

UPEI FUTURE DIRECTIONS Vision Document

MAY 2012



Message from the President

Fulfilling potential and succeeding through transformation. UPEI's vision is one of fulfilling potential and succeeding through transformation—on a student level, a university level, and a community level. To achieve our vision, we are committed to discovering our greatest strengths and potential through a shared sense of purpose and direction.

Discovery is a process that has the power to transform us as individuals and as an institution, allowing us to realize the limitless possibilities that lie ahead. UPEI's *Vision Document* marks the beginning of our discovery journey. We invite and encourage you to take part in charting UPEI's future direction as we move forward to build the plans and initiatives needed to realize our greatest potential in both the classroom and the community.

ALAA ABD-EL-AZIZ President and Vice-Chancellor

INTRODUCTION

The University of Prince Edward Island exists to better our communities by developing people to their full potential. Central to all our efforts is our commitment to educate students through high-quality teaching and access to experiential learning opportunities such as, but not limited to, cooperative work terms, internships, external relations, and community-based service learning. By offering a transformative educational experience, UPEI strives to provide a learning environment in which our students develop fully as active citizens, eager to contribute to our communities and to society.

UPEI recognizes its role in advancing civic engagement, as well as a learning and discovery institution. With this sense of purpose, we work in a sustainable and accountable manner to align our University priorities with those of our communities to help address complex issues and create new knowledge.

UPEI's Vision Document is neither a strategic plan nor a business plan. Rather, it provides a foundation for broader planning and decision-making at UPEI over the next five years. It will, in essence, be a compass to help guide our institutional direction and keep us on track when developing strategic plans to help us navigate economic, demographic, and other emerging post-secondary education challenges.

Guided by our vision, we endeavour to shape the future of higher education in Prince Edward Island and UPEI's impact around the world.

VISION

The University of Prince Edward Island will be a leader in delivering outstanding experiential learning opportunities that encourage our students to develop to their full potential in both the classroom and the community. Driven by discovery, UPEI will be a destination for those eager to advance our world by creating new knowledge. Together, we will foster the development of tomorrow's leaders who will emerge from their studies ready to excel and contribute to the betterment of our local and global communities.

MISSION

The University of Prince Edward Island, founded on the tradition of liberal education, exists to encourage and assist people to acquire the skills, knowledge, and understanding necessary for critical and creative thinking, and thus prepare them to contribute to their own betterment, and that of society, through the development of their full potential. To accomplish these ends, the University is a community of scholars whose primary tasks are to teach and to learn, to engage in scholarship and research, and to offer service for the benefit of our Island and beyond.



OUR VALUES (in alphabetical order)

ACCOUNTABILITY & INTEGRITY >> As individuals and as a community, we are accountable to those we serve, as well as to our key partners, for the quality of education we deliver, and the transparency of our operations. We will conduct ourselves with integrity, employing our expertise to serve others and benefit society.

EXCELLENCE >> We aspire to excel in education, research, and service through an unwavering pursuit of the highest endeavours envisioned by our community of scholars.

RESPECT & COLLEGIALITY >>> Respect for self, others, and the process of discovery is the hallmark of our community. Through respect, collegiality, and reciprocity, we welcome the opportunity to openly exchange ideas and implement decisions.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY >>> Through shared responsibility, faculty, staff, and students are called to a duty of creating an enriched learning environment that fosters student success through engagement.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS PILLARS

As we work towards an exciting and sustainable future, UPEI will focus energies and resources on four core strengths—Student Experience, Vibrant Communities, Exploration and Discovery, and Living Sustainability. Based on this *Vision Document*, UPEI will develop strategic action plans to fully develop and realize the opportunities that lie within these four pillars.



STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Our focus on transformative *learning experiences* places strong emphasis on high-quality teaching, collaborative engagement in scholarly activities, and providing access to experiential learning opportunities that translate theory into practice.

Core to UPEI's existence is providing outstanding student experiences to underpin overall student success. To prepare our students to be thoughtful and productive citizens, our focus on transformative learning experiences places strong emphasis on high-quality teaching, collaborative engagement in scholarly activities, and providing access to experiential learning opportunities that translate theory into practice.

UPEI believes that the student experience is a shared responsibility of faculty, staff, and students. We strive for an outstanding quality of effort resulting in a high level of student involvement and participation both within and beyond the classroom. The ability to deliver high-quality programs, integrated learning experiences, services, and resources-including academic, social, and financial support-to our students will be our highest priority.

>> Student Experience Challenge

At UPEI, we will challenge our students to reach their full potential by becoming thoughtful, productive citizens on a local and global scale through high-quality academic and experiential learning opportunities. UPEI will adopt a co-curricular transcript to encourage and track, in an official manner, our students' participation, leadership, professional and educational development, as well as honours, awards, and recognition. This will encourage learning and participation in a manner that assists personal growth while providing tangible evidence of learning (beyond academic standing) to employers and graduate schools.

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- Ensure each UPEI student participates in an experiential learning opportunity through pathways such as cooperative work placements, internships, service learning, community interaction opportunities, global experiences, and external rotations.
- Further foster a culture of collaborative engagement, integrated learning experiences, and mentorship that • provides students with well-rounded, value-added educational experiences.
- Explore a global passport option for students to build global experiences, awareness, and appreciation.
- Encourage and facilitate opportunities for students to engage in original research and original projects with faculty supervision throughout a student's time at UPEI in a "student-as-scholar" model of learning.
- Better understand and meet students' evolving expectations around their university education and experiences.
- Transform students, as faculty and staff transform themselves, to be champions of a true learning environment built upon respect and the continual development of our individual and collective potential.





VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

Our exceptional quality of life and world-class opportunities make UPEI a gateway to outstanding learning and living. Set against the inspirational backdrop of one the world's most beautiful islands, UPEI provides a vibrant, welcoming, and safe environment that provides a unique culture of learning that benefits students, faculty, and staff alike. Our exceptional quality of life and world class opportunities make UPEI a gateway to outstanding learning and living.

In our pursuit to provide ever-increasing value to our students, alumni, and stakeholders, we are eager to further build upon our close-knit campus culture, program offerings, and connectivity with local communities. Building an enriched learning environment means welcoming the world to UPEI, and ensuring we are responsive and adaptable to the needs of stakeholders and issues within the wider world around us.

>> Vibrant Communities Challenge

UPEI provides a gateway to exceptional educational opportunities in an intimate learning environment. To build increasingly relevant educational offerings and a greater level of connectivity, UPEI will develop fully integrated, interdisciplinary programs that increase the value of learning, research, and service for our campus and communities.

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- Move beyond traditional boundaries (geographical, cultural, and organizational) to provide students with new perspectives on traditional disciplines while preparing them to help address complex issues and create new knowledge. This includes encouraging and supporting team-teaching through inter- and cross-disciplinary programs in a variety of fields.
- Foster an evolving culture of learning, participation, and interaction that maximizes the educational and social benefits of an ever-increasing diverse and globally enriched campus.
- Achieve a higher level of involvement between our University and Island communities to better communicate, share knowledge, and serve the needs of the public.
- Explore new models of open learning and improve our use of technology as an enabler to enhance access, encourage a higher level of discourse, and foster innovation.
- Build a service-oriented culture that consistently delivers positive front-line interactions for students and a client-focused approach that anchors our interactions on campus and in the community.
- Develop UPEI as a four-season hub of activity for academic, campus, and community activities.
- Work daily to build a resurgence of pride in UPEI both within our University and communities through the strength of our academic programs, the impact of our research, the spirit of our athletics, the cultural richness of our performing arts, and the experiences of our alumni.



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EXPLORATION AND DISCOVERY

We must work with great dedication and diligence to prepare the next generation of researchers, innovation leaders, critical thinkers, and cultural forerunners for their roles in shaping and creating the world around us.

UPEI is a growing centre of research excellence. This is demonstrated by our rank as the number one undergraduate university in Canada for research income growth, the global reach and impact of our research, a substantial increase in graduate student enrolment over the past decade, and our proven track record for securing research chairs—including the prestigious Canada Excellence Research Chair in Aquatic Epidemiology.

UPEI will build upon its contributions to society through a strong focus on collaboration and leveraging existing strengths. This will include strengthening partnerships with private companies, industry, and government to increasingly share expertise that provides research-based decision-making in areas of policy and practice that are essential to the health and prosperity of our communities.

Society's increasing dependence on innovation requires us to think broadly and prepare our students to successfully contribute to life beyond university. In this respect, we must work with great dedication and diligence to prepare the next generation of researchers, innovation leaders, critical thinkers, and cultural forerunners for their roles in shaping and creating the world around us.

>>> Exploration and Discovery Challenge

UPEI will work to implement a novel model of discovery for undergraduate and graduate students that will move them forward as generators of new knowledge and leaders of tomorrow.

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- Encourage undergraduate and graduate students to pursue their curiosities as the next generation of researchers, innovation leaders, and critical thinkers.
- Further build partnerships and collaborative opportunities that identify, address, and benefit the physical, social, cultural, and economic health of our communities.
- Work to better promote the impacts of our research outcomes in meaningful ways to a wider audience.
- Recognize and reward innovation in areas ranging from research and operations, to programs and sustainability.
- Offer cross-disciplinary learning opportunities at undergraduate and graduate levels to provide a more integrated and interdisciplinary perspective to complex challenges.
- Prepare our students for jobs that have not yet been created.







LIVING SUSTAINABILITY

Building upon the wealth of resources within UPEI and our province, our University will work to further build unique relationships, programs, and initiatives that promote Prince Edward Island as a living laboratory. UPEI strives to provide students, faculty, and staff with a unique immersion into a learning environment whereby sustainability grows from a conceptual to a cultural level. We aim to demonstrate "living and embracing sustainability" in our research, operations, and daily activities in a consistent and forward-looking manner. By doing so, we will encourage and inspire members of our campus community to become more knowledgeable and better-equipped global citizens capable of making a difference locally and globally.

Building upon the wealth of resources within UPEI and our province, our University will work to further build unique relationships, programs, and initiatives that promote Prince Edward Island as a living laboratory in which complex and relevant questions are explored through a sustainability lens to create new knowledge.

>>> Living Sustainability Challenge

UPEI will become a leader in living sustainability by modelling forwardlooking programs and decisions that demonstrate our commitment to making a difference in the environmental, social, cultural, and financial health of our University, people, and communities.

- Model positive behaviour and initiatives.
- Apply knowledge to real-world challenges, needs, and complex issues.
- Further develop research constellations that provide new knowledge in environmental, social, and cultural sustainability.
- Enhance our use of resources—intellectual, physical, and cultural—that are close at hand on our campus and in our communities.
- Embrace the proximity of our Island resources, information, and infrastructure in an innovative manner to promote our Island as "a living lab" that fosters the incubation and insight needed to solve local and larger world issues.



These platforms will play a critical role in maximizing long-term success for UPEI, its people, and partners.

STRATEGIC PLATFORMS

The four pillars of Student Experience, Vibrant Communities, Exploration and Discovery, and Living Sustainability reflect core strengths that will be developed to support and achieve UPEI's vision. To ensure the strength and integrity of these pillars, several broad cultural and operational platforms will be reviewed to ensure they effectively support strategic-action planning.

These platforms will play a critical role in maximizing long-term success for UPEI, its people, and partners. They also assist in maintaining the focus of our efforts, building synergies between resources and initiatives, and meeting stakeholder expectations. Strategic platforms include:

- Continual development of our faculty and staff.
- Building pride in our University and people.
- Celebrating the experiences and intellectual energy of our alumni.
- Cultivating a service-oriented and mentor-minded campus culture.
- Fostering a deeper level of community connectivity and engagement.
- Ensuring sustainability in all we do.

CONCLUSION

UPEI's Reflections and Future Directions process has provided an unprecedented opportunity for our community to be involved in charting the future of our great University. A commitment to consultation and collaboration have set a positive tone that we are eager to build upon and will continue to employ in our planning. With the input of our stakeholders, we will work to develop a thriving, sustainable future for UPEI, our people, and province.





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