP TEAM

The feedback and themes generated from these engagement sessions will be used to develop the guiding Vision, Mission (Purpose) and Values for SES, and inform SES' strategic planning. Group sessions will be held to review the draft Vision, Mission and Values and provide all staff with an opportunity to provide input.

## Quick wins

A recurring sentiment heard during the feedback sessions was that staff wanted to feel more connected to each other and aware of the work taking place within SES, and wanted their expertise within UCalgary to be amplified and recognized. As work continues on the development of the SES Strategic Plan, two initiatives will be launched early in response to the need for increased connection and collaboration:

- 1. PD Days to return:** A committee has been established to bring back the annual SES PD Day.
- 2. Cross-unit work – Crisis, Conflict, Care and Resilience:** Jen Quin and Kevin Wiens will be leading a cross-functional SES working group to review our student at risk team and related policy, and to further develop tools and resources that support our campus community in managing and recovering from difficult student situations. This initiative will demonstrate and amplify the collective expertise of our SES staff and will commence this spring.



