

LAND, LEARNING & LEGACY: OUR PATH TO 2040

STRATEGIC PLAN 2025–2040

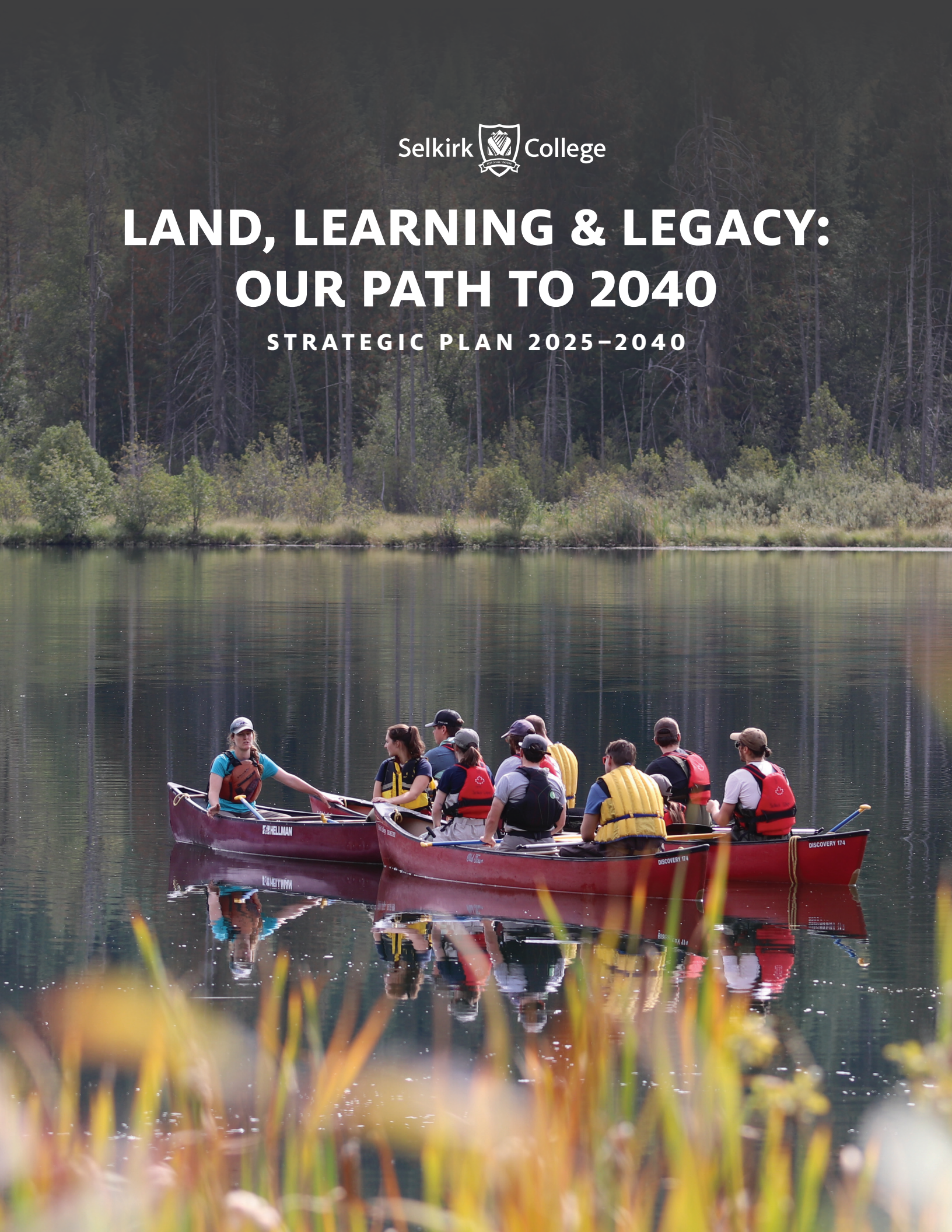


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Indigenous Land Acknowledgement **wayá • ki'su'k kyukyit • weyt-kp • tawnshi • greetings**

Selkirk College acknowledges the traditional territories of the First Nations of the West Kootenay and Boundary regions: the Sinixt (Lakes), the Syilx (Okanagan), the Ktunaxa and the Secwépemc (Shuswap) Peoples. The mountains, rivers, lakes and lands of these territories have sustained life and human communities since time immemorial. Learning and education have been part of this land for millennia.

Selkirk College is grateful to the keepers of these territories where we live and learn and for the wisdom and beauty that surrounds us. Selkirk College is honoured to work with an engaged and proud Métis community who make the West Kootenay and Boundary regions their home. We honour and celebrate the values, cultures and ways of knowing that all Indigenous learners bring to Selkirk College.



Message from the President

Dear Members of our College Community,

As we navigate an era of unparalleled change in higher education, I'm very pleased to present our new strategic plan: *Land, Learning & Legacy: Our Path to 2040*. It's the result of extensive internal and external consultations, and I am deeply grateful for the level of engagement and enthusiasm you demonstrated during this process.

This strategy will guide us through an evolving landscape of post-secondary learning, workforce demands and advances in technology. It emphasizes our unique strengths within BC's post-secondary landscape. It highlights our location, place-based learning opportunities, and commitments to sustainability and community.

We recognize that change is constant. We designed this plan to be adaptable, allowing for adjustments as new challenges and opportunities arise. Your continued engagement and feedback will be crucial as we implement these strategies through our departmental and school operational plans.

Adopting a distinctive, long-term strategy will help us focus on our vision and make better decisions on competing priorities. We now have a tool to help us face these challenges thoughtfully and strategically by:

1. Guiding resource allocation to areas of greatest impact, allowing for growth in demand-aligned programs.
2. Leveraging our distinctive strengths to increase enrolment and generate new revenue streams.
3. Informing our approach to organizational transformation, ensuring we maintain our core mission and values.

I'm confident that together, we'll not only adapt to change but lead it, and I'm looking forward to embarking on this exciting journey with all of you.



Maggie Matear

President

How This Strategy Will Serve Us

This strategy will serve as the foundation for all our future decisions. It will guide the creation of further plans for education, research and operations so we can continue to transform our college to meet the needs of our communities.

The strategy doesn't provide specific instructions or projects to complete. It's not a task list.

As we head into a future marked by ongoing change, this strategy offers direction that guides us in the face of uncertainty and ambiguity. It is a framework for determining priorities, making decisions and providing clarity of purpose while maintaining the flexibility we'll need to meet the challenges ahead.

It doesn't tell us explicitly what to do but guides us on how to make informed and logical choices that will advance our vision over the next seven generations and beyond.



How We Got Here

Building this strategic plan has been a collaborative effort.

As *Building Remarkable Futures: Strategic Plan 2019–2024* came to a close, Selkirk College needed a strategy to capture our community’s collective ambition and guide us through a transformative period. The strategy would require an inclusive and iterative consultation process.

A steering committee comprised of members from the Selkirk College community—including the Selkirk College Board of Governors; the director of Indigenous education & engagement; faculty; three employee unions; and operations, administrative and student services staff—was formed to oversee the process. Members provided advice on consultation processes and insights and feedback on draft documents.

In the winter and spring of 2024, we convened groups of employees, students and community partners to solicit their input for our future strategy. We realized that emerging trends and external forces were creating a new reality that would require us to adapt and innovate. To identify a strong, future-forward vision in this context, we asked:

- What is the most significant challenge we’re facing?
- What is the most inspiring achievement we can strive for in the coming years?
- Why do we, as a college, matter?
- How will we make a meaningful difference, and what lasting impact do we want to make?

Through hundreds of conversations and engagements with a broad range of constituent groups, our community was able to do the hard work of acknowledging what we’re facing, where we want to go and how we’ll get there.

“The public consultation elements of this process were crucial to final outcomes ... as the college belongs to everybody.”

***—Maggie Matear, President,
Selkirk College***

“I am very excited to be paddling in the same direction. I am happy to hear our values and commitments are not changing much, and we are moving toward a focus on excellence.”

—Internal consultation participant

Consultations by the Numbers

- 20+ Group and individual engagements with external partners and allies.
- 12+ Group and individual engagements with First Nations and Métis people on campus and partners external to the college.
- 340+ Responses to community surveys.
- 12+ Focus group engagements with internal community groups across all campuses and learning sites.

More than 500 people engaged in planning through interviews, online surveys and regional community consultations. They told us what made them proud to be part of Selkirk College and the West Kootenay and Boundary regions, and they shared their ideas for the future of the college.

Consultations revealed that our strategy needs to be grounded in the present while firmly focused on the future. The “What We Stand For” section in this document is the heart of our strategy, outlining core values, commitments and guiding principles for all future actions. “What We’re Facing” anchors our strategy in our immediate context to acknowledge and remain accountable to present realities as we build toward our envisioned future. “Where We’re Going” articulates this future through our vision and mission statements. Finally, “How We’ll Get There” speaks to the strategies and objectives guiding our decision-making.

“Thank you for checking in and asking for comments and feedback.”

—Consultation participant



Selkirk College is the heartbeat of the West Kootenay and Boundary regions. It nurtures local talent and invites international diversity. Without it, the region would lose a key contributor to its educational, cultural and economic landscape. It's not just a college—it's a community builder.

—Survey respondent

What We Stand For

Our values are what we stand for. These are enduring in the face of change, and even more than our mission and vision, they are our reason for being and doing. They shape our culture. They define us.

OUR VALUES

Community means delivering education that builds relationships, culture, belonging, empowerment and opportunity. Selkirk College students and employees are part of an educational community that is integral to the well-being of the West Kootenay and Boundary regions and has provincial, national and global connections.

Access means an educational experience should be attainable to all, regardless of who or where they are or what challenges they face. Accessibility defines a culture of inclusion, considers the services provided to learners, develops innovations to program- and course-delivery formats and timing, and supports the technological and physical infrastructure required for student success.

Respect means we treat ourselves, each other, members of our college community and the world around us with respect, dignity and integrity. Respect builds trust and includes respect for diverse people, ideas, perspectives, cultures and traditions, respect for the environment, and the modelling of respectful discourse and conversation in our work.

Excellence means everyone strives for the highest level of quality, accountability and professionalism in all areas, including instruction and services and operations for students, employees and communities. Excellence promotes creative and growth mindsets and approaches to our work that inspire innovation.

Our Commitments

Our commitments emerge from our values. We aim to embed our commitments in everything we do, including programming, student and employee supports, planning, and operations.

SUSTAINABILITY

We integrate our respect for the land and natural environment through sustainable practices, carbon footprint reduction and responsible use of resources.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

We provide a safe, supportive and inclusive community where all students and employees can learn and work together equitably.

RECONCILIATION

We intentionally establish and maintain respectful and right relationships with Indigenous Peoples, including Indigenous governments, organizations, families and learners.

RESEARCH & INNOVATION

We foster new ways of thinking and delivering education that help learners adapt and thrive in the face of change.

WELLNESS

We develop innovative support systems to promote healthy behaviours, mental resilience and personal growth for employees and students.



SUSTAINABILITY: STEWARDSHIP FOR THE FUTURE

Sustainability is a concept with deep historical roots. The Haudenosaunee Seventh Generation Principle has come down to us through centuries of oral knowledge, advocating for decisions that ensure a sustainable world for future generations. There are parallels in the 1987 United Nations Brundtland Commission’s definition: “Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

All versions of sustainability, whether focused on conservation or development, share a common thread: stewardship and concern for the future. Both ancient wisdom and current realities inform this care. Our natural environment—its mountains, rivers and forests—exemplifies sustainability through its enduring presence, adaptability and resilience over thousands of years of change.

Our institutional approach to sustainability is grounded in our relationships with the land, with each other and with the resources that support us—environmental, cultural and financial. This understanding of sustainability is central to our purpose and our role in shaping the future.

What We're Facing

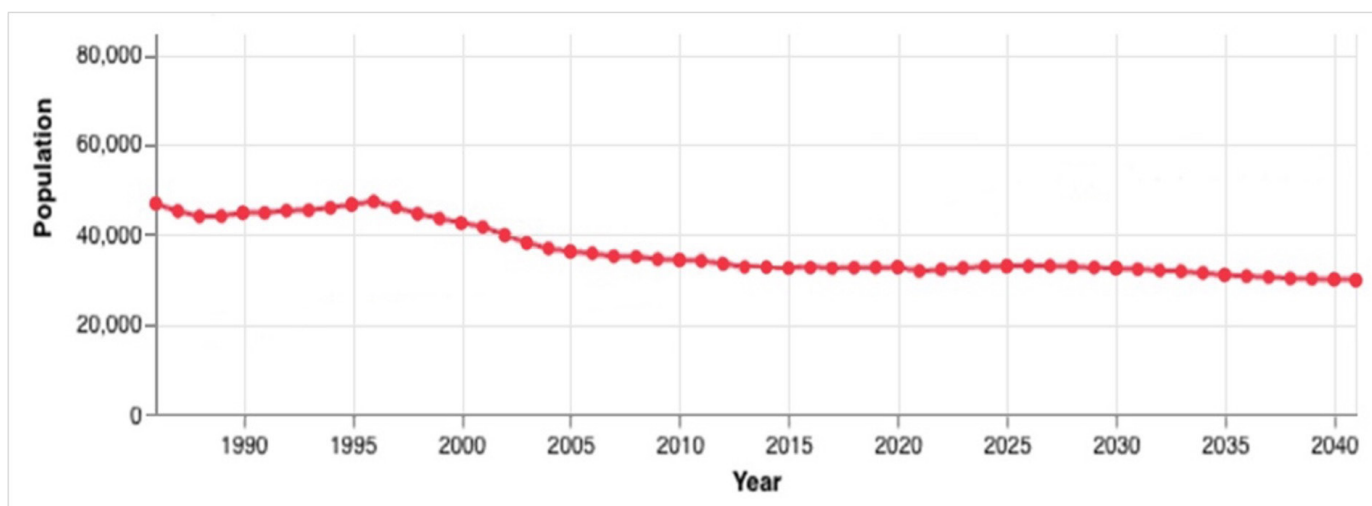
As we began to draft a new strategic plan, we recognized the profound changes, challenges and opportunities shaping our path.

Selkirk College is a regional college deeply connected to both the land and the people of the West Kootenay and Boundary regions. The challenges of our time—climate change, shifting demographics and economic uncertainty—demand a bold vision that matches the dynamism of our local communities.

Climate change has taken a visible toll on our region. We have long-standing commitments to promoting sustainability and mitigating climate impacts. Our research intentionally focuses on applied and social innovation that supports rural resilience and environmental stewardship.

Our student population, too, is changing. Selkirk College has been a regional destination, fostering a sense of belonging and pride spanning generations of alumni. However, while the overall population in the region is growing slowly, the youth population most likely to attend college is shrinking (see Figure 1). Our local employers are already feeling strained by a shortage of qualified workers. Fewer students at Selkirk College will mean fewer skilled workers for our region's future. That is a loss we can't afford.

Figure 1: Projected Youth Population to 2041, for all Columbia Basin: Boundary



To mitigate the negative impacts of a declining domestic student population, Selkirk College embraced opportunities to recruit internationally. International students have helped stabilize enrolment, enriched our learning environment and made meaningful contributions to the economic prosperity of our region. Until recently, international students made it possible to offer a vast suite of programs, despite the college's relatively small enrolment size.

Changing provincial and federal regulations have affected Canada's reputation as an attractive destination for post-secondary education. International recruitment will continue to play an important role in supporting campus diversity. However, we are actively seeking ways to enhance our efforts to attract and retain domestic students, which is essential to achieve our enrolment goals and ensure long-term financial stability.

Changes to the student population are a call to action. The decisions we make and the actions we take in the coming years will be pivotal in shaping the future of the West Kootenay and Boundary regions for the next seven generations and beyond.



Without Selkirk College, the West Kootenay and Boundary regions would lose a vital educational institution that serves as an anchor for the community. It provides accessible higher education opportunities, contributes to economic development, and fosters innovation and cultural enrichment.

—Survey respondent

Where We're Going

Our mission and vision are straightforward, focused and built to guide our planning.

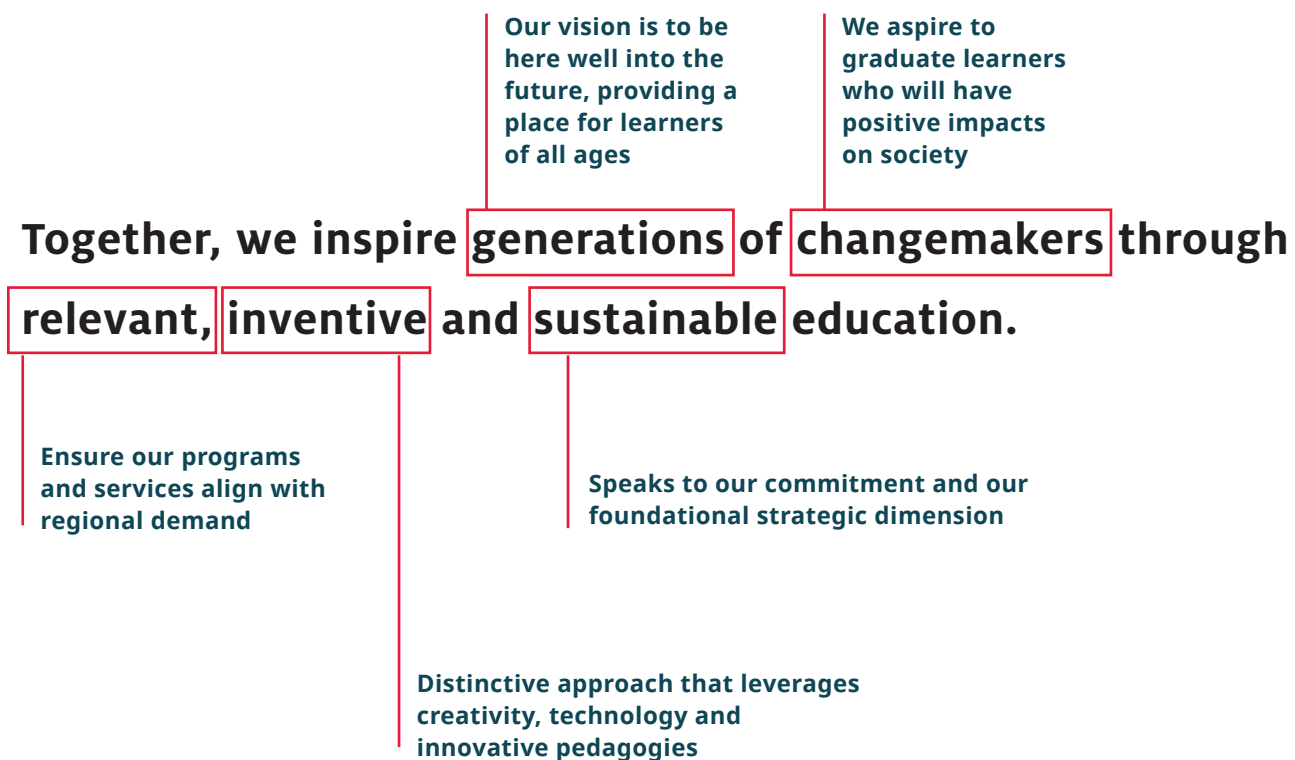
VISION

Our vision is what we want to become. It motivates us to align our efforts and priorities to achieve the future we see for ourselves.



MISSION

Our mission is what we need to make our vision a reality. It guides our efforts to advance learning and inquiry by describing how we approach our work.



How We'll Get There

Our Foundational Goal: Positioning Selkirk College for Sustainability

Sustainability is our foundational goal, underpinning all our efforts to create a college that best serves our students and communities.

There are four dimensions to our strategy. Together, they provide the strategic direction to ensure Selkirk College excels well into the future.



Dimension One

Sustainability: Seven Generations and Beyond

Sustainability is not a fixed state but a continuous improvement process. It encompasses environmental, social and economic resiliency in a rapidly changing world. It demands that we ground our efforts in Indigenous ways of knowing that suggest holistic ways of seeing the world and considering the future. It implies responsibilities for reciprocity, co-learning and collaboration.

1.1 Deepen our relationship with the land and strengthen our commitment to environmental stewardship.

We will cultivate a profound sense of place, recognizing the interconnectedness of our college and the natural world.

Climate and geography have an enormous impact on the culture of the region, and our relationship with the land provides the opportunity to lead and innovate in ways that honour both the natural world and the traditions of its stewards.

This relationship with the land will guide our decision-making around policy, infrastructure, college services, education, applied research and partnerships.

1.2 Nurture our role as a trusted partner.

We will continue to build and maintain strong, collaborative relationships with groups in our region, including Indigenous partners, communities, industry partners, governments, other education providers and the various peoples who call this place home.

1.3 Safeguard the college's long-term fiscal health.

We will ensure we use our resources as effectively and responsibly as possible. Selkirk College intends to be here for posterity, delivering unique learning experiences that will support the prosperity of the West Kootenay and Boundary regions for the next seven generations and beyond.





Dimension Two

Focus: Transformative, Distinctive Education

As a college with an expansive footprint and legacy, we face wide-ranging expectations and complex challenges. Meeting these expectations requires careful planning, focus and deliberate action.

2.1 Support regional and community priorities through high-demand applied learning, continuing education and research initiatives.

We will align our applied learning, continuing education and research efforts with the needs and aspirations of our region.

Monitoring emerging sectors, trends and regional labour market demands will help ensure our programs and initiatives remain relevant and effective.

2.2 Expand efforts to Indigenize and decolonize education and campuses.

We will continue to be guided by the principles of UNDRIP (particularly article 15), the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and Selkirk College's commitment to reconciliation.

Through our Indigenization Plan and daily activities, our engagement with Indigenous Peoples will be reciprocal, meaningful and supportive. Indigenous ways of knowing, doing and being will inform the college's purpose, culture and curricular offerings.

2.3 Emphasize exceptional teaching and learning experiences across all programs.

We will leverage our unique setting, facilities and proximity to nature to create immersive learning experiences that enhance every stage of a student's academic journey. Engaging opportunities in the classroom, in the lab and on the land will enrich our programs and student activities.

Our proximity to pressing environmental issues, such as wildfires, water management, vulnerable ecosystems, and sustainable resource extraction, offers a unique setting for water- and land-based experiential learning.

Our position and expertise equip us to lead in the fields of rural economic development and environmental stewardship.

We will continually refresh and update spaces, services and curricula and draw on our strengths as one of British Columbia's top applied research colleges.



Dimension Three

Deliver: A High-Performance, High-Support Organization

A healthy workplace culture that advances continuous improvement and accountability requires robust systems and investments in innovation and technology.

Selkirk College will empower employees through access to robust, adaptable systems and cultivate their potential through a focus on collaboration, support and shared responsibility.

3.1 Inspire a culture of engagement and accountability, energized by the possibilities of change.

We will continue to nurture an environment where everyone feels valued for their contributions and inspired to share their progress.

Working together, we can create a culture that encourages shared responsibility, mutual support, and a commitment to continuous improvement. By embracing change as an opportunity for innovation, we will become more adaptable, resilient and responsive to our communities.

3.2 Advance an informed, vibrant and respectful workplace culture.

We will build a workplace where knowledge is shared, diversity is celebrated and respect is foundational.

We will encourage open dialogue, embrace different perspectives and support continuous learning and collaboration. We will foster an inclusive environment where every member of our community feels valued, empowered and engaged in our vision and mission.

3.3 Optimize processes and structures to support efficiency.

We will work to make policies, processes, infrastructure and technologies more effective and efficient and collaborate to deliver our services effectively.



Dimension Four

Impact: Innovation for Thriving Communities

At Selkirk College, processes, structures and infrastructure are subject to continuous reflection and adaptation. We demonstrate our capabilities through a culture of exploration and problem-solving, offering students and employees a platform to develop innovative and impactful solutions to real-world challenges.

As education and research evolve, Selkirk College will continue to leverage its unique strengths and regional partnerships to deliver learning experiences that set it apart.

4.1 Prioritize innovative approaches to program and service delivery.

We will approach our surroundings as an extension of our classrooms—living laboratories that create immersive learning experiences. We will embrace new learning models and technologies to continuously improve access to and quality of education. We will continue to focus research efforts on helping to solve the real-world challenges facing rural communities, industries and businesses.

4.2 Create more engaging and memorable student experiences on our campuses and learning centres.

We will find more ways to nurture students' personal and social well-being and their intellectual and professional growth.

4.3 Cultivate an entrepreneurial spirit.

We will demonstrate resourcefulness, resiliency and creativity to actively pursue ideas—projects, programs, services or processes—that support our vision.



Acknowledgements and Gratitude

The college owes enormous thanks to the members of the Selkirk College community who devoted their time, insights and expertise as members of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee. Their efforts ensured that this plan is the product of the college’s collective aspirations.

Over the past year, they played a vital role in overseeing the development of a plan that accurately reflects current realities, community input and future aspirations. The committee provided essential feedback on various materials, including communications and strategy drafts, that helped clarify the plan’s direction. By effectively representing their peers and colleagues throughout this process, the committee ensured that the final plan is a collaborative effort that serves the entire Selkirk College community today and into the future.

- Brier Albano
- Christy Anderson
- Dianne Biin
- Kerry Clarke
- Leesa Dean
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- Lareena Rilkoff
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- Terri MacDonald
- Maggie Matear
- Tracy Punchard
- Tiffany Snauwaert
- Margaret Sutherland
- AJ Wearmouth
- Taya Whitehead

The college is also indebted to the Selkirk College Board of Governors for providing time, insight and guidance during the development process. Their role in the coming years will be to ensure the college remains true to the vision, mission and values articulated in this plan. Their involvement has been instrumental in laying the foundation for a successful future.

- Margaret Sutherland, Chair, Appointed Member
- Amed Naqvi, Vice Chair, Appointed Member
- Christy Anderson, Appointed Member
- Mary Austin, Appointed Member
- Debbie Bird, Appointed Member
- Danny Bradford, Appointed Member
- John Dutton, Appointed Member

- Thompson Hickey, Appointed Member
- Bronwyn Krause, Elected Member
- Udayveer Migla, Student Representative
- Kim Pham, Elected Member (SCFA)
- Kris Salikin, Appointed Member
- Abina Thomas, Student Representative
- Ken Wyllie, Appointed Member
- Dr. Maggie Matear, Ex-Officio Member
- Darcy Falkenhagen, Ex-Officio Member

The strategic planning process and this document would not have been possible without the many employees working behind the scenes to turn plans into action. Thank you for helping to bring this strategy to life. The college is also immensely thankful to First Nations and Métis partners, along with community, government and industry partners. This process showed how invested our allies and partners are in our success. Many took time out of their busy schedules and travelled long distances to offer thoughtful and considered ideas, insights and feedback for the future of our college.

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