

2020-25 Academic Plan

Fall 2019

**DRAFT FOR COMMUNITY
CONSULTATION**

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Setting the Stage

Ryerson University is embarking on a new and exciting chapter. Urban, culturally diverse and inclusive, Ryerson is Canada's leader in innovative, career-oriented education. It is home to more than 44,000 students in 121 graduate and undergraduate programs and a vibrant school of continuing education. The Ryerson family also includes 3,900 faculty and staff and nearly 198,000 alumni worldwide.

Since 2014, Ryerson University has been guided by a bold Academic Plan. *Our Time to Lead* articulated a shared vision to help Ryerson realize its objective of becoming Canada's leading comprehensive innovation university. It empowered our diverse community of students, faculty and staff to continue pushing boundaries across disciplines, redefining how we see our role as an academic institution.

The success of that plan is demonstrated through achievements across critical areas of our institution including:

- Teaching and experiential learning;
- Scholarly, Research, and Creative (SRC) activities; and
- Community, government and industry partnerships.

As we move into Ryerson's next decade, our university continues to challenge conventional approaches in many areas, especially the three broad pillars of postsecondary education, research and city-building.

Celebrating Success

Our Time to Lead has provided the guidance required to strengthen Ryerson as a comprehensive innovation university over the past five years. Specific highlights speak to just some of the many successes realized under that plan.

Challenging student minds

Undergraduate enrolment saw a 17 per cent increase with graduate enrolment increasing by 23 per cent. Program offerings were expanded, with two new bachelor programs, seven new master's programs and three new doctoral programs being launched.

One of the reasons that students choose Ryerson is because of opportunities to apply their learning in real world situations. Ryerson has seen a dramatic increase in the development of co-op programs and experiential learning. Over the course of *Our Time to Lead*, the number of co-op programs has doubled to 23 and enrolment in courses with an experiential learning component has increased by more than 2,000 registrations.

Strength in research and innovation

Achievements in scholarly, research and creative activity include a significant increase in external research funding, as well as the establishment of research chairs including the Jarislowsky Chair in Democracy, our first Canada Excellence Research Chair, in addition to the appointment of several Canada Research Chairs. Other highlights include the creation of the Yellowhead Institute, a First Nation-led research centre, the opening of the Centre for Urban Innovation, and the establishment of the Faculty of Science research space at MaRS.

Ryerson has made significant progress in fostering an innovation ecosystem. Highlights include:

- Obtaining approval for a new Law School that will feature innovative approaches to teaching and learning in this field;
- Growing the Zone Network to 10 innovation zones that span a wide variety of disciplines;
- Seeing the DMZ ranked as the top university incubator in the world;
- The establishment of applied research centres, e.g., Institute for Biomedical Engineering, Science and Technology (iBEST) and Centre for Urban Energy (CUE);
- Establishing the Office of Social Innovation; and,
- Being named as the lead institution of the Future Skills consortium, a group that fosters skills development among Canadians.

Collectively, these and other initiatives illustrate how Ryerson has taken significant steps not only to embrace the innovation landscape, but to play a pivotal role in helping to advance it.

Focus on communities and cities

Over the past five years, Ryerson has made significant contributions in the areas of community engagement and city-building. Notable highlights include appointing the first vice-president of equity and community inclusion, being named Canada's first Ashoka Changemaker Campus, and seeing Ryerson join the WC2 group of universities working to address cultural, environmental and

social issues of interest to world cities. We have also established Ryerson Urban Water, an interdisciplinary research centre.

SciXchange is another example where Ryerson actively demonstrates its commitment to the broader community. Its mission is to make science engaging, comprehensible and accessible to the general public, with an aim to increase science literacy and foster critical thinking about scientific issues. SciXchange provides opportunities for members of the community to engage in science through hands-on work and discussion.

Ryerson has also contributed to expanded community engagement and city-building by creating a unique physical imprint on Toronto with new buildings that are part of the city's changing landscape. These include the Daphne Cockwell Health Sciences Complex, the Centre for Urban Innovation and the Sheldon & Tracy Levy Student Learning Centre. In addition to providing well designed space to learn and work, these buildings have transformed, expanded and modernized Ryerson's urban footprint while providing welcoming spaces that foster collaboration and innovation. A particular example is Ryerson's Urban Farm on the roof of the George Vari Engineering and Computing Centre.

Looking back, moving forward

As the existing Academic Plan was developed for 2014 through 2019, now is the time to look ahead — to create the next plan outlining the priorities and values that will guide the Ryerson community.

An Academic Plan is both aspirational and operational. It involves finding a careful balance — between articulating our dreams and bringing them to reality in practical ways that are achievable.

Consultations across the Ryerson community indicated that *Our Time to Lead* provides a solid foundation to develop the next Academic Plan. Using it as our springboard, we can leverage our collective achievements as we continue striving for excellence.

Working together, we can advance Ryerson's vision, mission and mandate, while continuing to inspire the students who choose to study with us, and the broader community, in the months and years ahead.

As we define and shape the next Academic Plan, members of the Ryerson community are invited to consider two key questions:

- How do the values and priorities in *Our Time to Lead* intersect and how they might be refined or focused in the next plan?
- How does work in respective local units relate to the Academic Plan, and how might they work with other groups across the university to advance Ryerson's priorities?

Your feedback on these questions, and the material included in this draft paper, will contribute greatly to shaping the direction our university takes in the immediate years ahead.

We welcome your input, and your voice, so we can continue building a Ryerson for today and tomorrow.

A Summary of Consultation Findings

[To be updated in the final draft, to include results and feedback from this fall 2019 series of consultations / town halls]

Overview

- First phase of consultations/Town Halls on the next Academic Plan occurred in late spring and summer 2019
- The Ryerson community is enthusiastic about the university's overall direction, so the goal is to refresh and refine the Academic Plan rather than charting a completely new course
- One early takeaway: the new plan needs more focus, with clearly defined priorities and strategies and tangible markers that can be readily assessed

Consultation Update

- Total number of town halls / presentations: 16
- Number of participants: 1,080+
- Specific discussions have taken place over the past year with:
 - Senate
 - Chairs, Deans, and Directors
 - Distinguished Visiting Professors
- Other planning processes have been informed by priorities detailed in the Academic Plan, including:
 - Budget Plan
 - Research Plan

- Master Plan
- Risk Management Plan
- Spring/summer town halls with Faculties and divisions
- Students and staff were welcomed to provide their input as part of Faculty town halls

What we heard -- the new Academic Plan should include:

- Further focus on **Indigenous perspectives**
- Additional focus on **international initiatives**
- Continuing to improve Ryerson's **national and global reputation** through increased **research, PhDs** and a renewed focus on the overall **student experience**
- **Sustainability**, including fiscal sustainability as well as environmental sustainability
- A commitment to enhancing **classrooms and other learning spaces**
- **Civility** as a fundamental principle that governs who we are and how we work and collaborate
- Renewed focus on **collaboration** and **interdisciplinary approaches** to learning
- Enhanced recognition of the importance of **overall wellbeing, including mental health**
- **Stronger external connections** in the form of partnerships, collaborations, work-integrated learning and co-op opportunities
- A **new emphasis on city-building**, with specific focus on urban realities, a greater stewardship role and enhanced community engagement, in addition to re-defining the concept of city-building

Our Values

In *Our Time to Lead* 14 values were established as critical to helping propel that plan and the university forward. These values continue to be at the core of our work.

Underpinning these values is a commitment to be bold, to be enterprising, to examine the status quo and identify where we should do things differently. Going forward, we remain committed to boldness in our everyday thinking, in our actions and decisions as an academic institution, and to how we live out our values on a day-to-day basis.

Excellence

In everything we do at Ryerson, we aspire to excellence — to be the very best we can be both inside and outside the classroom. Whether in the research lab, at a co-op placement, or in the office, it means we are always striving for excellence, and doing so in a manner that is both positive and authentic. Ryerson's commitment to providing an exceptional postsecondary experience depends on the actions and accomplishments of the entire university community.

Academic Freedom

Academic freedom is at the very heart of what it means to be a university. It gives us the liberty to think critically, explore new ideas and challenge existing norms and preconceptions. We embrace unequivocally freedom of thought and expression in support of teaching, learning and scholarly, research and creative activity. Our commitment to academic freedom provides the foundation for all that we do at Ryerson.

Respect and Shared Success

At Ryerson, respect and a commitment to shared success underscore how we work together and how we treat one another. Collaboration with an aim toward mutual success shapes our work and the ways in which we measure achievement. It's about recognizing that while work or research might be independent, there's a bigger picture that we are creating together. Respect is about how we communicate our ideas, how we debate and listen to each other, and how we articulate and comprehend our identities in all their diverse forms. Learning can be transformative but can also, naturally, create discomfort. Healthy discussion where differing viewpoints are expressed is the very essence of higher education — and that discussion is most effective when it occurs with integrity, responsibility and respect.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

For Ryerson, equity, diversity and inclusion are necessary components of a modern, accessible post-secondary institution. A major strength of our university comes from the diversity in our Ryerson family which reflects the very essence of Toronto, the diverse, multicultural community we call home. Teaching and learning at Ryerson both influence and are influenced by the diversity of ideas and experiences that members of our community bring. Inclusion means that all students, staff and faculty are respected and appreciated as valuable members of the Ryerson community, and that a commitment to equity is embedded in our everyday thinking and actions.

Sustainability

At Ryerson, sustainability means taking steps and behaving in ways that carry us and our institution forward. That means continuously looking ahead and thinking about the future. Sustainability means many things, from taking meaningful action to protect the environment, to being fiscally responsible while ensuring high quality student experiences. Ryerson is committed to pursuing environmental, social and economic sustainability through our programs, SRC activities, and our policies. We recognize our individual and collective responsibility for our campus, our community and our planet.

Enterprising

The university champions innovation and entrepreneurship, and empowers its students, faculty and staff to think creatively, take initiative and demonstrate resourcefulness. This includes civic, cultural and social advancements that enrich the fabric of society, improve quality of life, and drive change.

Wellbeing

Ryerson is committed to the success of its community by creating a safe, secure, collegial, and healthy environment that puts people first, is supportive of the whole person, and enhances the development of physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing. We recognize that wellbeing contributes to positive social outcomes, to healthy communities, and to a shared partnership in teaching and learning. In this regard, we encourage learning as a lifelong activity through accessible, responsive and comprehensive continuing education, and professional development and learning opportunities for students, faculty and staff.

These values give shape to what Ryerson is about, what inspires us, and what we want our work to mean. They are not simply aspirational statements captured in a document, but are intended to be lived across all aspects of university life.

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Our Priorities

The Student Experience

We equip students of all backgrounds to impact our changing world by developing their knowledge, skills and careers through teaching and engagement in local and global communities.

Excellence in learning and teaching. Outstanding programs and services available to support students. Committed faculty and staff. An unwavering commitment to holistic student wellbeing. These are the ways in which Ryerson strives to provide an excellent experience to every student inside and outside the classroom. Our commitment is to help students to develop the knowledge, skills and competencies they need to have an impact on the world. Delivering on this priority involves every member of the Ryerson community — anyone who, in any way, influences student experience at Ryerson.

Going forward, Ryerson will strengthen its commitment to providing interdisciplinary and experiential learning opportunities that bring students and faculty together to address real-world local and societal problems. In this, students will become more fully engaged with local and global communities, service providers, and industries as partners in their learning experiences.

Quality teaching matters to us. Supporting faculty as they hone this craft is an integral part of the Ryerson student experience. Ryerson will continue nurturing a culture of teaching excellence that empowers our faculty and encourages experimenting with bold approaches, innovative pedagogies, creative outlets, and technology-enhanced learning informed by research.

Intentionally creating student-centred learning environments that are inclusive and engaging is a critical component of the student experience. This involves examining how learning occurs and using a wide array of teaching practices and learning spaces so that all students can be fully engaged. The university will continue encouraging the application of open educational practices, inclusive curriculum design, technology-enhanced learning and the creation of flexible, modern environments that leverage the diversity every student brings to learning.

Recognizing that the student experience outside the classroom is critical, Ryerson will continue to provide exceptional academic, social and cultural programs and services that support our diverse student communities. These will

be offered within a framework that promotes students' overall wellbeing and that recognizes the value of the whole person.

Ryerson embraces lifelong learning and puts it into action in a variety of ways in the classroom through continuing education courses, and by growing graduate and post-graduate offerings. Lifelong learning also occurs through externally focused ways such as creating opportunities for volunteering and mentoring, and through a vibrant alumni system that connects students and graduates with Ryerson over their lifetime.

The conditions that we create for students, along with inspirational teaching, an empowered faculty and staff, and diverse learning environments are the essential ingredients we need to deliver the very best student experience — an experience that is uniquely Ryerson.

SAMPLE STRATEGIES

Initiatives undertaken in support of the student experience may include, but are not limited to, a focus on areas such as:

- Experiential learning
- Support for faculty to enhance teaching skills
- Mental health support for students
- Access initiatives for students
- Renovation of classrooms and other learning spaces

SRC and Graduate Studies

We foster a robust culture of inquiry that attracts and provides talented and diverse faculty, graduate students and post-doctoral researchers with opportunities to develop and apply new ideas that matter in the world.

Excellence in scholarly, research and creative activity, or SRC, is a cornerstone of Ryerson's identity. So too is our commitment to attracting graduate students keen to participate in the extensive networks offered by the Toronto community Ryerson calls home.

Our research and graduate students make tangible contributions to local communities, industry and society. As Ryerson aspires to undertake a more prominent national and global place in the world, new partnerships and endeavours showcasing our talent and research expertise will deepen our research intensity and overall influence.

Ryerson will continue building a culture that fosters inquiry, discovery, knowledge and creativity — the very essence of SRC. Meanwhile, enhancing the profile and scope of graduate studies will contribute to sustaining a robust SRC culture along with programs with a strong professional orientation.

In this, Ryerson will continue championing its commitment to fostering excellence in graduate studies to attract and retain students, faculty and post-doctoral researchers of the highest calibre. This includes ensuring that our graduate programs are accessible to under-represented groups and that appropriate services and supports are available for students.

The university will also focus on our graduate programs and the talented students who choose to pursue their graduate work at our institution. As part of this focus, we'll expand learning opportunities and work to better address labour market and societal needs while supporting Ryerson's broad research plan.

Our SRC strengths and priorities, including innovation, entrepreneurship and environmental sustainability are demonstrated through the ongoing work of our Canada Research Chairs, our research centres and collaborations with industry and community partners. Collectively, they highlight Ryerson's growing leadership in a multitude of areas nationally and internationally. Ryerson is committed to enhancing the impact of its research with knowledge mobilization and open access initiatives.

Ryerson's continued commitment to SRC, graduate studies and students affirms our intent to deepen our reputation for world-class excellence as we broaden our footprint across Canada and the world.

SAMPLE STRATEGIES

Initiatives undertaken in support of SRC and graduate studies may include, but are not limited to, a focus on areas such as:

- Increased graduate enrolment and new programs
- Post-doctoral scholarships
- Knowledge mobilization (e.g., open access)
- Interdisciplinary collaboration
- Workspace for graduate students and post-doctoral students

Revitalizing Indigenous Thought

Ryerson aspires to social change by embedding Indigenous thinking, ideas, ideals, cultures and understanding in all our work.

Ryerson is steadfastly committed to truth and reconciliation. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) has emphasized the special role of educational institutions, both in terms of the current state of relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians, but also in terms of the role that education can play in revitalizing Indigenous knowledge and reconciliation more generally.

Located in Toronto, home to one of the largest and most diverse Indigenous populations in Canada, Ryerson is well placed to support the community. Building on existing foundations, entrenching an Indigenous focus in all aspects of our university affairs is the way to move forward. This includes, among other initiatives, growing the community of Indigenous faculty and staff and integrating Indigenous pedagogies and experiential learning opportunities, expanding the curriculum with Indigenous content, recruiting and supporting Indigenous students, promoting community-grounded research, and transforming the university space to recognize the Indigenous community's presence.

Realizing these priorities involves thoughtful collaboration across the university, privileging and being led by Indigenous voices, as well as the broader Indigenous communities to ensure the steps we are taking are meaningful, resulting in a positive impact in whatever area they may touch.

Over the past several years, a number of groups and individuals across the university have begun this work and those initiatives will be supported in greater degrees.

Initiatives related to this priority will also continue to be informed by the contributions of the university's Truth and Reconciliation Commission Strategic Working Group, which has been tasked with guiding the implementation of recommendations from the 2018 TRC Community Consultation Report.

This work is fundamentally about reversing the marginalization of Indigenous peoples and knowledges and ensuring that the communities here can grow and thrive. By making the revitalization of Indigenous thought a priority within the Academic Plan, Ryerson aspires to social change by helping to break down racism and stereotypes, transforming the institutions in Canadian society that

continue to discriminate against Indigenous peoples, and moving towards a future defined by respect and dignity for all.

The journey is about embedding Indigenous thinking, ideas, ideals, cultures and understanding in all our work, and making the university a place where Indigenous thought can live.

SAMPLE STRATEGIES

Initiatives undertaken in support of the priority of Revitalizing Indigenous Thought may include, but are not limited to, a focus on areas such as:

- Increased number of Indigenous faculty and staff
- New pathways for learners to become Ryerson students
- Curriculum development
- Faculty development opportunities (e.g., how to facilitate class discussions)
- E-learning for faculty and staff development

Global Leadership

Ryerson is committed to becoming a leading city-facing university with a global reach.

Global Leadership means ensuring that students have opportunities to participate in global learning opportunities that speak to their goals and interests. It involves continuing to improve equity of access to global learning opportunities for all students, particularly those from Indigenous, racialized, first generation and other underrepresented groups.

Global Leadership is also about increasing the number of, and supporting, international students who choose Ryerson, often because of the university's ties to modern, multicultural Toronto. These students enrich our campus, our community, and the learning environment for all students.

Building greater global awareness of Ryerson, and its unique strengths as an institution of teaching, learning and SRC, is a cornerstone of internationalization. It includes:

- Helping students broaden their international and intercultural competencies;
- Providing greater opportunities for global learning;
- Collaborating on curricular and co-curricular programming with global reach;
- Seeing Ryerson actively participate in more national and international inter-institutional networks and incentivizing programming so students can 'dig deeper' into current global issues; and,
- Honouring other ways of knowing and being, beyond the dominant Western point of view.

In keeping with Ryerson's bold approach to teaching and new pedagogies, growing our global footprint involves creating new opportunities for our faculty to engage in international research partnerships and connect to global research networks.

Under the internationalization umbrella, Ryerson aims to meet five key objectives over the next five years: increasing global learning; promoting research collaboration; enhancing projects and capacity-building; attracting more international students; and fostering innovation, incubation and entrepreneurship.

Global leadership is about fostering opportunities for the members of our Ryerson family to engage in and share perspectives with peers from cultures and nations beyond their own — both within Canada and abroad. Internationalization exposes us to alternative ways of thinking and to different cultural approaches and mindsets. It helps students and faculty be as competitive as they can in the world.

SAMPLE STRATEGIES

Initiatives undertaken in support of the priority of Global Leadership may include, but are not limited to, a focus on areas such as:

- Programming to support international students' transition to the university
- Extra-curricular activities
- Support for domestic students to participate in international experiences
- International research partnerships
- The university's international rankings

Innovation

Ryerson's vision is to be Canada's leading comprehensive innovation university.

Throughout our history, innovation has meant evaluating and challenging conventional approaches to post-secondary education — both inside and outside the classroom — approaches that have enriched our society and the Toronto community that Ryerson calls home, resulting in an improved overall quality of life.

An innovation ecosystem is characterized by risk taking, examining subjects critically and creatively, and thinking broadly to derive ideas and solutions to problems. Ryerson's innovation ecosystem is showcased in many ways, including, for example, our labs, SRC partnerships, our teaching, and in our 10 innovation zones. Focused on various sectors, ranging from biomedical engineering, to fashion, energy and social justice, our zones provide students in all programs with access to resources that help bring their ideas to life as viable ventures.

Innovation occurs throughout our Faculties in approaches to teaching, learning, and curriculum that are practiced every day. It can be seen in how we support students and in how we approach our daily work as faculty and staff. Throughout the decades, it's an environment that has:

- stimulated creative thinking and know-how, rewarding ideas and bringing innovation to life through, education, research and learning opportunities and experiences offered to students;
- strengthened interdisciplinary connections;
- enhanced curriculum development;
- increased partnerships with complementary organizations; and,
- reinforced our university's strong commitment to continue building a robust teaching and SRC culture.

Whether the members of our community are engaging in social or civic ventures, driving change in existing organizations or creating new companies, products or jobs, they're tapping into the spirit of innovation that is the very essence of Ryerson.

Being innovative is true to who we are, a campus and a community that — throughout its history — has always embraced 'out-of-the-box' thinking and

approaches to learning, teaching and research. It's what makes us unique, and what us has always allowed us to stand apart.

Going forward, we will build on our roots and those strong foundations, continuing to develop and foster an innovation ecosystem that positions all members of the Ryerson community at the fore.

We will do this by continuing to nurture an environment that instills creative and critical thinking across disciplines and supports more students, faculty and staff in becoming innovators, entrepreneurs, activists and socially-responsible citizens who can make a positive difference.

A Ryerson approach to learning, emphasizing bold thinking and big ideas, encourages the members of our Ryerson family to chart new waters and break existing boundaries, inventing and championing ideas that can and will continue to change the world.

SAMPLE STRATEGIES

Initiatives undertaken in support of the priority of Innovation may include, but are not limited to, a focus on areas such as:

- Curriculum development that allows students to innovate within courses
- External partnerships with community organizations and industry
- Opportunities for faculty to develop teaching and learning practices that includes a recognition of previous learning.
- Knowledge mobilization initiatives that link research and creative outputs to the external environment
- Links between academic programs and innovation initiatives such as the zone network

Community and Urban Partnerships

Ryerson is committed to advancing conversations on culture, economics, technology, social justice and the environment that lead to policies and actions that contribute to building inclusive, resilient, sustainable and dynamic cities.

As a postsecondary education institution located at the centre of Canada's largest city, Ryerson has deep connections with those who share the physical landscape and space.

Closely linked to our surrounding communities, we are constantly seeking ways to collaboratively engage in urban partnerships with those communities and their residents. Equally, those partnerships offer reciprocal benefits for our neighbours and very real opportunities for students, faculty and staff to make a difference. For everyone in the partnership, they put knowledge-sharing and learning exchange into everyday practice.

Going forward, we will continue engaging our local communities in partnership — building on tradition spanning more than seven decades. This includes delivering valuable community services and social programming. We remain committed to equity, diversity and community inclusion.

With over 80 per cent of Canada's population living in urban environments, cities are our future. Given our downtown location, Ryerson is especially well positioned to play a role as communities both in Toronto and elsewhere navigate the social, economic, political, environmental, cultural, physical, and technological aspects of urban growth and change.

We continue seeking new ways and partnerships to advance both conversation and action around safe, resilient and sustainable cities. We will also continue harnessing and sharing our expertise so Ryerson remains at the fore of issue and policy-oriented discussions on current topics, from sustainable housing and renewable energy, to community and individual wellbeing and health, water policy, the future of land use, smart infrastructure, urban design, migration and settlement, democratic governance, and more.

As we look to the future, Ryerson will continue broadening its greater societal impact by developing stronger global ties. One way we'll achieve this is by strengthening our focus on city-building. This calls for enhancing Ryerson's expertise as a leader in urban study and thought while sharing what we've learned through our experience as one of North America's most populous cities. Equally, it calls for bringing experts from other cities to our doorstep.

These and other efforts will help further position Ryerson at the fore as a city-building university.

SAMPLE STRATEGIES

Initiatives undertaken in support of the priority of Community and Urban Partnerships may include, but are not limited to, a focus on areas such as:

- Outreach and access initiatives
- Workshops, lectures and other events that are open to the community
- Sharing of faculty research with the community
- Consultation with community organizations, industry and corporate partners about their needs
- Involvement of students in community projects and community service

What's Next?

To better align budget resources and allow flexibility to respond to a changing environment, specific implementation strategies for the Academic Plan will be outlined in a separate document. This supporting document will detail the objectives and associated actions to be undertaken in support of the Academic Plan priorities.

The Implementation Plan will be updated periodically and tied to the annual budget process, with allocations tied to specific activities that are aimed at supporting Academic Plan priorities.

Faculties and Divisions will have an opportunity to contribute to the implementation process, adapting strategies locally in alignment with the Academic Plan.

PLACEHOLDER FOR LINKS TO OTHER PLANS (E.G., RESEARCH, INTERNATIONAL)