

# UPEI ACADEMIC PLAN

(OCTOBER 2015)



UNIVERSITY  
of Prince Edward  
ISLAND

*people ■ excellence ■ impact*





## RECOGNIZING OUR EVOLUTION

This Academic Plan comes at an exciting and challenging time in Higher Education. The field is globalizing and specializing at the same time. It is being called on to better prepare people for the workforce and still be a place where students can come to find themselves. The development of our Academic Plan also comes at an interesting time in the history of the University of Prince Edward Island. We have evolved from a local liberal arts university mainly serving students from the Island, to one that accepts students from around the globe to an increasing array of professional and graduate programs. We are embracing these changes while committing ourselves to that island context that makes us who we are. We think this balance is at the heart of who we are.

The strength of UPEI is in its people and in its unique position as Prince Edward Island's only university. We see our academic mission as both being true to our heritage but also recognizing our emergence as a small comprehensive university. We have long had strong core offerings in Arts, Science, and Business as well as our professional programs in Nursing, Education and Veterinary Medicine. These have helped shape not only who we are but also the direction of our new offerings: study and research in aquaculture, kinesiology, climatology/erosion, nutrition, early childhood education, leadership and entrepreneurship, economic sustainability, health care, business acumen and veterinary medicine.

The new Sustainable Design Engineering degree, for instance, is building upon an engineering diploma with over a 40-year history at UPEI. We are a campus where you can learn and contribute as a scholar, get to know your community, and have a wide variety of program options. It is this balance between our island way of life and our commitment to learning, research, and service that makes us a special place to work and study.

Given that we are the only university in the province, we are uniquely situated to address/respond to government priorities and community societal needs. We have significant local impact and are an economic engine for the Island. We have global reach. We have a commitment to support all our cultural communities, including continuing to work alongside our Aboriginal partners to contribute to the reconciliation process through higher learning. We have a responsibility to PEI to provide a high quality learning experience, and we have purposefully chosen to look off-Island, and internationally, to further enrich our own community and to bring our work to the world.

The UPEI Academic Plan is a commitment to this balance.





# PROLOGUE

As was seen throughout the Strategic Planning process and now the Academic Planning process, great ideas and practical solutions exist on our campus. Those ideas and solutions are in many cases already being considered and piloted by some programs, by a single unit, or by faculty members. This plan is built with this understanding as its foundation. We need to give our people the tools they need to succeed, to take our home-grown solutions and implement them university wide.

The plan is designed to create official campus-wide academic initiatives, assign responsibility for outcomes, and develop an accountability framework to allow us to measure our successes. Each of these initiatives is designed to complement and align with the four pillars of our Strategic Plan by building capacity in our academic departments, in our degree programs, and in our administration. We need to be flexible, strategic, and united if we are to adapt to the changes confronting us in a changing demographic, locally, and with broader shifts in Higher Education as a whole.



## ACADEMIC PLAN GUIDELINES

The first phase of producing this document included a review of strategic, academic, and departmental plans from across Higher Education. Through that research and consideration of feedback received during the consultation process, we affirm the following:

1. *Our Academic Plan must be an actionable response to issues raised in our strategic plan.*
2. *Our Academic Plan must be an actionable response to issues raised during our consultation process.*
3. *Our Academic Plan will assign direct responsibility to academic units for delivering outcomes to this response.*
4. *Our Academic Plan must include accountability measures that ensure that the work is progressing satisfactorily, and that the initiatives are working for the faculty and for students.*
5. *Our Academic Plan must be concise and comprehensive.*
6. *Our Academic Plan will uphold the principles of academic freedom as stated in the collective agreement: 'academic freedom involves the right to teach, to investigate, to speculate, to publish and to collect and make available library materials without deference to prescribed doctrine and free from institutional censorship.'*

## OVERVIEW

The targets and initiatives in this plan are the result of two years of consultation with the UPEI community. Each one represents ideas, suggestions, best practices, or concerns that were mined from the consultation process. This draft has been created and vetted by a 22-member committee comprising students, staff, faculty, and representatives from senior administration. It is designed to provide guidance for the next four years of academic work on the UPEI campus.

## RESEARCH METHOD

We used a provisional coding approach with the data that we collected. The original subject categories that we selected were gleaned from the academic responsibilities detailed in the Strategic Plan. From that point, a variety of consultation measures were used and each of those were coded against the Strategic Plan (December survey, public sessions, 20 committee meetings, and academic program surveys). Where aligned, consultation feedback was incorporated into existing initiatives, and where new needs/ideas coalesced, new initiatives were added to the plan. In this way, we have built on the work that was done in the Strategic Plan with further feedback from our campus.

## EVALUATION METHOD

This project is designed to have two interlocking evaluation methods. Each initiative is assigned to a particular campus unit or units with an "initiative plan" due date. Included in that standardized first report will be a critical path with successive trimester report dates. Initial evaluation targets are included in this plan and will be expanded upon in the first report. In addition, a faculty "evaluation of the academic plan" will track the success of these projects from the faculty program perspective.

## PROJECT SUCCESS MEASURES

- » Flexible to allow for differences across faculties/programs
- » Reports January, May, September by initiative lead and through evaluation of the academic plan
- » Detailed initiative plan delivered to Senate
- » Baseline and improvement plan for initiatives where applicable



Boyer (1990) describes four dimensions of scholarship: scholarship of discovery, or creation of new knowledge, scholarship of integration, also framed as cross-disciplinary research, scholarship of application and public engagement, and scholarship of teaching and sharing knowledge. Evidence shows that students who are engaged in scholarship early in their academic careers are more likely to persist with their academic careers. We have a long tradition at UPEI of projects that support scholarship amongst students, including case competitions, Honours programs, undergraduate conferences, and programs such as Student as Scholar and SPUR (Summer Program for Undergraduate Research). It is incumbent upon the university to support and enhance these research opportunities for undergraduate students and to develop new opportunities that reflect the continually evolving landscape of research in all academic disciplines.

<b>Goal:</b>	Provide programmatic, administrative and financial support for undergraduate student scholarship
<b>Description:</b>	Design and deliver programmatic, administrative and financial support for existing undergraduate research programs (e.g., Student as Scholar, SPUR)

**Responsibility:** Vice-President Research and Graduate Studies

**Success measures:** Number of students involved in publications of all types: reports, peer reviewed papers, networked participatory scholarship, editorials; number of student research grants; number of students engaged in research; number of students acknowledged in publications; number of student records (e.g., Honours Theses) deposited in *islandscholar.ca*; research report improvement plan

.....

<b>Goal:</b>	Recognize all forms of undergraduate student scholarship
<b>Description:</b>	Support existing activities and foster new processes and supports which recognize undergraduate students for their presentations, publications, research grants and community outreach





## INITIATIVE 4: GRADUATE RESEARCH SUPPORT

<b>Goal:</b>	Provide programmatic, administrative and financial support for graduate student scholarship
<b>Description:</b>	Design and deliver programmatic, administrative and financial support for existing graduate research programs and for individual student awards (e.g., Health Research Master's Award, Travel Grants); design and implement programmatic, administrative and financial infrastructure for a Graduate School that encompasses graduate education across the university
<b>Responsibility:</b>	Vice-President Research and Graduate Studies
<b>First report due:</b>	January 15, 2016
<b>Success measures:</b>	Creation of a Graduate School; creation of graduate research training and mentorship initiatives for each of the programs that offer Masters and Doctorates; number of graduate students involved in publications of all types; number of graduate students engaged in research; number of graduate students achieving public and professional visibility through conference presentations and other public academic endeavours; number of records (e.g., PhD and Master's Theses) deposited in <i>islandscholar.ca</i>
<b>Current Status:</b>	In progress and in development

## INITIATIVE 5: GRADUATE RESEARCH RECOGNITION

<b>Goal:</b>	Recognize all forms of graduate student scholarship
<b>Description:</b>	Support existing activities and develop new processes to recognize graduate students for their presentations, publications, research grants, research-related media appearances and community outreach.
<b>Responsibility:</b>	Deans/Vice-President Research and Graduate Studies
<b>First report due:</b>	January 15, 2016
<b>Success measures:</b>	Creation of a baseline of graduate student success for each of the programs that offer Masters and Doctorates; creation of a newsletter and other communications channels for student and faculty accomplishments; increased focus on IslandScholar
<b>Current Status:</b>	In progress and in development

## INITIATIVE 6: GRADUATE RESEARCH INCUBATION

<b>Goal:</b>	Develop new research programs for graduate students
<b>Description:</b>	Design and implement MSc and PhD programs in engineering and climate change; expand graduate offerings in existing graduate

**Responsibility:** Vice-President Research and Graduate Studies  
**Initiative plan due:** January 15, 2016  
**Success measures:** Number of new and expanded MSc and PhD programs; number of new interdisciplinary graduate programs  
**Current Status:** In development

UPEI scholars are conducting excellent research and contributing to discovery, integration, interpretation, and application of knowledge. However, the university needs to develop more formal processes for ensuring that faculty scholarly activities are supported adequately and are recognized and disseminated. As part of our commitment to scholarship and to our community, the university will encourage the development of projects that support the further development of scholarship and dissemination of the excellent work already being done, and the development of community and global connections that could open opportunities for new scholarship.

**Goal:** Provide programmatic, administrative and financial support for all forms of faculty scholarship

**Current Status:** In progress and in development

**Description:** Develop processes to recognize faculty for their presentations, publications, research grants and community outreach; to that end, expand the role







The services, both transactional and relational, that we offer to our students are another critical element of the student experience. Where mentorship supports the broader context of the university experience, specific services are part of the day-to-day success of any student. We want our students to have direct access to the support they need and our staff to have the structure required to be able to address their concerns in a timely manner. Our students are individuals that come from diverse backgrounds and have differing needs. Whether they are graduate students, come to us from other countries, have administrative, financial, personal or academic concerns, we need to be able to guarantee their support.

<b>Goal:</b>	Ensure an excellent student service experience
<b>Description:</b>	Identify which services are needed by student groups (e.g., faculty-specific, articulation, international, graduate). Establish an “experience” committee that is responsible for assessing the excellence of these services on an ongoing basis.
<b>Responsibility:</b>	Vice-President Academic’s Office
<b>Initiative plan due:</b>	January 15, 2016
<b>Success measures:</b>	Creation of a student experience committee;

**Current Status:** In development

<b>Goal:</b>	Reflect the University's values identified in the strategic plan in communications with our students
<b>Description:</b>	Review each standard communication sent from administrative units to students and evaluate their effectiveness with regards to informing students and representing our campus values. This project should also advise on issues related to specific messaging going to graduate and international students.

Initiative plan due: January 15, 2016

**Success measures:** Establishment of guidelines for student communications including response time and values; evaluation of success on meeting those targets



## INITIATIVE 14: PROMOTE FIRST-YEAR SUCCESS

**Description:** Assess the factors impacting first-year success and recommend a coherent first-year approach that responds to our current student body. Use this information to inform e-portfolio development (Initiative 28).

Initiative plan due: January 15, 2016

**Current Status:** In development

## INITIATIVE 15: TWELVE-MONTH CAMPUS

**Description:** With many UPEI programs moving to a 12-month model, we need to be able to respond to student needs year round. This plan will identify the gaps in our services between May and August and provide direction on how to fill those gaps.

Initiative plan due: January 15, 2016

**Current Status:** In development

## INITIATIVE 16: COORDINATED SCHEDULING

**Description:** Course scheduling has a profound impact on the life of staff, students, and faculty. This project will do a complete review of the process of scheduling in order to create procedures that will support the timetable policy. The procedures should include training for new Chairs and Directors assuming leadership of a program.

Initiative plan due: January 15, 2016

**Current Status:** In development

## F. MENTORSHIP

One of the primary roles that a university serves is to provide mentorship to students to help guide them to the next stage of their lives. That mentorship can help students in their academic work, but it can also support them socially, personally, and professionally. Relationships are what mentorship

is all about and the initiatives contained in this section are designed to encourage those relationships between students, staff, and faculty. The challenge, however, as Ward, Thomas, and Disch (2014) have indicated, is that “each student is unique and faces a constellation of issues and challenges with respect to academic, career and personal dimensions of development.” We believe that coordinating our UPEI community relationships is the most effective mechanism for providing the mentorship that our students need and deserve.

## INITIATIVE 17: FACULTY/STAFF COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE FOR MENTORSHIP

**Goal:** Develop initiatives to expand faculty mentorship of students in all Faculties, Schools, and Departments based on best practices for mentorship

**Description:** Bring together current UPEI faculty already deeply engaged in mentorship activities to implement and monitor guidelines, approaches, and suggestions for mentorship in different programs on campus.

**Responsibility:** Faculty Development Office

**Initiative plan due:** January 15th, 2016

**Success measures:** Establishment of faculty community of practice; creation of mentorship satisfaction surveys; creation of faculty mentorship reports; student participation in mentorship activities

**Current status:** Draft plan written

## INITIATIVE 18: STUDENT MENTORSHIP PROJECT

**Goal:** Create initiatives to promote student-student mentorship

**Description:** Train peer-mentors through the New Student Orientation process in order to create relationships between upper year and incoming students.

**Responsibility:** Vice-President Academic's Office

**Initiative plan due:** January 15th, 2016

**Success measures:** Attendance rates at NSO; attendance at year round NSO activities; retention rates; student satisfaction surveys

**Current status:** In development

## INITIATIVE 19: SHARE PROGRAM

**Goal:** Connect our students to alumni

**Description:** This is an existing UPEI project that we intend to further support to address alumni and community mentorship opportunities at the program level (e.g. Physics, Engineering, History, Business).

**Responsibility:** Office of Skills Development and Learning

**Initiative plan due:** January 15th, 2016

**Success measures:** Number of students participating in the program; satisfaction surveys from students and mentors

**Current status:** Local project

## INITIATIVE 20: STUDENT/STAFF MENTORSHIP CLUBS

**Goal:** Connect our staff to students

**Description:** Support the integration of staff/faculty into societies and clubs and specifically target the inclusion of incoming students through new student orientation.

**Responsibility:** Vice-President Academic's Office

**Initiative plan due:** January 15th, 2016

**Success measures:** Establishment of a baseline of student participation in clubs and societies; increased staff/faculty participation; increased student participation

**Current status:** In development





UPEI has a long-standing commitment to teaching excellence. We would like to take advantage of this work to both support those who are currently doing well, and to share that knowledge with others who can learn from that excellence. The scholarship of teaching is foundational to our success.

<b>Goal:</b>	Build a comprehensive method of data gathering and analysis about the student experience on campus
<b>Description:</b>	Review of all existing surveys gathering information from students. Our survey of faculty members and campus feedback have revealed a desire to expand our survey data on student satisfaction, formalize the response to student surveys, as well as collect some of these data institutionally.
<b>Responsibility:</b>	Deans
<b>Initiative plan due:</b>	January 15, 2016
<b>Success measures:</b>	Standard program-wide student survey results; alumni student satisfaction survey; research-informed survey report with recommendations for improvements
<b>Current Status:</b>	In development

<b>Goal:</b>	Encourage excellence in teaching
<b>Description:</b>	Support a teaching excellence committee (Senate Committee Enhancement of Teaching) to further promote and acknowledge excellence in teaching. We have many faculty who have received teaching awards, including our own Hessian award and Presidential awards for teaching. This program will seek out awards and identify deserving nominees.
<b>Responsibility:</b>	Faculty Development Office
<b>Initiative plan due:</b>	January 15, 2016
<b>Success measures:</b>	Identification of good practice; dissemination of good practice; teaching participation/nominations received; awards submitted and awarded. Update existing awards database
<b>Current Status:</b>	Ongoing

<b>Goal:</b>	Share home-grown, research-led solutions to teaching challenges on campus
<b>Description:</b>	We have excellent faculty doing successful and innovative pedagogy across campus. This project will collect these examples and use them as the



UPEI has made a strong commitment to experiential learning in its Strategic Plan. This section provides UPEI with the tools to track experiential learning, as well as support students through the process of understanding their own learning and applying it to their future endeavours. Through learning, reflection, and “real work” application we can provide a university experience that is at once complex and meaningful as well as applied and practical.

<b>Goal:</b>	Develop project management skills that are easily reported to future employers
<b>Description:</b>	Explore the possibility of including a project management certificate available across the curriculum. This program would encourage career readiness as well as better support students through the planning required to be a successful student.
<b>Responsibility:</b>	Vice-President Academic's Office and Office of Skills Development and Learning
<b>Initiative plan due:</b>	January 15, 2016
<b>Success measures:</b>	Report on the viability of a Project Management Institute
<b>Current Status:</b>	In development

<b>Goal:</b>	Translate skills and literacies including soft skills learned at UPEI to future endeavours
<b>Description:</b>	Understanding and demonstrating skills and literacies

**Responsibility:** Office of Skills Development and Learning

**Initiative plan due:** January 15, 2016

**Success measures:** Coordination with first-year programs; course integration; capstone courses; total number of students and courses successfully using public portfolios

**Current Status:** In development

<b>Goal:</b>	Use our employment of students as a training ground for job search skills
<b>Description:</b>	Each year, over 500 students work on the UPEI campus supporting the mission of the University. This provides an ideal opportunity to create supports to help shape their future career skills. This project will provide supports to student applicants before, during, and after their work time here at UPEI.







## INITIATIVE 30: PROGRAM REPORTS

**Description:** Support brief yearly check-ins from programs covering issues such as funding needs, program successes and challenges that have been encountered.

**Description:** Review reports submitted by programs and suggest courses of action to support quality in all of our programming.

**Responsibility:** Academic Planning Curriculum Committee

Initiative plan due: January 15, 2016

**Success measures:** Establishment of the committee; success of projects suggested

**Current Status:** In development

<b>Goal:</b>	Support the effective evaluation and creation of new programs
<b>Description:</b>	A cross-campus committee that would support the pedagogical, financial, and research questions associated with the creation of a new program on campus.

**Goal:** Support the effective evaluation and creation of new programs

**Description:** A cross-campus committee that would support the pedagogical, financial, and research questions associated with the creation of a new program on campus.

**Responsibility:** Vice-President Academic's Office

Initiative plan due: January 15, 2016

UPEI ACADEMIC PLAN (OCTOBER 2015)

The evaluation is intended to allow programs to track the general progress of the academic plan across the entire campus and is not intended as the primary means of measuring the success of any individual initiative. It will be presented regularly to Senate to measure overall initiative suitability.

19	SHARE program	
20	Student/staff mentorship clubs	
<b>EXPERIENCE</b>		<b>STATUS</b>
21	Review student surveys	
22	Promote excellence in teaching	
23	Collaborative curriculum	
24	Learning/data analytics for student success	
25	Course goals	
26	Online learning quality assurance	
27	Create a project management institute	
28	Domain of one's own	
29	Student employment on campus	
<b>PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY</b>		<b>STATUS</b>
30	Program reports	
31	Quality assurance committee of the Academic Planning Curriculum Committee (APCC)	
32	Program incubation team	
33	Textbook alternatives	
34	Comprehensive recruitment plan	
35	Ensure responses to faculty requests	

## SAMPLE INITIATIVE

INITIATIVE NAME	Mentorship community of practice		
DATE CREATED	Sep-15	DISPOSITION	Approved
SPONSOR/REQUESTER	Christian Lacroix	INITIATIVE LEAD	Gerald Wando
ACCOUNTABILITY	Faculty Development	INITIATIVE #	26
OTHER CONTACT		VERSION #	1
TARGET START DATE	29-Sep-15	TARGET END DATE	19-Aug-16
ESTIMATED FUNDING REQUIRED	\$	FUNDING SOURCE/ ACCOUNT CODE	

## INITIATIVE OVERVIEW

FOCUS	Academic
THEME	Mentorship
DESCRIPTION	The Faculty Development Office, Student Affairs and the VPA's office is convening a discussion on faculty mentorship of students at UPEI. The goal of the initiative is to improve the student experience through encouraging faculty mentorship. We have several excellent mentorship projects on campus now and our hope is to harness the current expertise among our faculty to development suggested guidelines that could be used across the university.
OUTCOMES	10 faculty mentors helping students in March 2016 // 20 students having met with a mentor by November 2015

## PRELIMINARY HIGH-LEVEL MILESTONES



## SCOPE

IN SCOPE	OUT OF SCOPE

## TEAM

NAME	ROLE	TIME REQUIRED (DAYS)
1	PROJECT SPONSOR	
2	PROJECT LEADER	
3		
4		
5		
6		

## COMPLETION CRITERIA

## WHAT DOES THE DEFINITION OF "DONE" LOOK LIKE?

HOW DOES THE DEFINITION OF "LINE" DIFFER?	

APPROVED BY		INITIATIVE TYPE	RESEARCH
JOB TITLE		DATE APPROVED BY SENATE	
SIGNATURE		LINK TO OTHER DOCS	

## APPENDIX

## HOW THE ACADEMIC PLAN INITIATIVES FIT INTO UPEI STRATEGIC PLAN, 2013–18 PRIORITIES

## EXPLORATION AND DISCOVERY

- » Celebrate our research success
- » Support our grad student and new faculty by providing support and resources to get their research started
- » Research on teaching and learning to help support all our students
- » Research incubation team to foster new collaboration at UPEI on PEI and around the world

## VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

- » Building research communities on campus to foster interdisciplinary cooperation
- » Faculty working together to build a UPEI community curriculum of strategies to support student success
- » A mentor for every student—student, faculty, staff, or alumni
- » Increased graduate students to support undergraduate success and faculty research
- » Use accountability systems to ensure that student, staff, and faculty concerns are addressed

## STUDENT EXPERIENCE

- » A commitment to student research as central to the UPEI learning experience
- » Creation of programs that identify and develop career readiness skills
- » Excellent research into teaching and learning
- » Accountability to every student
- » 12 month commitment to student success
- » Experiential learning goals

## LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY

- » Comprehensive recruitment plan
- » Growth in graduate studies
- » Aligning course scheduling with student needs
- » Program incubation team to foster new programs
- » A commitment to quality in services and program offering
- » Identification of student challenges through data analysis





UNIVERSITY  
of Prince Edward  
ISLAND

**VPACADEMIC@UPEI.CA → UPEI.CA**