

A Future for Humanity

Strategic Plan 2023 – 2030

Faculty of Arts

University of Waterloo



UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

| FACULTY
OF ARTS

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Territorial Acknowledgement

The University of Waterloo and its Faculty of Arts acknowledge that much of our work takes place on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg, and Haudenosaunee Peoples. Our main campus is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River. Our active work toward reconciliation takes place across our campuses through research, learning, teaching, and community building, and is coordinated through the Office of Indigenous Relations.

It has become customary for University of Waterloo events, activities, and publications to feature an acknowledgement that signifies our awareness not only that the University's main and Stratford campuses are located on Indigenous territorial and treaty lands, but also that treaty arrangements and relationships, while often ignored over the centuries, have never been rescinded. It is therefore incumbent upon us to recognize our respectful indebtedness to the Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee Peoples on whose traditional territories the University is situated.

The territorial acknowledgement on the part of the University of Waterloo and the Faculty of Arts is genuine and sincere, but such an acknowledgement on its own falls short of the institution's goals of relationship-building with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples, incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing into our scholarship, our curriculum, and our community, and welcoming and integrating an Indigenous presence into our student, staff, and faculty bodies. Nor does it address the specific and general [calls to action](#) for the post-secondary sector formulated by the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#). The Canadian Association of University Teachers' [guide to territorial acknowledgement](#) states the following:

Acknowledging territory is only the beginning of cultivating strong relationships with the First Peoples of Canada. CAUT encourages academic staff associations to reach out to local Aboriginal communities to open pathways for dialogue.

The University and the Faculty of Arts are committed to such outreach, dialogue, and pathway-building, and among the Affiliated and Federated Institutions of Waterloo, United College in particular has shown leadership in this field for some years. Arts will work together with the Office of Indigenous Relations, the AFIW, and the institution as a whole to bring about the transformation that we hope to see.

Setting the Stage

The University of Waterloo was founded in 1957 (the University of Waterloo Act received royal assent on 5 March 1959). At that time, its immediate goal was to address Canadian society's need to educate more professional engineers, and to do so in a pioneering fashion: the 74 engineering students in its inaugural class were to pursue their schooling through a co-operative system of education. But the founders of Waterloo had a larger long-term vision as well: a new university with the breadth and depth that would allow it to take its place alongside Canada's older institutions, while at the same time maintaining its unique spirit of connectedness between academia and the world beyond. Waterloo was not to be an ivory tower. Its singularity was to be its focus on experiential learning, in which students benefitted from regular relevant employment experiences outside the academy, and faculty and students alike brought a problem-solving mentality and a goal of real-world impact to the academic mission of the institution.

A Faculty of Arts was already in the minds of the University's founders when it opened its doors to those engineering students in 1957. This was particularly so of Gerald Hagey, who became Waterloo's President in 1958: "The humanities call now – as always – for the attention of all who work towards a fuller Canadian life."¹ Postsecondary courses in the arts had been taught in the local institutions that had preceded the founding of the new university: Waterloo College and St. Jerome's College, each of which had a lengthy and lively history of its own that entwined it with the institution. But in 1960, with the hiring of more than 20 professors in such diverse areas as history, English, mathematics, German, Russian, French, Spanish, and political science, the Faculty of Arts at the University of Waterloo was born. Within the next two to three years, courses of study also became available in geography, economics, philosophy, classics, and psychology. Collaboration with St. Jerome's, together with the nascent Renison, Conrad Grebel, and St. Paul's (now United), amplified Arts' offerings further through partnerships that continue today.

Since 1960, the Faculty of Arts at Waterloo has gone through many changes. It has grown considerably in size, with a fully rounded representation of humanities, social sciences, languages, and creative arts. It has moreover kept pace with the unconventional differentiators that distinguish Waterloo. Arts was a leader in the University's distance education initiative, which took its place alongside co-op as one of those differentiators. Co-operative education was first introduced into Arts in 1975 in the Department of Economics; not long after, co-op became available to any Arts majors through the Applied Studies (now Arts and Business) program. As of 2022, more than 60% of all Arts students are in co-op. Other business-related programming has also flourished, in the School of Accounting and Finance and the Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business.

¹ Quoted in K. McLaughlin, *Waterloo: the Unconventional Founding of an Unconventional University*, University of Waterloo 1997, 89.

Over the decades, the Faculty has experienced dramatic shifts in student needs, desires, and expectations, and its research profile has expanded in multiple award-winning directions unforeseen by those early founders. At this point in time, Arts has well over 300 faculty members, 140 staff, almost 8,000 undergraduate students, and over 750 graduate students. Arts convocations celebrate close to 2,000 graduates every year, from over 60 distinct programs. Neither the Faculty nor the University has stood still since its inception: as the [University strategic plan](#) asserts, “Waterloo is built for change.” With change comes the need for regular self-assessment and strategic planning for the Faculty’s future. Regardless of the existing strengths of Waterloo’s Arts scholars, educators, and students, the Faculty needs to remain receptive to reform and renewal in order to maintain its place as part of “an evolving institution in an evolving world”.²

² [Waterloo @ 100](#).

Message from the Dean

The development of this strategic plan has been an unusually protracted one. Work began in the late fall of 2019 and the winter of 2020, with the establishment of the original Task Force that was to carry out initial consultations with all stakeholders. In March of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the shutdown of in-person activity across the campus for some time to come. The majority of consultations were carried out virtually, and in late 2020 the Task Force submitted its report. In 2021, I established four Working Groups to develop and elaborate on the recommendations of the Task Force; much of their work was also done virtually, as many of the constraints caused by the pandemic remained in place. I received reports from these groups in late 2021, but the continued impact of the pandemic, in addition to other unanticipated delays, have meant that this plan is only going forward for discussion and approval by the Faculty in late 2022/early 2023.

I have no doubt that the lengthy delays in the process of building this plan have caused frustrations and uncertainties, feelings which are likely to have been exacerbated by the challenges of living under the pandemic. But while acknowledging the genuine challenges presented by these delays, I would also like to reflect on the fitness of devising a strategic plan now rather than two years ago. Not only the pandemic, but other events over the past few years – continued racism, accelerating climate change, economic uncertainty, rapid technological transformations, aggressive war, fomentation of intolerance, aided by hate-speech and misinformation, and the rollback in human rights even in western democracies – have shown that it is time for a sea change.

Experiencing and observing these events and trends have given us all a renewed awareness of the vital need for humane solutions, informed by compassion, empathy, and a concern for the well-being of the individual and the community, locally and globally. The Faculty is now better poised than ever to bring to bear its talents in exploring, understanding, and improving the condition of humanity and our planet. Within the University as a whole there is a new spirit of collaboration and interdisciplinarity, and a renewed conviction that Arts is a crucial and integral part of Waterloo's mission of higher learning and its impactful contribution to society.

This plan is intended to bring together the ethos of what we are with the aspirations of what we want to be. It is also intended as a catalyst to address pragmatic issues of sustainability and potential structural change, with a view to assisting us in reaching our goals and maintaining the long-term health of the Faculty. Although the timeline embraced by this plan is seven years (2023-2030), the vision developed here is one intended to align with [current thinking](#) about where we want the University of Waterloo to be when it reaches its hundredth anniversary in 2057.

Sheila Ager, Dean of Arts
April 2023

Executive Summary

The 2023-2030 Faculty of Arts Strategic Plan, which has been developed through broad and deep consultations with constituents and stakeholders, is grounded in the values long espoused by the Faculty. Our goals and objectives fall into three broad areas that we have designated as “Priorities for Change”:

I. Building Connection through Interdisciplinarity

- Goal I.A. We will build on existing research partnerships within and beyond the Faculty and will pursue further opportunities for interdisciplinary and collaborative scholarship.
- Goal I.B. We will build on existing strengths to enhance and facilitate interdisciplinary and collaborative undergraduate and graduate opportunities.
- Goal I.C. We will employ an interdisciplinary lens to strengthen and expand current programming and scholarship on all dimensions of social inequity and their intersections.
- Goal I.D. We will maintain and consolidate the unconventional and uniquely interdisciplinary approach to “business” at Waterloo.

II. Effecting Social Impact

- Goal II.A. We will continue to engage in scholarship and learning that emphasizes social impact.
- Goal II.B. We will enhance opportunities for international learning experiences that focus on bettering globalized society.
- Goal II.C. We will explicitly develop and enhance the concept of social entrepreneurship in our scholarly activities.
- Goal II.D. We commit to programming, scholarship, and community-building founded on principles of social justice.
- Goal II.E. We will continue to contribute humanizing perspectives to health and technology research and programming.
- Goal II.F. We will continue to contribute to the University’s sustainability goals.
- Goal II.G. We will employ lifelong learning opportunities to expand and diversify our contributions to social and economic well-being.
- Goal II.H. We will enable our students to have direct social impact through their research, curriculum, and work- and volunteer-integrated learning.

III. Fostering Student Agency

- Goal III.A. We will continue to enhance the flexibility of our programming to provide students with the opportunity to design their own education.
- Goal III.B. We will develop greater opportunities for all our students to gain competency and skills in the critical use of information.

- [Goal III.C.](#) We will continue to expand the number, type, and flexibility of work- and volunteer- integrated learning opportunities for both undergraduate and graduate students.
- [Goal III.D.](#) We will increase opportunities for student-driven project- and problem-based learning at both the undergraduate and the graduate level.
- [Goal III.E.](#) We will prioritize a campus culture centred on social justice in all its dimensions.
- [Goal III.F.](#) We commit to supporting student health and well-being in the Faculty of Arts.

The Faculty sees these goals and objectives not only as distinct undertakings for the seven-year period defined by this plan, but also as guides for navigating long-term change. Our ultimate destination is aligned with that of the institution as a whole: when the University of Waterloo reaches its hundredth year, the Faculty of Arts will provide both support and leadership to its vision of making significant impacts on the greatest challenges facing humanity and the world we inhabit.³

³ [Waterloo @ 100.](#)

Vision, Mission, and Values

Our Vision

The Faculty of Arts will contribute to a better world through positive Social impact. Our research, teaching, and learning will emphasize a conviction that all peoples are worthy of respect, empathy, and socio-economic wellbeing. We will apply our resources and talents to reduce harms inflicted by people on each other, on themselves, and on the environment, while seeking to advance human ingenuity to benefit all.

Our Mission

Arts advances knowledge through excellence in teaching, research, and creativity across the humanities, social sciences, and creative arts. Aligned with the University's strengths in work-integrated learning, we prepare our students for life and for work with values that emphasize the welfare of individuals, communities, and the environments in which we live.

Our Values

Our values are grounded in the concept of a civil society: for each freedom we espouse there is a concomitant responsibility.

- Free inquiry driven by curiosity and the obligation to seek truth through critical analysis
- Social justice in all its dimensions, including equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism
- Respect and tolerance
- Compassion and empathy
- Honesty, integrity, and personal responsibility
- Sustainability
- Collegiality, cooperation, and collaboration

Priorities for Change

Introduction

We are launching this strategic plan at a time of rapid societal, technological, and environmental change. Universities are being called to improve society and drive prosperity in a responsible way by challenging traditional models of education.

University of Waterloo Strategic Plan,
Connecting Imagination with Impact, 2020-2025

The November 2020 Arts Faculty Strategic Plan Task Force report, which was based on extensive consultations, identified four areas entitled “Pillars of Change”:

- Faculty Identity: Global Leaders in Research and Teaching with Social Impact.
- Governance and Organizational Change.
- Student Experience and Success.
- Connection, Community, and Collaboration through Interdisciplinarity.

The Task Force also recognized eight cross-cutting themes that underpinned more than one of these pillars. These themes were considered crucial, but rather than isolate them into separate pillars, the Task Force recommended that consideration be given to them wherever appropriate and necessary:

- Equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Interdisciplinarity in teaching and research
- Identity within a STEM-focused university
- Work-integrated learning and co-op
- Graduate education, agile post-degree, lifelong learning
- Community, space, and wellness
- Metrics and benchmarks of success
- Faculty organizational structure

The next stage of the process involved the creation of four working groups, each of which was tasked with consideration of one of the pillars of change identified by the Task Force, along with the cross-cutting themes. All of the working groups included at least one Associate Dean and were comprised of faculty, staff, student, and Affiliated and Federated Institutions of Waterloo (AFIW) representatives (the one exception was the governance working group, which did not include student or AFIW representation).

The working groups each submitted a report to the Dean; these reports included recommendations of goals and individual objectives to support change in the area under consideration. Further discussion, involving the Dean, the Associate Deans, and senior staff in the Dean’s office, resulted in a topical refinement of the pillars, now identified as three distinct

“Priorities for Change”. It was determined that ideas proposed under the second pillar (governance and organizational change), rather than standing alone, were best considered as a means of achieving the goals identified under the other priority areas. These three priority areas each embrace the totality of our mission of teaching, learning, scholarship, and community, and are now arranged thematically. As the original Task Force discovered, it is not always possible to disentangle the skeins that tie our priorities together. The priority areas should therefore not be seen as independent stand-alone pillars; rather, they represent an interconnected matrix of mutually reinforcing goals:

- Building Connection through Interdisciplinarity
- Effecting Social Impact
- Fostering Student Agency

Change is implicit in any strategic plan, but the change we envision is firmly embedded in our existing values, and indeed is already occurring organically. The timeless vision of the Faculty of Arts – making the world a better place through an understanding of humanity in all its dimensions – is embodied in everything we do and everything we stand for. It is also the best possible platform from which to launch a future-oriented operational plan for transformative renewal that will enable us to achieve the goals and objectives identified here.

I. Building Connection through Interdisciplinarity

The Faculty of Arts at Waterloo embraces many diverse disciplines, presenting a richness of talent and perspective that has provided over the years numerous opportunities for collaboration and interdisciplinary academic programming and scholarship. Beyond the content-focused character of such programs, Arts has also long engaged in the distinctively Waterloo overarching emphasis on employment-oriented education, offering programs such as Arts and Business (formerly Applied Studies) that enable students who wish to pursue their passion in a given field – whether it be French literature or art history or criminology or developmental psychology – in combination with a suite of professionally-oriented courses. The School of Accounting and Finance has collaborated with other Faculties such as Math and Science for decades; most recently, the School has joined forces with the Faculty of Environment to create a new Bachelor's degree. The Bachelor of Global Business and Digital Arts and the Master of Digital Experience Innovation, both offered through the Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business, are examples of fully integrated interdisciplinary programs. Programs offered by Arts partners at the affiliated and federated institutions, such as Peace and Conflict Studies (Grebel) and Social Development Studies (Renison), likewise embrace the principles of both collaboration and interdisciplinarity.

The Faculty of Arts is home to over 20 research institutes, centres, and groups that are interdisciplinary in nature. Arts scholars also have significant involvement in research collectives across the University, such as the Water Institute and the Cybersecurity and Privacy Institute. The Arts Research Office increasingly supports applications for interdisciplinary projects involving Arts researchers working with scholars in other Arts disciplines, other faculties at the University of Waterloo, and other universities. Research projects connecting our researchers with government, industry, and external community organizations are also rising. To give but two examples of Waterloo Arts-led collaborative interdisciplinary endeavours over the past several years: the Games Institute brings together humanists, social scientists, mathematicians, computer scientists, and engineers to understand, design, enhance, and solve problems through games, game-driven technologies, interactive immersive technologies and experiences, while the International Tobacco Control Policy Evaluation Project, a multi-million-dollar multi-year enterprise embracing over 30 countries, has successfully brought about policy change affecting the global sales and marketing of a deadly substance.

The Faculty of Arts will be the focal point at the University of Waterloo for research and learning aimed at understanding, interpreting, and shaping thought and action in a culturally diverse and technologically driven world in great need of humanizing perspectives and solutions. We aim to build on this solid base of interdisciplinary experience and outlook by expanding even further the fields of endeavour and collaboration in the areas of scholarship, teaching, and community engagement. As this plan is being drawn up we have seen the new Bachelor of Sustainability and Financial Management coming into existence, the inauguration of the Trust in Science and Technology Research Network, the Longhouse Labs project extending its outreach to Indigenous artists and communities, the Global Engagement Seminar involving students from across campus in the search for solutions to pressing global problems, and the

creation of new interdisciplinary programming in Black and Anti-Racism Studies. We foresee other research and curricular possibilities, especially through collaboration with colleagues in other faculties. Connection and collaboration equally imply the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusivity, and Arts will continue to be a leading player in the University's commitment to improving social justice.

Interdisciplinarity goal I.A: Research

We will build on existing research partnerships within and beyond the Faculty and will pursue further opportunities for interdisciplinary and collaborative scholarship.

Objectives

1. Supporting clusters of interdisciplinary research in emerging areas and continuing to integrate Arts research(ers) into broader campus initiatives
2. In alignment with the University Strategic Plan and the visioning exercise Waterloo @ 100, participating and leading in research around health and technology
3. Making visible Arts collaboration, contribution, and leadership in University-wide research through informal colloquia across campus, such as the highly successful interdisciplinary "mashup"
4. Encouraging and supporting interdisciplinary post-doctoral opportunities
5. Reviewing hiring, performance evaluation, and tenure and promotion expectations for implicit barriers to collaborative and interdisciplinary research
6. Creating opportunities for Arts researchers to work with graduate students in other faculties

Interdisciplinarity goal I.B: Learning

We will build on existing strengths to enhance and facilitate interdisciplinary and collaborative undergraduate and graduate opportunities.

Objectives

1. Identifying and removing organizational and systemic barriers to interdisciplinarity and creating processes conducive to the organic development of interdisciplinary thinking and collaborative effort
2. Making interdisciplinary opportunities visible and accessible to all students, including those in discipline-based programmes
3. Reviewing our graduate admissions and offerings to explore the potential for growth in interdisciplinary and collaborative programming at the graduate level
4. Providing guidelines, training in best practices, and theoretical models to assist with collaborative development of interdisciplinary programming

5. Employing the program review process strategically to identify interdisciplinary opportunities
 6. Providing opportunities for students to showcase publicly collaborative and interdisciplinary projects
 7. Continuing to liaise and collaborate with the Affiliated and Federated Institutions of Waterloo (St. Jerome's, United, Conrad Grebel, Renison) to build and enhance interdisciplinary programming
 8. Continuing to provide learning opportunities in the humanities, social sciences, and creative arts to other faculties
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Interdisciplinarity goal I.C: Social justice

We will employ an interdisciplinary lens to strengthen and expand current programming and scholarship on all dimensions of social inequity and their intersections.

Objectives

1. Supporting the development of social justice and equity-oriented programming with a view to decolonization of the curriculum and pursuing education about Indigenous ways of knowing
 2. Identifying opportunities to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action
 3. Supporting research that is focused on social justice
 4. Emphasizing recruitment of a diverse student body and providing supports for students of racialized and marginalized backgrounds
 5. Establishing Faculty leadership on equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, and Indigeneity to provide guidance for all members of the Faculty in understanding and addressing relevant issues
 6. Continuing the focus on faculty/staff recruitment and hiring diversity
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Interdisciplinarity goal I.D: Professionalization

We will maintain and consolidate the unconventional and uniquely interdisciplinary approach to "business" at Waterloo.

Objectives

1. Strengthening our collaboration with various partners, within and outside the Faculty and the University (private and public sector employers, industry partners, alumni)
2. Participating in and providing leadership for the University-wide revisioning of its business programming

3. Reviewing the current academic, administrative, and staffing model under which the Arts and Business program operates
4. Expanding the traditional focus on “business” to embrace professionalism and employment-readiness more broadly (private sector, public sector, health organizations, not-for-profit, etc)
5. Creating lifelong learning opportunities for our external partners

II. Effecting Social impact

The University of Waterloo's ethos of experiential learning, entrepreneurship, and problem-based scholarship translates into an uncommonly high degree of institutional connectivity with society at large. Waterloo's distinctiveness as an institution that is focused on having an impact on the challenges facing humanity and our world is well-deserved; the University's planning prioritizes the role it can play in bringing about effective change. The institutional strategic plan (*Connecting Imagination with Impact*, 2020-2025) emphasizes the institution's goal of leading nationally and globally at the interface of health, society, and technology. Moreover, current discussion around the vision for the University when it reaches its hundredth anniversary (*Waterloo @ 100*) features a "Five Global Futures" framework: societal, sustainable, health, technological, and economic. Arts will be a key player in bringing about the goals to which the institution is committed.

The Faculty of Arts has a keen awareness of the impact of our work on individual and community wellness, both locally and globally. Research in Arts addresses problems of global importance in the areas of equity, mental health, climate change, governance, conflict, refugees, racism, poverty, finance, cybersecurity, and reconciliation, to name but a few. Beyond the direct impact of scholarship and learning in such fields, the foundational education provided by the study of the humanities, the social sciences, and the creative arts inspires critical thinking and prepares our students for active civic engagement in a civil society. Our programs emphasize the critical and reflective skills necessary to confront a fast-changing environment, while the dissemination of our scholarship and our creative work educates and challenges our citizens, shapes ethical debate, builds cultural awareness, contributes to the development of public policy, and informs the economic and financial framework that guides our society, while addressing a host of other issues integral to the health and well-being of humanity.

In concert with the rest of the University of Waterloo, the Faculty of Arts will set a world-class standard for social impact in scholarship and teaching. Science and engineering expertise will play a significant role in the technology and health futures to which Waterloo has committed itself, but the profound knowledge and understanding of humanity – its successes and its failures – brought to the table by arts disciplines is equally crucial. The Faculty's Lupina Foundation Postdoctoral program, targeting researchers in the area of social determinants of health, and the new diploma in Health Humanities initiated by St. Jerome's University are recent examples of the blending of disciplines that holds the most promise for profound and lasting real-world impact. Furthermore, the "Tech for Good" focus of the Arts-founded Critical Media Lab is one among several Arts initiatives that emphasize the importance of ethical leadership in technological innovation. Increasingly, interdisciplinary teams feature a breadth of proficiencies, from physics to philosophy, computers to communication, engineering to English.

In curricular settings such as the Global Engagement Seminar, Peace and Conflict Studies, Global Business and Digital Arts, and Sustainability and Financial Management, our students have shown themselves to be deeply committed to tackling the global challenges that face us

today. We will continue to expand student opportunities to effect change, and will assist them in readying themselves to face the challenges of tomorrow.

Social impact goal II.A: Scholarship and learning

We will continue to engage in scholarship and learning that emphasizes social impact.

Objectives

1. Supporting a wide range of research and programming that has direct applicability to local and global problems and problem-solving
 2. Recognizing and articulating the immediate social impact of creative cultural production (theatre, art, digital design, music, literature, etc.)
 3. Recognizing and articulating the significant contributions of fundamental research in Arts disciplines to the well-being of the individual and society
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Social impact goal II.B: International experience

We will enhance opportunities for international learning experiences that focus on bettering globalized society.

Objectives

1. Increasing international work-integrated learning options for domestic students, undergraduate and graduate, including research and/or work with IGOs and NGOs
 2. Creating on-campus/online programming attractive to international students interested in bettering conditions in their home country
 3. Creating more on-campus/online opportunities (e.g., through the Scholars at Risk program) for individual students in dangerous circumstances to come to Waterloo
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Social impact goal II.C: Entrepreneurship

We will explicitly develop and enhance the concept of social entrepreneurship in our scholarly activities.

Objectives

1. Embedding concepts of [various types of social entrepreneurship](#) (community, not-for-profit, transformational, global) into our business-related programming
2. Providing incentives and supports to assist our students in engaging with extracurricular opportunities such as Greenhouse, Grebel Peace Incubator, and Velocity

Social impact goal II.D: Social justice

We commit to programming, scholarship, and community-building founded on principles of social justice.

Objectives

1. Making necessary change within the Faculty to achieve our short- and long-term goals of equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism
2. Participating in educating the University community about Indigenous cultures and knowledges through (e.g.) The Indigenous Speakers Series
3. Providing general leadership within and beyond the University in issues related to equity (anti-racism, gender identity, sexuality, disability)
4. Building programming for our students and for the public (through lifelong learning) that emphasizes actions necessary to build social justice

Social impact goal II.E: Health and technology

We will continue to contribute humanizing perspectives to health and technology research and programming.

Objectives

1. Emphasizing the social justice dimensions of health and technology advances, such as differential access, poverty, educational inequity, etc.
2. Continuing Arts-based scholarship, programming, and clinical practice in the areas of health, technology, and society, such as mental health research, design and user experience, social and political policy, etc.
3. Continuing to participate and provide leadership in University-wide teamwork by bringing an Arts expertise (e.g., ethics, public policy, human-computer interaction) to current trends in technological health delivery, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, etc.

Social impact goal II.F: Sustainability

We will continue to contribute to the University's sustainability goals.

Objectives

1. Employing the UN [Sustainable Development Goals](#) as a guide to critical areas for curricular and scholarly innovation

2. Facilitating the greening of the Faculty in general through education and support to individual units and initiatives
 3. Exploring further options for incorporating issues around sustainability goals into our programming
 4. Supporting Arts research focused on sustainability issues, including interdisciplinary and collaborative research across campus
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Social impact goal II.G: Lifelong learning

We will employ lifelong learning opportunities to expand and diversify our contributions to social and economic well-being.

Objectives

1. Promoting lifelong learning opportunities specifically for diverse audiences at different life stages and with limited access to continuing education
 2. Providing opportunities to our own graduates and to our employees for continuous upgrade of their education and skills
 3. Contributing to both the public and private sector through professional education in financial and economic development, data management and analysis, human resources management, user design, etc.
 4. Providing short-course credentials to public and private sector organizations and businesses in such areas as “cultural awareness”, “diversity in the workplace”, “anti-racism”, etc.
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Social impact goal II.H: Student learning

We will enable our students to have direct social impact through their research, curriculum, and work-and volunteer-integrated learning.

Objectives

1. Creating a greater breadth and variety of work- and volunteer-integrated learning opportunities through connecting with outside partners, including community organizations and the not-for-profit sector, as well as alumni
2. Embedding problem-based and applied learning into more areas of the Arts curriculum at both the undergraduate and graduate levels
3. Expanding Co-op for Social Good into international venues
4. Supporting research assistantships in areas of social impact
5. Exploring the possibility of creating a co-curricular credential in volunteerism

III. Fostering Student agency

An Arts degree remains the best way to acquire a diverse skill set that prepares students for a flexible and dynamic career. At Waterloo, our programs emphasize transferable skills, experiential learning, career-readiness, and interdisciplinary strength. We have made work-integrated learning open to all undergraduate and some graduate students, and provide our students with the ability to connect their learning experience with career readiness. The multiple opportunities we provide to Arts students encourage them to take charge of their own education, to exercise thoughtful choices, and to be agents in their own development.

Human development is not solely a matter of the acquisition of specific skills intended for employment readiness. Everything we do in Arts contributes to fundamentally human-centred learning and showcases the profound value of an Arts education at a deeper level. Our students are encouraged to pursue learning that sets them on a path to both wisdom and humility as they acquire knowledge and insight not only about the world, but about themselves. They gain an ability to problem-solve while also learning to cope with insoluble problems, the limits to knowledge, and the dangers of misinformation. They develop a cultural sensitivity and understanding that enables them to synthesize a global “big picture” view.

It is in part these broader aspects of an Arts education that result in the frequency with which Arts graduates appear in leading roles in the workplace. Regardless of the nature of the company or organization, whether it be software design, healthcare delivery, or biotechnology research and development, Arts graduates are often found across all sectors in leadership positions featuring management, strategic initiatives, and forward planning. Current planning at Waterloo recognizes and emphasizes the values of such an education for all students: “leveraging our strengths in integrating disciplines and working at the intersections, we can also be relied upon as innovators for social good.” ([Waterloo @ 100](#)).

None of us is able to predict the future, even in the short-term, let alone the long-term that is encompassed by the decades of the average career. We need to prepare students to be versatile, agile, and creative, “future leaders who leverage a Waterloo education that facilitates integrated knowledge and problem-solving within and at the intersections of our Global Futures.” ([Waterloo @ 100](#)). In keeping with aspirations identified at the institutional level, the Faculty of Arts will ensure that its students graduate with a broad set of future-ready skills: communication literacy, social and cultural literacy, information literacy, and digital literacy will all be critical. We will empower our students to realize their full potential and continue to improve their capacity to become socially-minded leaders.

Student agency goal III.A: Flexible programming

We will continue to enhance the flexibility of our programming to provide students with the opportunity to design their own education.

Objectives

1. Removing barriers to program flexibility and exploring possibilities for more blended learning and more flexible scheduling
 2. Building upon the recent rapid growth in online programming to create new learning experiences
 3. Exploring new means of combining student programming interests, within and across Faculties
 4. Finding ways to appropriately capture and incorporate relevant student feedback on courses and programs
 5. Providing lifelong learning to our graduates
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Student agency goal III.B: Information literacy

We will develop greater opportunities for all our students to gain competency and skills in the critical use of information.

Objectives

1. Providing students with strong fundamental skills in both qualitative and quantitative research, analysis, and communication
 2. Providing specific skills acquisition opportunities in areas such as data management and analysis, statistics, and digital skills
 3. Providing increased opportunities for formal recognition of specific competencies gained through curricular or community-based experience (e.g., certificates, co-curricular notations, diplomas)
 4. Enabling students to identify, reflect on, document, and articulate the skills they have derived from their Arts experience and its potential for social impact, personal growth, and skills development
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Student agency goal III.C: Integrated learning

We will continue to expand the number, type, and flexibility of work- and volunteer-integrated learning opportunities for both undergraduate and graduate students.

Objectives

1. Exploring alternative formats for Co-op, including term and time flexibilities
2. Creating more opportunities for internships, especially in programs featuring problem-based learning
3. Expanding the Co-op for Social Good program
4. Creating “micro”-experiential opportunities

5. Integrating the experiential piece of our students' education further into the academic piece
 6. Preparing graduate students for multiple non-academic career opportunities
 7. Continuing to connect students with alumni for networking and professional support
-

Student agency goal III:D Problem solving

We will increase opportunities for student-driven project- and problem-based learning at both the undergraduate and the graduate level.

Objectives

1. Creating course-based capstone projects emphasizing solutions to local and global challenges
 2. Enabling students to develop and enact their ideas for social and commercial entrepreneurship
 3. Developing course-based opportunities for interdisciplinary teamwork
 4. Providing opportunities for all disciplines, including creative work, to engage in project- and problem-based learning
 5. Showcasing student solutions regularly through a problem-solving "challenge" competition
-

Student agency goal III:E Social justice

We will prioritize a campus culture centred on social justice in all its dimensions.

Objectives

1. Providing leadership, guidance, and incentives for creation/revision of courses and programs inclusive and reflective of perspectives of communities of colour and as a means to achieving appropriate decolonization of the curriculum
 2. Prioritizing recruitment, retention and membership of Indigenous, Black, and other students of colour, including targeted financial supports
 3. Developing strategies for supporting students from underrepresented and marginalized communities in general
 4. Practising mindfulness around accessibility and promoting the notion of "disability" as a culture and identity rather than a diagnosis
 5. Increasing opportunities for international graduate students in Arts
 6. Providing financial and other resources for student leadership and organizations to make progressive change on campus
-

Student agency goal III:F Well-being

We commit to supporting student health and well-being in the Faculty of Arts.

Objectives

1. Challenging and redefining dominant ideas about what is meant by “health”
2. Developing Faculty-specific resources to support students’ mental and physical health needs and assisting students in understanding their own health needs
3. Building familiarity with both university and the Kitchener-Waterloo community support resources and social opportunities
4. Increasing opportunities for supportive connections among students, including peer mentorship and student-led clubs
5. Creating supportive connections between students, faculty, and staff, including department advisors, department social initiatives, and collaborations with faculty
6. Creating more student-friendly and/or student-dedicated spaces in the Faculty.
7. Promoting more student involvement at all levels of governance

Looking forward

As we move forward with the implementation of this plan, all of us will need to work together as a Faculty in order to achieve our aims. Our next steps will consist of setting an order of priority for the fulfillment of the various goals and objectives; determining what structures, processes, and positions may need to be put in place to realize those goals; identifying individuals and groups who may be charged with the responsibility of implementation; and determining appropriate metrics and benchmarks that will allow us to track and measure our success. The goals are open-ended and in many cases the aim is long-term culture change rather than a short-term completion of a discrete and time-limited set of objectives. In any case, the Faculty and its constituent units – both academic and academic support units – should be engaging regularly in an ongoing process of self-assessment and strategizing.

We are entering this next phase of the Faculty's existence with a reasonable and tempered optimism. As we work towards implementing the plan, it will be necessary for us always to have a clear and realistic understanding of our existing resources, their limitations, and the potential for identifying new sources of revenue. Moreover, although this plan has had little to say on the issue of physical space, space, along with finances, represents potential constraints and sustainability issues, and will be a necessary consideration as we move forward. We must also keep in mind our human resources as well, and not lose sight of the need to support the well-being of our faculty and staff as we ask them to take on new projects. Mindful operational planning will need to go side by side with the kind of visionary and aspirational planning represented here.

As emphasized throughout this document, the Faculty of Arts Strategic Plan for 2023-2030 is aligned with both the [University Strategic Plan](#) instituted in 2020 and the current visioning exercise designated as [Waterloo @ 100](#). The latter in particular emphasizes a holistic and collaborative approach to the multiple challenges we face in the world today. The Faculty plan likewise situates the contributions of Arts disciplines within the larger framework of the University as a whole, and underscores the vital importance of the values that are core to what we do. The Faculty of Arts is proud to play a crucial role in the University of Waterloo's aspiration to create a better future for humanity and our planet.

Appendix 1: Glossary of terms

Interdisciplinarity

Interdisciplinary research and learning addresses subject matter and/or employs methodologies from more than one discipline. In its most developed form, interdisciplinary scholarship presents new and transformative theoretical perspectives resulting from a genuine integration of a multiplicity of disciplinary information and approaches. The Faculty of Arts engages with interdisciplinarity on many different fronts and in many different forms. In the context of this document, ‘interdisciplinarity’ may be seen as an umbrella term that embraces also activities considered multidisciplinary, cross-disciplinary, and transdisciplinary — within our own faculty, with members of other Waterloo faculties, and at other institutions.

Social impact

Social impact can result from research and learning that directly or indirectly benefits people and societies. Social impacts from the Faculty of Arts are broad and can include advancements in: economies and prosperity; public policy; communication and education; creative and cultural expression; individual and community well-being, both physical and mental; organizational systems; accountability; justice, equity, and other areas.

Social justice

Social justice implies work that prioritizes addressing and rectifying disadvantage and marginalization experienced by groups and individuals. For example, this work might focus on ability, neurodiversity, gender, and/or race issues. We recognize and value that there are a broad range of views within the Arts community regarding the goals of social justice and approaches to promote those goals. Within this plan, connection and collaboration equally imply principles of equity, diversity, and inclusivity. An overarching goal of this plan is to carry out work that contributes to anti-racism, decolonization, and combating other forms of systemic and personal discrimination within our own institution and well beyond.

Student agency

Student agency refers to a general principle of supporting and assisting our students in developing a sense of personal responsibility and enabling them to make mindful choices for themselves in their education, their work life, and their personal life. Within this plan, we aim to foster such agency both through encouraging flexibility and choice and through the provision of a supportive and safe environment.

Sustainability

Sustainability within Arts research and learning encompasses social, economic, and environmental concerns both locally and globally. Work within Arts does or can align with

most of the 17 United Nations [Sustainable Development Goals](#). We also refer to sustainable practices in the faculty's organization, administration, and delivery of our programs.

Appendix 2: Strategic Plan Task Force and Working Groups

Task Force:

Faculty

- Andrew Faulkner, Classical Studies (Co-Chair)
- Ranjini Jha, School of Accounting and Finance (Co-Chair)
- Veronica Austen, English Language and Literature, St. Jerome's University
- Ramona Bobocel, Psychology
- Elise Lepage, French Studies
- Lennart Nacke, Communication Arts/Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business
- Mikal Skuterud, Economics

Staff

- Greg Campbell, Arts Undergraduate Office (Co-Chair)
 - Caroline Brookes, Dean of Arts Office
 - Shelby Davies, Political Science
 - Angela Roorda, Dean of Arts Office
-

Working Group I: Faculty Identity: Global Leaders in Research and Teaching with Social Impact

Faculty

- Katherine Acheson, Associate Dean of Arts, Undergraduate Programs (Co-Chair)
- Changling Chen, School of Accounting and Finance (Co-Chair)
- Gerard Boychuk, Political Science
- Richard Eibach, Psychology
- Ana Ferrer, Associate Dean of Arts, Research
- Andrea Jonahs, English Language and Literature
- Monica Leoni, Spanish and Latin American Studies/Fine Arts
- Marcus Shantz, President, Conrad Grebel University College
- Christina Vester, Classical Studies
- Gerald Voorhees, Communication Arts

Staff

- Rita Cherkewski, Dean of Arts Office
- Amy Meredith, Arts Undergraduate Office
- Wendy Philpott, Dean of Arts Office

Student

- Stefania Stachura, Arts and Business, Communication Arts (Undergraduate)
-

Working Group II: Governance and Organizational Change

Faculty

- Robert Park, Associate Dean of Arts, Co-op and Planning (Co-Chair until 30 June 2021)
- Anindya Sen, Interim Associate Dean of Arts, Co-op and Planning (Co-Chair from 1 July 2021)
- Tara Collington, French Studies (Co-Chair)
- Lai-Tze Fan, English Language and Literature/Sociology and Legal Studies
- Eric Helleiner, Political Science
- Margaret Insley, Economics
- Ian Milligan, History

Staff

- Andrea Charette, Dean of Arts Office
 - Janice da Silva, Psychology
 - Kathryn MacDonald, Dean of Arts Office
 - Julie Mulvey, Arts Undergraduate Office
-

Working Group III: Student Experience and Success

Faculty

- Anna Esselment, Associate Dean of Arts, Graduate (Co-Chair)
- Bruce Dadey, English Language and Literature (Co-Chair)
- Martin Cooke, Associate Dean of Arts, Undergraduate Students
- Katy Fulfer, Philosophy
- Kristina Llewellyn, Social Development Studies, Renison University College
- Teferi Mergo, Economics
- Blake Phillips, School of Accounting and Finance
- James Skidmore, Germanic and Slavic Studies
- Jessica Thompson, Fine Arts/Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business

Staff

- Kayla Lorentz, Arts Undergraduate Office
- Kaitlin O'Brien, Dean of Arts Office

Students

- Jaydum Hunt, Psychology (Graduate)
 - Rachel Bruce, English Language and Literature (Undergraduate)
 - Angad Lehal, Arts and Business, Economics (Undergraduate)
-

Working Group IV: Connection, Community, and Collaboration

Faculty

- Ana Ferrer, Associate Dean of Arts, Research (Co-Chair)
- Imre Szeman, Communication Arts (Co-Chair)
- Joel Blit, Economics
- Michael Boehringer, Germanic and Slavic Studies
- Alana Cattapan, Political Science
- Alan Huang, School of Accounting and Finance
- Logan MacDonald, Fine Arts
- Colleen McMillan, Social Work, Renison University College
- Andrew McMurry, English Language and Literature
- Abigail Scholer, Psychology

Staff

- Xing Liao, Dean of Arts Office
- Nancy Mattes, Dean of Arts Office
- Angela Roorda, Dean of Arts Office
- Mona Skuterud, School of Accounting and Finance

Student

- Khusro Mir, Economics (Graduate)