

## University of Regina Adopts Strategic Plan Infused by Reciprocity A Case Study on the Guidelines for Integrating Social Purpose into Strategic Plans

The [University of Regina](#) was part of a cohort of six post-secondary institutions participating in pilot testing a set of [Guidelines for Integrating Social Purpose into Strategic Plans](#). This is a case study of their approach to using the Guidelines in support of social impact.

*“The guidelines helped our Strategic Planning Facilitation Team better articulate how our university engages with social impact and opened up discussions among our Facilitation Team, and with stakeholders across and off campus, that encouraged us to think more deeply about how we are currently engaging in social infrastructure, and how we want to see this evolve in the future at the U of R.”*

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### The Strategic Plan

The University of Regina published its [2020 – 2025 Strategic Plan](#) “All our Relations”, in June 2020.

Its new vision is:

*“To reflect the world in which we want to live – a world that **values empowered citizens, generates high-impact scholarship, and embraces Canada’s diversity.**”*

Most of its strategic goals centre on social impact, here is one example:

*Impact and Identity: Strengthen connections with communities*

- *The University of Regina provides positive social, environmental, economic, and health impacts through our reciprocal relationships with our communities. In 2024, the University of Regina will celebrate its 50th anniversary as an independent institution, providing an opportunity to evaluate and communicate how we meet provincial, national, and global societal needs. The past five decades have served as an important era of development for the University and it is now the time to fully articulate and celebrate our identities and impacts on society.*

This idea of social impact is picked up further in its objectives, such as this one:

*The University of Regina is committed to serving the social, cultural, economic, environmental, and technological needs of our community by:*

- *Championing the building of mutually beneficial relationships in our teaching and research.*
- *Engaging communities in the continued pursuit of knowledge and discovery projects.*
- *Developing shared histories with community partners.*
- *Harnessing the institution’s assets to support our communities, via open resources and data, training highly qualified employees, making spaces and infrastructure available for use, etc.*

Notably, this last objective is fully aligned with the call to action from the 2017 Discussion Paper: [“Maximizing the Capacities of Advanced Education Institutions to Build Social Infrastructure for Canadian Communities”](#).

### **Applying the Guidelines**

The University of Regina had a strategic planning team of fourteen people selected from across campus, involving grassroots members and not executives. The Guidelines helped inform the plan’s terminology – the team was most drawn to the concept of social impact and reciprocity because of their actionable orientation. The stakeholder questions, rephrased, were used in the consultation process, and several of the prompting questions influenced edits to the university’s Mission, Vision, and Values (e.g. how might your vision benefit students, your institution and communities/society?)

Some of the concepts such as “leveraging institutional assets” and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals were incorporated directly into the plan. Many other goals resonated and were included in the plan significantly, while most of the others were addressed one way or another.

*“Our team was most drawn towards the concept in which the university serves and is a part of the community and is in a reciprocal relationship with the community.”*

### **Critical Success Factors to Embedding Social Impact in your Strategic Plan**

- Identify where your campus is already engaged in social impact, call it out and formalize it
- Agree on definitions and terms for social impact that resonate internally and externally
- Develop social impact goals in such a way that other departments can take them on

### **Advice for using the Strategic Planning Guidelines**

- Use the guidance provided to refresh the institution’s mission, vision, and values
- The Guidelines are useful for agreeing on terminology and determining how the institution can do better
- The Guidelines are a helpful tool to get planning teams focused on their social impact priorities