

ENVIRONMENT: TOGETHER FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

January 29, 2024

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UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

FACULTY OF
ENVIRONMENT



ENVIRONMENT 2024

- **5** schools/departments
- **9** undergraduate degrees (including BSFM, joint with Arts)
- **21** graduate degrees
- **2,500** undergraduate students
- **650** graduate students
- **105** faculty, including 8 Canada Research Chairs and 4 University Research Chairs
- **54** staff members
- **\$42M** total tuition and grant revenue
- **\$14.1M** research funding
- **17** research clusters within the Faculty
- **9** research centres led/hosted by the Faculty



CONTEXT FOR CHANGE

- Waterloo at 100, Global Futures, evolving values, and related initiatives
- Integrated activity planning and rolling, multi-year budgeting
- Government policy, e.g. funding, tuition, international student study and work permits
- Student (and parent/influencer) focus on relevance and cost of education, and student experience/supports
- Broad-based societal concern about human-environment issues such as extreme weather, changes to earth systems, biodiversity and ecosystem collapse, natural resource shortages, and pollution

ENV STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025

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.

Goals

1. Be Canada's leader in environmental and sustainability education.
2. Achieve increased impact through national and global leadership in environmental and sustainability research.
3. Demonstrate an ethos of caring in all that we do.

Commitments: The Faculty adopted 23 commitments to achieve the goals.

STRATEGIC VISIONING: PREPARATION

- **June 2022 – June 2023: Informal Information Gathering**
 - Observations re opportunities and challenges
- **August 2023, Leadership Retreat: Visioning Exercise**
 - Discussion re the context for change and brainstorming around possible future directions
- **September 2023 – January 2024: Research and Analysis**
 - Formation of undergraduate, graduate and research task teams to explore options

OBSERVATIONS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

IDENTITY & DIRECTION

Challenge: Over the years, our identity and direction have become grounded in the many, many things we do as individuals and units.

Opportunity: We have the opportunity to redefine who we are and want to be as a Faculty, so that we can have a greater impact and attract employees, students and partners who share our vision.

CONNECTION & COLLABORATION

Challenge: Our historically, close-knit and supportive community has been challenged by expansion and the pandemic. We have become increasingly siloed and disconnected internally and with external communities and partners.

Opportunity: We have opportunities to strengthen our sense of community as a Faculty, break down siloes that impact operational and academic collaboration, and expand and deepen connections with external stakeholders and communities to enhance research, learning and outreach activities.

COMMUNICATION

Challenge: We have world-class researchers working with partners on pressing issues. We have unique, highly relevant, interdisciplinary programs, including a wide range of climate change specific academic offerings. We have not been recognized for this leadership (yet).

Opportunity: Leveraging the expertise of our recently enlarged communications team in partnership with University Relations, we have the opportunity to raise the profile of the Faculty and our leadership in research, learning and knowledge mobilization.

ENVIRONMENT 2030: OUR PATH FORWARD

A change initiative designed to:

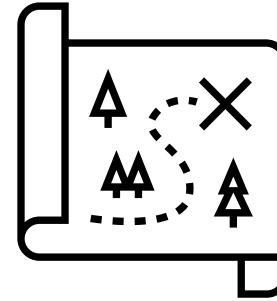
- **Identify and connect our unique strengths in research and learning** to the world's most pressing challenges at the intersection of humans and their environments.
- **Grow and sustain a community of faculty, staff, students, alumni and partners** who are passionate about – and proficient in – collaborating, integrating diverse approaches, and co-creating and mobilizing new knowledge.
- **Align resources, operations and communications** to support these objectives.



ENVIRONMENT 2030: EXPLORATION AND IDEATION

Task Team 1: Undergraduate programming is exploring:

- Identifying core competencies for first year Environment students; and
- Increasing flexibility of our degree pathways.



Task Team 2: Graduate programming is exploring:

- Streamlining and harmonizing core requirements for relevant programs;
- Housing and administering all graduate programs through a school of graduate studies; and
- Offering an applied PhD.



Task Team 3: Research strengths and foci is exploring:

- Current and emerging areas of research emphasis;
- Research approaches common in the Faculty; and
- Differentiation from other institutions.



ENVIRONMENT 2030: NEXT STEPS

- **January 2024 – April 2024: Consultation and Iteration**

- Each task team will undertake focused consultations with subject matter experts and broad consultation with Faculty stakeholders.
- I am visiting each School and Department, and will be testing concepts and directions with external partners while traveling this Winter.

- **May 2024: Presentation and Discussion**

- Recommendations will be presented at the Annual General Assembly for discussion and endorsement.

- **June 2024 – on: Communication, Implementation, Reporting**

- Subject to endorsement, operationalization and communication plans will be implemented with regular reporting and adjustment as necessary.

WATERLOO AT 100 & ENVIRONMENT 2030

- From Waterloo at 100: "A community of curious, collaborative, innovative and entrepreneurial problem-solvers and leaders who seek to understand and identify equitable and sustainable solutions for the future of humanity and our planet."
- This vision describes Environment's reason for being and how we approach research and learning. We emphasize:
 - **Connecting** our scholarly work to pressing societal issues at the intersections of humans and their environments;
 - **Integrating** different approaches and perspectives to understand and propose solutions to complex challenges;
 - **Collaborating** with individuals and organizations within the academy and local and global communities to co-create innovative and sustainable solutions.
- Environment 2030 will allow us to refocus and realign to our identity, strengths, and deep commitment to co-creating a sustainable future with our community and partners in a way that also supports the University in realizing its vision for Waterloo at 100.

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Our greatest impact happens together.