UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY



2025 – 2026

# Strategic Plan Mid-Year Report

STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND SUPPORT

## Introduction

Student Experience and Support continues to be grounded in our vision and purpose. In Year 2 of the Strategic Plan, we're building on the foundation established in Year 1, with a renewed focus on operationalizing, measuring and scaling impact through how we achieve our objectives.

## How we work

This renewed focus means refining priorities; establishing working groups and cross-disciplinary teams; and introducing clearer processes and governance on projects. At the same time, we're strengthening how we define and use metrics—moving beyond reporting on activities and processes alone, towards demonstrating outcomes and impact.

## How we measure impact

We've developed the following definitions for the overarching elements that will be used for strategic plan reporting. They will form the basis of our year-end report.

They include:



### Outcomes

Most critical, quantifiable, results that indicate success/performance across SES at a macro level aligned with strategic goals and performance. Outcomes are specific and measurable high-level results that track impact or change. They define what we want to achieve and why.



### Measures

Measures are the specific results that indicate progress toward our strategic goals. Measures are objective data points that are typically short, one sentence and action oriented. They have impact and are annual in nature. Measures define how we know we've achieved an outcome.



### Performance metrics

Metrics are the quantifiable measure that define our progress toward a specific goal. Indicators or key deliverables measure how a specific aspect of SES is operating within the different units towards the outcomes/ measures. They provide evidence of progress, can be reliably verified and offer important data for decision-making.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1

# Creating transformative experiences for students

## Review Student Wellness, Access and Support (SWAS) services, implement recommendations

SWAS initiatives remain aligned with the 2023–24 external review and U15 comparative scan, with Year 2 focused on implementing priority recommendations and strengthening utilization, access and sustainability across services and programs.

### Health and Wellness Clinic

Improving access to care by increasing use of available appointment capacity across core student support services was a key focus for SWAS entering Year 2, with the following metrics reflecting utilization during the current reporting period:




**100%** Psychiatry

**96%** Mental Health Nursing

**92%** Counselling

**86%** Student Support Advisors (SSAs)

**82%** Indigenous counselling

**73%** Indigenous Student Support Advisor

A single Electronic Medical Record (EMR) was also introduced (August 2025) to standardize appointment booking, automate workflows, improve cross-team coordination and enable clearer tracking of utilization and access.

### Student Accommodation Policy Review

Led by Student Accessibility Services, this initiative focuses on reviewing UCalgary's current student accommodation approach in relation to U15 institutions and gathering input from students and key partners on the existing hybrid model. Year 2 is dedicated to review, benchmarking and engagement, with findings informing a formal policy review planned for 2026–27.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1

## Campus Well-being Services (SWS)

Since May 2025, the team has improved program targeting and governance structures to increase capacity and support student engagement. Other notable launches include the Health and Well-being Advisory Council and the introduction of Multi-Faith Space Guidelines.

Wellness Classroom Visits continue to increase engagement with SWS through classroom outreach. To date, **86 presentations have been delivered**.

**Of the 7,300+ students who attended:**

**80%** reported they now felt more confident in managing their well-being

**87%** reported knowing how to access support services



## Develop and implement a first-year experience that addresses the diverse needs of new students

This multi-year initiative strengthens the first-year student experience by supporting successful transition, belonging and awareness of supports. A cross-functional First Year Engagement (FYE) working group was launched in June 2025 to coordinate SES efforts and guide the tactics and evaluation for future years.

### Progress to date:

- After-arriving webpage launched to support transition from Orientation
- Development of "My First Year" planner, with **distribution of 3,000+ copies to students**
- Collected feedback from 605 students across four pop-ups across campus

## Review programs and supports within SES for international students

A comparative review of International Student Services has been completed against U15 institutions and three Alberta post-secondary institutions. Findings will be assessed alongside retention data, the 2023 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the 2025 Canadian Campus Well-Being Survey (CCWS) and the Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC) data.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1

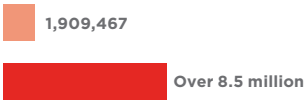
## Increase engagement across communications channels within the student content strategy

This objective reflects a strategic shift from unaligned and fragmented student communications to aligned, focused and meaningful student engagement across core communications channels.

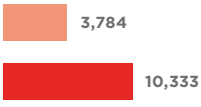


### @myucalgary (social media) to date

**Over 300%**
Views/ impressions **increased**




**273%**
Average monthly engagements **increased**

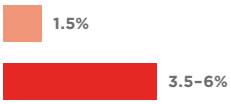






### UThisWeek newsletter to date

**230 – 400%**
Average click-to-open rate **increased**






We aim to grow these metrics by at least 5% year over year for both @myucalgary and UThisWeek newsletter. Additionally, Under the Arch will relaunch as UThisWeek (web) and implement a dashboard to begin tracking most-read editorial content and engagement trends.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2

# Investing in the success, growth and recognition of our people

## Commitment to creating a supportive work environment with strong leadership and ongoing professional development for all employees

The resulting goal from Year 1 was to meet institutional standards on the Employee Wellness Survey in three areas: workload, professional development and leadership.

In Fall 2025, employees participated in the Employee Wellness Survey to assess progress toward this objective. Results show improvement across all areas, with workload and clarity of leadership/expectations identified as the top psychosocial factors (90% of respondents).

We will continue engaging employees to identify strengths and areas for improvement, with the survey conducted every two years in June.



### Annual Employee Professional Development Day (PD Day) for all employees and faculty

The annual SES PD Day was held on June 24, 2025, with a focus on employee growth, connection and collaboration, and increased participation over the previous year. Employee feedback will continue to inform planning for 2026 to ensure relevance and impact.

**78%**
attendance
9% increase year over year

**95%**
of respondents rated PD Day as excellent or good

**64%**
reported the knowledge and skills gained were extremely or very useful

**95%**
agreed the event supported connection with colleagues

### Develop a process to ensure SES employees can fully utilize their annual vacation time

We continue to focus on ensuring our employees are fully using their vacation entitlement to support their wellbeing and our commitment to a healthy sustainable workplace. Aligned with this, 100% of SES staff have now created annual vacation plans with their manager and we are committed to ensuring these plans are operationalized. An additional goal, established at the end of Year 1, is to clear all historic vacation liability by March 31, 2026.

STRATEGIC GOAL 3

# Supporting Student Wellbeing

## Steward institutional approach to support students in crisis

In the second year of this initiative, we have achieved our objective of full implementation of the National Association for Behavioral Intervention and Threat Assessment (NABITA) model to support complex student needs. This work focused on building internal capacity, clarifying roles and strengthening coordination across response teams.

Key progress includes the addition of a full-time case manager to support coordinated responses through the Assessment and Care Team (ACT) and the Student Crisis Response Team (SCRT), as well as the establishment of a shared collaboration framework to ensure clarity of services and continuity of care.

- **100% of ACT members certified** in the NABITA risk rubric
- **116 hours of training completed** by ACT members to support assessment and management of complex behaviours and risk

## Expand education and resources for supporting complex student needs across the campus community

This year, the Director, Student Care, Conduct and Accountability initiated collaboration with institutional partners to improve processes and build awareness.

- Cross-training conducted with People and Culture and the Assessment and Care Team (ACT) to clarify roles and improve coordination
- Foundational training program Responding to Students in Distress updated to address complex student behaviours
- Four training sessions delivered to campus partners, **reaching 114 participants**
- **95%** agreed the event supported connection with colleagues

Employee feedback will continue to inform planning for 2026 to ensure relevance and impact.

## Mobilize Think Tanks to understand critical issues related to students' basic needs

SES will deliver a renewed Think Tank model in Winter 2026. Sessions will now be conducted across all UCalgary campuses, with pop-up engagement sessions as well as digital feedback options to increase accessibility.

**Target metrics for Winter 2026:**

- 200 in-person student engagements
- 2,000 digital engagements across all campuses and online channels

A What We Heard Report will be compiled and distributed by April. Themes from the Tuition and Fees Consultation Committee (TFCC) survey will also be explored.



STRATEGIC GOAL 3

## Campus Food Hub

The Campus Food Hub continues to expand student-informed programming that addresses food insecurity by increasing access to nutritious food, strengthening food literacy and creating meaningful opportunities for student engagement. Key results are collected for all Food Hub programs.

### Nutritious and affordable food access

**Of students surveyed:**

- **99%** report that accessing this resource has improved their student experience
- **96%** indicate that participating in Campus Food Hub programming has contributed to their sense of wellbeing
- **100%** agree the Campus Food Hub improves their ability to access affordable, healthy foods in an ongoing way

**66%**
**increase in Affordable Market transactions**
**1,760 → 2,928**
(Fall 2024 vs Fall 2025)



**46%**
**increase in Ladle Up engagement**
**999 → 1,459**
participants



**94%**
**increase in Breakfast Club engagement**



**87 → 169**
participants

### Student engagement and participation

- Volunteer engagement is a key opportunity for involvement in this work. From April-December 2025, there were **69 unique Campus Food Hub volunteers** contributing **a total of 1,165 hours**
- The Gathering Table a student planned and led initiative **engaged 276 participants** in Spring/Summer 2025

### Food literacy and education

- Food literacy programming included a new Culinary Basics workshop series which supports practical food preparation skills and **engaged 77 participants**

**Of students surveyed:**



**100%**
**indicate they feel confident that they can utilize the skill, technique or information provided**



**96%**
**indicate that participating in the workshop contributed to their sense of well-being**

STRATEGIC GOAL 4

# Achieving operational excellence and sustainability

## Review and align resources to support the highest priorities across SES and the sustainability of our work

All student-facing SES units have completed a service standard review using a uniform service model. By year end, all SES units will establish service-level standards and objectives, supported by multi-year budget forecasting to ensure resources are dedicated where they are needed most.

## Establish a committee to identify, analyze and disseminate institutional data and metrics that contribute to our strategic priorities

This is the first year of a two-year initiative focused on strengthening SES-wide data and measurement practices. Year 1 goals include piloting a division-wide student-facing survey, establishing a baseline and consistency in how student experience data is collected and used across units.

An SES Survey Toolkit was created and shared with all SES units with 55% of units having integrated survey toolkit questions into a selection of current surveys for Fall 2025.

An initial needs assessment and evaluation of strengths and gaps is underway. The goal is to achieve 100% unit adoption of the toolkit by year end, establishing a stronger foundation for division-wide analysis and reporting.




## Develop a consistent approach across SES for project management and workflow, and implement process improvement tools to help improve coordination and alignment across units

The SES Project Management Toolkit (launched June 2025) has transitioned to active use, supported by training sessions and early adoption across multiple SES initiatives.

- **Nearly 40% of SES employees** have now participated in essential project management training
- **42% of trained participants** report using the tools in their work

This progress positions the toolkit for a broader rollout and continued process maturity in 2026.



## Looking ahead

Over the past year and a half, we have collectively made significant progress, and taken significant strides, in moving our SES strategic plan forward, together. We have aligned around a unifying vision and purpose, and defined shared values and strategic priorities, while achieving tangible results across many of our strategic goals.

As we move towards more integrated and outcomes-focused view of progress, our year-end report will take on a different look. A dashboard will be introduced to capture our outcomes for the year-end report. The outcomes definitions, measures and performance metrics introduced this period will help ensure the data going into this dashboard is aligned and accurate.

This work ensures our teams in SES are well-positioned before we move into Year 3 of the SES Strategic Plan.

Stay tuned!

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
Student Experience and Support

ucalgary.ca/student-services

# Start something.