UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO
strategic plan
FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENT
2013 to 2018
SUMMARY
2013 to 2018
SHAPING OUR SUSTAINABLE FUTURE
For over 40 years the Faculty of Environment has been dedicated to having a positive impact locally and globally. With interdisciplinary programs and researchers we make meaningful change happen in the classroom, the office, and in communities around the world. This Strategic Plan guides our direction over the next five years. It is the basis from which we develop and implement practices that allow us to achieve our collective vision.
SCHOOLS AND DEPARTMENTS

» Department of Environment and Resource Studies
» Department of Geography and Environmental Management
» Department of Knowledge Integration
» School of Environment, Enterprise and Development
» School of Planning

PROGRAMS

Bachelor of Environmental Studies (BES)
» Environment and Business
» Environment and Resource Studies
» Geography and Aviation
» Geography and Environmental Management
» Geomatics
» International Development
» Planning

Bachelor of Knowledge Integration (BKI)

Master of Arts (MA)
» Geography
» Global Governance
» Planning

Master of Applied Environmental Studies
» Local Economic Development

Master of Climate Change (MCC)

Master of Development Practice (MDP)

Master of Environment and Business (MEB)

Master of Environmental Studies (MES)
» Environment and Resource Studies
» Geography
» Planning
» Sustainability Management
» Tourism

Master of Science (MSc)
» Geography

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
» Geography
» Planning
» Social and Ecological Sustainability

RESEARCH CENTRES

» Ecosystem Resilience and Adaptation (ERA)
» Heritage Resource Centre
» Interdisciplinary Centre on Climate Change (IC3)
looking back

Formed in 1969, the Faculty of Environment was the first of its kind in Canada. Today, we’re the fastest growing Faculty at the University of Waterloo.

Sustainability has been central to our mission since the Faculty’s inception. We take a leadership role in greening the campus and in advocating for sustainability policies and practices at local, national and international levels.

**Notable initiatives include:**

» **Greening the Campus**: a course that has been offered in the Environment and Resources Department for nearly 40 years;
» **Robert Starbird Dorney Garden**: transformation of campus lawn into a native-species garden, initiated in 1987;
» **Residential Energy Efficiency Project (REEP)**: a partnership that has delivered over 20,000 home energy evaluations, was awarded the Ministry of Environment Award for Environmental Excellence in 2011 and has retrofitted the REEP house to LEED® Platinum;
» **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)**: Eight faculty members served as Authors, or Expert Reviewers to IPCC’s 4th Assessment Report — co-recipient of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize.

**Our defining strengths:**

By design, our approach in both research and pedagogy is highly interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary, integrating the natural and social sciences, policy and business in ways that address pressing environmental problems and issues.

» Our Faculty contributes in significant ways to four of the University’s key areas of differentiation identified in the Strategic Mandate Agreement between the University and the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities: “environment/biological systems”, “x and business”, “governance” and “health and well-being”. We are also poised to play a leadership role in the proposed program area of growth, “social innovation, entrepreneurship and sustainability”.

» The University of Waterloo Strategic Plan recognizes the strengths in the Faculty: “Within the Faculty of Environment, interdisciplinary groups collaborate with other Faculties to solve climate change, water, energy, food systems, ecological restoration, and urban planning issues through science and policy” *(University’s Strategic Plan 2013, 21).*

Our experiential approach to education provides unique opportunities for integrative learning, preparing tomorrow’s graduates to think laterally and work collaboratively in order to better understand, adapt to, and engage with the complex, rapidly changing world that awaits them.
since the last strategic plan

The previous strategic plan for Environment, “Smart Green Solutions”, outlined an ambitious growth agenda for the five-year period beginning in 2007. This growth plan was justified by the increasing demand for graduates with environmental degrees as well as the planned implementation or expansion of several undergraduate and graduate programs in targeted areas including aviation, environment and business, environmental science, geomatics, global governance, international development, knowledge integration, social innovation, and water resources.

INNOVATION IN ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

2007

2+2 joint education program with universities in China
BES in Geography and Aviation
BES in Geomatics
MA and PhD in Global Governance

2008

BES in International Development
Bachelor of Knowledge Integration (BKI)
MSc in Geography and Environmental Management

2009

PhD in Social and Ecological Sustainability
Founding of the School of Environment, Enterprise and Development
SINCE 2007, THE FACULTY HAS DELIVERED...
VISION

To use our unique position as a leading teaching and research institute for the environment to create sustainable solutions needed to address the complex challenges facing our world.
strategic priority areas

OUR PEOPLE

IMPACTFUL RESEARCH

OUTSTANDING ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING

INFLUENTIAL COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

Completed in 2011, Environment 3 is the first LEED® Platinum certified building on an Ontario university campus.
“it starts with our people…”

Foster a collaborative community of engaged students, staff, faculty and alumni who are proud to be part of our Faculty and feel empowered and supported to contribute to our collective vision.

Despite substantial growth over the past five years, the Faculty remains a close-knit community. As we continue to welcome an influx of new faces, this is an ideal time to reassess how we work together across schools and departments, across the campus, and in our various partnerships in order to ensure efficiency and unlock new opportunities.

Our objectives are to:

» Continue to foster and respect a breadth of cultural and disciplinary perspectives by recruiting and nurturing talented people from around the world.

» Support our people in their professional and academic development by ensuring opportunities for training, professional development and international experience.

» Enhance the vibrancy of our intellectual community by providing more opportunities for mentorship and peer-to-peer learning relationships.

» Spark creativity and improve our collective efficiency and efficacy by encouraging and supporting teamwork and collaborative approaches across departments and faculties.

» Increase undergraduate students’ engagement by building on our successes. e.g., Living-Learning Community partnership with St. Paul’s University College.

» Ensure that technology-enabled tools and services meet the needs of students, instructors, researchers and administrators by adapting to change, maintaining stability in IT service provision, and promoting relevant training.

» Empower our people as ambassadors of the Faculty’s vision by supporting student, staff and faculty initiatives to advance sustainability on and off campus.

» Deepen and extend our external relationships by working with alumni and others who share our vision.
Conduct impactful research that transcends disciplinary boundaries in addressing complex environmental and societal issues.

From its inception, the Faculty of Environment has engaged in scholarship that addresses important environmental and societal issues. Our research is integrative in nature, drawing on concepts, theories, methods and substantive knowledge in the natural sciences, social sciences and humanities. As such, we are uniquely positioned to help solve the complex sustainability challenges facing the world today.

Our objectives are to:
» Foster a culture of research excellence by offering a supportive environment for all aspects of the research enterprise.
» Continue the Faculty’s upward trajectory with respect to research output and impact by strategically pursuing funding and partnership opportunities, and by recruiting strong researchers.
» Increase our research impact by honing the Faculty’s research identity and leveraging our identity for fundraising and graduate-student recruitment.
» Provide more capacity for research by creating and reconfiguring physical and virtual spaces.
» Increase doctoral student enrolment by engaging faculty in pro-active recruitment and by providing more competitive funding.
Continue to build our reputation as a national and global leader by offering a range of unique and highly regarded educational programs related to environment and sustainability.

With multiple one-of-a-kind programs as well as traditional academic departments and schools, the Faculty of Environment truly offers environmental education from all angles. As we move forward, we will embrace the complexity of the issues we study in order to educate graduates who will have the critical thinking, creative problem solving, and collaborative skills to be effective contributors to building a sustainable future for humanity.

Our objectives are to:

» Attract the best and the brightest students by focusing recruitment efforts and scholarship support in strategic ways.

» Enable students to reach their full potential by maintaining a flexible learning environment that embraces individual talents and interests.

» Incorporate student-centric approaches, experiential learning, and technology-assisted learning in our curriculum at every level of study by making program modifications and enhancements.

» Partner with external stakeholders to enrich our educational programming and ensure that our students have the background and skills necessary to compete and contribute after graduation.

» Enhance our world-class graduate programs by working across departments and schools to harness synergies.

» Leverage and develop new strategic partnerships to increase international enrolment and create more research and learning opportunities for our students to participate in international activities and gain exposure to global influences.

» Increase student engagement and access by appropriately integrating alternate course delivery formats and providing more research opportunities for students.

» Respond to emerging societal needs by focusing growth on graduate education and targeted undergraduate programming.

» Increase Faculty visibility, reputation, and engagement across campus and beyond by designing and delivering sustainability curriculum for new on-campus and off-campus audiences.
influential communication and outreach

Share the story of the Faculty to **enhance our reputation** with varied audiences, extend the impact of our research, and **inspire environmental action**.

With research that forms the bridge between the natural and human environments, our work impacts the lives of people at the local, national and global level. This creates compelling stories that are uniquely relatable to the human experience. Sharing these stories is critical in attracting talented people, generating support for our work, and establishing the Faculty of Environment as an influential voice in shaping the sustainable future of our world.

**Our objectives are to:**

- Optimize the Faculty’s outreach potential and increase our impact by co-ordinating communication efforts.
- Build our collective reputation by profiling our achievements and capitalizing on transformational research and teaching.
- Provide more opportunities for our students by deepening student, staff, faculty and alumni relationships.
- Inspire the next generation of leaders to shape a sustainable future by focusing outreach and storytelling towards youth audiences, e.g. the Waterloo Unlimited high school enrichment program.
- Extend our reach by providing a stronger allocation of resources to traditional and social media communications, and to community programming.
In 2013, the University of Waterloo launched its strategic plan, “A Distinguished Past — A Distinctive Future”. The Faculty of Environment’s Strategic Plan is positioned to contribute in meaningful and distinctive ways to the University’s ambitious plan.

EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION FOR ALL
As a campus leader in experiential learning, we will ensure that all our students have opportunities for meaningful and varied out-of-the-classroom learning.

A UNIQUELY ENTREPRENEURIAL UNIVERSITY
Embedded in the University’s entrepreneurial spirit, we will contribute to Waterloo’s global leadership in entrepreneurship education and practice, especially in the areas of social innovation and green entrepreneurship.

TRANSFORMATIONAL RESEARCH
We will continue our longstanding tradition of tackling complex environmental and social issues in innovative and interdisciplinary ways, thus contributing to transformational research that addresses existing and emerging global challenges.

OUTSTANDING ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING
We will ensure outstanding academic programming by continual review, co-operation across departments, schools and programs, and increased use of alternatives to traditional lectures.

GLOBAL PROMINENCE AND INTERNATIONALIZATION
We will build on our impressive record of growth over the past decade in order to further develop our international research network and enhance international opportunities for students.

VIBRANT STUDENT EXPERIENCE
We will build on our strong reputation as a student-focused Faculty to create more opportunities for student enrichment and to ensure that students receive the support necessary to develop their full potential.

ROBUST EMPLOYER-STAFF RELATIONSHIP
We are fully committed to being an exemplary employer and will provide opportunities and encouragement for staff and faculty to develop professionally.

PROMOTING A SOUND VALUE SYSTEM
We are committed to the value system articulated in the University’s Strategic Plan 2013, and will play a leadership role on campus in articulating and living out sustainability values.

OUR COMMITMENT
In the Faculty of Environment, we are proud of the successes we have collectively achieved. We are well positioned to take on challenges and embrace opportunities as we strive towards our vision. Using this Strategic Plan as the foundation, we commit to working together to develop implementation tactics that will enable us to achieve our objectives.
PROCESS

The development of this plan was iterative, bottom-up, focused on our strengths, and consistent with University priorities. A two-year consultation period translated into strategic plans for the various academic and support units. Simultaneous with this, each of the Associate Deans developed integrative plans for undergraduate studies, graduate studies and research, which were presented at Faculty Council in 2013. All of these fed into this plan which was presented to the University’s Executive Council in May 2014.

VIEW ONLINE
uwaterloo.ca/env/shaping-2018