



University College of the North

HERE YOU CAN.

ē-mēskanākiyak kaskitamasuwinihk isi creating pathways to success

ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH PLAN 2020-2025

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

University College of the North's (UCN) *Academic and Research Plan 2020-2025* represents the Learning Council's response to UCN's Strategic Plan, and establishes a framework to help ensure that teaching, learning and research at UCN is high quality, responsive and contributes to reconciliation with Indigenous¹ peoples.

This *Academic and Research Plan* establishes three Pillars:

1. **Kawi-ototemittuwīn Kiskinohamakewīnīk mīna Kiskinohmasiwīnīk ako Kiskinohamakan Soniya Natohcikwewīn:** Reconciliation in Teaching, Learning and Scholarship
2. **Kweskinakohewttaw kiskinwamakewīn:** Transformative Education
3. **Kiskinohomakwewīn mīna kiskinawamakewīn Natamakewīn Ka ati isi nipwakayak:** Academic and Scholarly Excellence

Listening to individuals, faculties, administrative leaders, the Council of Elders, and others, UCN's entire academic community has created a plan that identifies 10 goals and 47 related actions. This Plan will create specific pathways to establish a framework for reconciliation in post-secondary education that includes changing our students' lives for the better, creating positive, effective relationships within UCN, with our communities and northern industries, and ensuring excellence in all that we do.



UCN'S STRATEGIC PLAN

MISSION

University College of the North serves northern communities and peoples with education, training, teaching, learning and research while being inclusive of diverse Indigenous and northern values.

VISION

Guided by the Seven Sacred Teachings, UCN is building a better future for a stronger north.

THE SEVEN SACRED TEACHINGS

Truth, wisdom, honesty, humility, courage, love, respect.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

1. Support student success;
2. Advance an agenda of reconciliation;
3. Engage with communities and with industries;
4. Ensure responsible administration.

¹ The term 'Indigenous' in this document is a collective term which refers to the diverse and distinct Aboriginal Peoples who are the local First Nations, Métis, and Inuit on whose traditional territories UCN operates.

INTRODUCTION

UCN's story is one of potential. Located in Manitoba's north with a young and growing population that is more than 70% Indigenous, UCN is positioned to contribute significantly to social, cultural and economic development in our region and in Manitoba. UCN's *Academic and Research Plan 2020-2025* helps to guide how UCN will realize this potential.

THE LAST FIVE YEARS: 2015-2020

The *Academic Plan 2015-2020* strengthened UCN's foundations in teaching, learning and research. That Plan, the *Strategic Plan 2015-2020*, the appointment of a new President and Vice-Chancellor, a renewed Governing Council, and a major restructuring of administration, contributed to three strategies that emerged over the past five years:

1. **Improving access to and success in post-secondary education.** By strengthening foundational training and by increasing supports for post-secondary students, UCN helps students achieve their educational goals. This work continues and is accelerating.
2. **Better reflecting our Indigenous context.** *Academic Plan 2015-2020* pursued and achieved strategies to strengthen Indigenous content and pedagogy in all of our programs.
3. **Responding more strongly to industry needs.** Through the creation of Workforce Development Centres, and strengthening our organization around contract training and continuing education, UCN has increased its contribution to creating and enhancing the skills for northerners currently working in industry, and for those seeking employment.

THE NEXT FIVE YEARS: 2020-2025

The *Academic and Research Plan 2020-2025* helps to continue this record of success, and to frame UCN's future approaches to realizing its potential to build better futures for First Nations, Métis, Inuit peoples, communities and all northern Manitobans.

UCN's *Academic and Research Plan 2020-2025* incorporates reconciliation in each of its three Pillars, reflecting the importance of ensuring that Indigenous perspectives and worldviews are built into the fabric of the institution and not just presented as an "add-on." As we strengthen our support for student success, our engagement with communities with industry, and as we maintain the highest levels of quality, we continue to work towards reconciliation.





Reconciliation is a big word. We need new ways to listen and new approaches to rebuilding relationships long divided... [Our] message has to be about hope and moving forward together.

— A member of UCN's Council of Elders

PILLAR 1

Kawi-ototemittuwin Kiskinohamakewinik mina Kiskinohmasiwinik ako Kiskinohamakan Soniya Natohcikwewin: Reconciliation in Teaching, Learning and Scholarship

The local Indigenous socio-economic environment is what makes this post-secondary institution unique and gives us strength and opportunity. The *Academic and Research Plan 2020-2025* recognizes and builds on this while framing activity within the context of reconciliation. Actions with respect to Indigenization² are presented throughout this Plan. This first Pillar focuses specifically on ensuring UCN has processes that provide advice and guidance as we pursue this important and complex effort.

² The term 'Indigenization' is a process that "undertake[s] proactive measures aimed at restoring, renewing, and regenerating Indigenous practices, languages and knowledge" (CAUT, 2016).

GOAL 1.1

Understand Reconciliation in UCN's Academic Context

Reconciliation intersects with academic freedom, intellectual property, tenure, promotion, and a host of other concepts in higher education. Seeking the advice of Elders is vital to navigate these complexities. Establishing a clear and substantive role for Elders in academic and research matters helps UCN to create this critical path forward. This includes appropriate administrative processes regarding honoraria.

ACTION 1.1.1

Learning Council will establish a process in collaboration and cooperation with the Council of Elders to better define the roles that the Elders can play with respect to teaching, learning, scholarship and governance.

There is wide agreement that UCN must do a better job in defining what is meant by “reconciliation.” A shared definition will help to clarify what reconciliation means in classrooms, labs and in research, as well as in governance, policies, procedures, and in administration.

ACTION 1.1.2

Learning Council, the Associate Vice President, Reconciliation, Research and Academic Innovation (RRAI) will work collaboratively with all of UCN to define what reconciliation means in teaching, learning, research, and governance.

ACTION 1.1.3

Drawing on the definition established above, Learning Council's Academic Planning Committee will lead the development of a framework to guide the inclusion of Indigenous worldviews and perspectives in teaching, learning, research, and academic governance.

These actions are intended to help to frame all of UCN's academic and research activity. In the rest of the *Academic and Research Plan 2020-2025*, priorities and actions are incorporated that pursue an agenda of reconciliation in every aspect of our work in teaching, learning and scholarship.

GOAL 1.2

Support Indigenous Languages

UCN's Council of Elders agree that language is critical to reconciliation; Indigenous cultures and languages are inextricably connected. UCN offers a Certificate in Teaching Ininimowin, a number of university-level Cree language courses and operates the Centre for Aboriginal Languages and Cultures. In addition, a post-baccalaureate certificate and a minor in Cree language are in development.

ACTION 1.2.1

UCN will continue to expand Indigenous language programming that has meaning for northern Indigenous communities.

Expected Outcomes

Learning Council expects that by 2025, changes to the curriculum, student supports, human resources, and other processes and policies will reflect Indigenous perspectives and priorities, evolving the nature of post-secondary education at UCN. Furthermore, UCN will be a national leader in how colleges and universities can reconcile with Indigenous peoples.





Poor student preparation for post-secondary education is the most important problem that UCN has to solve to support student success.

– UCN faculty member

PILLAR 2

Kweskinakohewttaw kiskinwamakewin: Transformative Education

Transforming students' lives starts with preparing them for success in post-secondary education. Students' experiences from initial recruitment through to graduation and on to employment help to define the transformative nature of their time at UCN.

² The term 'Indigenization' is a process that "undertake[s] proactive measures aimed at restoring, renewing, and regenerating Indigenous practices, languages and knowledge" (CAUT, 2016).

GOAL 2.1

Prepare Students for Success in Post-Secondary Education

Educational attainment data shows that 36% of northerners have below a high school education compared to 15% for Manitoba as a whole. There is considerable variation by community. For example, the same figure for Thompson is 51%, 55% in St Theresa Point, 14.8% in Flin Flon, 46% in Norway House, and 43% in Cross Lake (Education Connections, 2018; University College of the North 2020 a, b, c, d). Added to this, our students are older, and those who have completed high school may have done so as much as a decade earlier.

These facts have a real impact on UCN. Since 2018, UCN has been pursuing the implementation of a strategy to prepare students better for post-secondary education including essential skills, adult learning, English as an Additional Language, and preparation for post-secondary education.

ACTION 2.1.1

Learning Council will ask program areas to consider an option where attendance could be included as an assessment factor in courses in order to assist students in learning and engaging in behaviours to become independent which will serve them well in their professional lives.

ACTION 2.1.2

UCN will make academic skills assessment mandatory for all applicants.

ACTION 2.1.3

Greater support should be provided for those students accepted at UCN for whom English is not a first language.

UCN is not alone in supporting student learning and professional development, and has been working with sponsors³ to create better systems in UCN to support First Nation, Métis, and government-sponsored students.

ACTION 2.1.4

UCN will continue to meet with sponsors annually and work towards building stronger mutual systems to share responsibility for student success with students and other stakeholders.

UCN is expanding its adult learning activities. As we prepare students for success in their future educational careers, there is an opportunity for UCN to pursue post-secondary credits (i.e. dual credit) for secondary students beyond the six dual credits that were offered in 2019/20. As our adult learning activity expands, so too do opportunities for dual credits. Furthermore, UCN will be a national leader in how colleges and universities can reconcile with Indigenous peoples.

ACTION 2.1.5

The Associate Vice-President of Access will work with deans to pursue the development of additional dual credit and hybrid programming opportunities as adult learning expands.

³ The term 'sponsors' refers collectively to First Nations, Manitoba Métis Federation, and other Provincial and Federal government agencies/organizations such as Employment Insurance (EI) who cover tuitions for students.

GOAL 2.2

Help Students Succeed while Enrolled in Post-Secondary Education

Responding to the departmental reports that UCN students need help transitioning their writing skills from the secondary school-level to the post-secondary level, and in partnership with the Kenanow Faculty of Education, the Faculty of Arts, Business, and Science, UCN established Writing Centres in Thompson, The Pas and online. This action was taken because we know that good writing practices are key to gaining higher grades.

These Centres are well-used, with more than 550 students seeking assistance in the 2018/19 academic year, up significantly from the previous year. Students report that the support they received at UCN's Writing Centres have helped to improve their grades and successfully complete courses and programs. In a very short period of time, Writing Centres have become key resources for retaining and supporting students.

The role of UCN's Writing Centres in student success is consistent with the performance of writing centres at other post-secondary institutions. Writing Centres fulfill very specific functions for students: supporting post-secondary-level academic writing. However, UCN is increasingly focusing on remediation, creating confusion as to where exactly UCN's Writing Centres fit. Writing Centres are not remediation centers; they must be situated more clearly within UCN's continuum of student support.

ACTION 2.2.1

The Faculty of Arts, Business, and Science will develop a clear plan for UCN's Writing Centres that will situate the Centres appropriately within the portfolio of the Dean of Students, which is consistent with UCN's continuum of student academic support.

Writing Centres at UCN are informally structured, supported by faculty members who have other duties within UCN, and not by staff who are assigned to the Centres as their primary duties. This approach, though not uncommon in smaller institutions such as Acadia University, is not preferable. Greater formality will help to establish Writing Centres in the organizational fabric of the Academic and Research Division and would be desired for the long-term viability of the centres. Seeking external advice and support for this planning would be an important aspect in this establishment.

ACTION 2.2.2

The Faculty of Arts, Business, and Science will develop options for consideration in the annual budget process in terms of the structure of the Writing Centres, including an appropriate and reasonable budget, how centres are led and how they are staffed.

GOAL 2.3

Organize for Student Success

The Office of the Registrar and the Dean of Students are the primary organizational structures responsible for managing student success. This activity is significantly supplemented by faculty members, Post-Secondary Education Access Centres, sponsors and other UCN and community resources. How we organize our resources in UCN helps to contribute to student success.

Retention is an important issue for any post-secondary institution, and an important focus of the ongoing work of the Student Success Planning Committee. Developing a coherent and integrated strategy is a priority for UCN.

ACTION 2.3.1

The Vice-President Academic and Research shall identify resources to hire a consultant to prepare a retention strategy for UCN. The Dean of Students and the Student Support Planning Committee will oversee the project.

Community education has been changing since UCN's reorganization in 2018. There is much to be done. Students taking programs in Post-Secondary Education Access Centres cannot access peer tutoring, on-site academic advising, counselling, or career and work integrated learning, and they receive an orientation that is considerably different from on-campus students. Gaps created are filled by faculty members and/or the Centre Coordinators.

ACTION 2.3.2

The Dean of Students will work with deans to investigate options for delivering student support for programs offered in communities.

Partnering with UCN's Student Association Council, UCN manages a peer tutoring system. This approach is used elsewhere as well: The University of Manitoba has a mentorship program where fourth-year nursing students are paired with first-year students, creating a buddy system. There are many options available. Exploring options must include assessing the resource requirements to support a mentoring program in an organized way that also includes communities.

ACTION 2.3.3

The Dean of Students will investigate peer programs available at other colleges and universities to help understand how UCN can help students organize to support each other in their academic programs.

Many colleges and universities operate in a distributed environment. UCN has online systems such as Jenzabar and UCNLearn that are powerful tools that can work together to help manage student success. Currently, UCN uses many paper-based processes to help manage student success. Current processes such as student program workbooks, learning plans, and early intervention processes can be supported by Jenzabar, which has features such as academic planning, retention, student, and enrolment modules that can help to provide a more holistic approach to managing and tracking student progress and helping provide the right resources to students at the right times.

ACTION 2.3.4

The Office of the Registrar and the Dean of Students will use Jenzabar and UCNLearn as the primary systems for managing student success.

Another key resource that supports student success is personal counselling. Faculty members observe that there is a notable increase in students presenting mental health issues at UCN, and this is anticipated to continue growing. Whatever the complex roots or societal causes, faculty members are dealing with students' mental health issues, whether they present in terms of challenges in attendance, with assignments, in the classroom, or in other ways. Faculty members need more support from UCN.

ACTION 2.3.5

The Dean of Students will investigate mental health support usage at UCN and review approaches taken at other colleges and universities, and develop a plan accordingly, including professional development for faculty to better recognize it when it happens.

Expected Outcomes

As a result of the actions in Pillar 2 of this Plan, Learning Council expects that by 2025, more students will be enrolled at UCN, will be completing their studies, will graduate on time, and will be more successful in gaining employment shortly after graduation.



There is a serious lack of student resources and support for programs offered in communities.

— UCN faculty member



**We have to make the bricks and mortar fit
our philosophy.**

— UCN faculty member

PILLAR 3

Kiskinohomakwewin mina kiskinawamakewin Natamakewin Ka ati isi nipwakayak: Academic and Scholarly Excellence

Quality is not an optional feature for our work; it must permeate all that we do. The Learning Council is the sole authority at UCN that determines the curriculum, creates academic and research policies, and establishes criteria associated with quality, such as qualifications for admissions, student assessments and requirements for graduation. The Learning Council works with administration on ensuring that teaching, learning and research are of the highest quality.

GOAL 3.1

Pursue Reconciliation in the Curriculum

In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) made the 94 Calls to Action to address the legacy of residential schools and their impact on Aboriginal peoples and Canada. Those Calls to Action include support to integrate Indigenous knowledges and to develop culturally appropriate curricula that is reflective of Indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge systems. Furthermore, access to Indigenous knowledge systems in education is a fundamental right of Indigenous people everywhere, as reflected in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Articles 14 and 15. In recognition, and as a step toward this, Learning Council mandated in 2019 that over time each course must include at least one learning outcome that incorporates Indigenous Knowledges. This action helps to actualize UCN's mandate to support Indigenous peoples and northern Manitoba. Ensuring strong learning outcomes are created and supported is a critical need for UCN.

ACTION 3.1.1

Learning Council will advocate for the addition of a second additional Indigenous Curriculum Specialist to support instructors as they incorporate Indigenous worldviews, content and pedagogy into the curriculum.



GOAL 3.2

Support Excellence in Academic Programming

To help ensure relevance, programs must update equipment that is in use in the workplace. Faculties maintain a three-year program equipment renewal plan, but achieving that plan often relies on the availability of unexpected or unexpended resources as the fiscal year draws to a close. Ensuring current and relevant program equipment requires more predictability.

ACTION 3.2.1

The Vice-President Academic and Research will work with the Chief Administrative Officer to provide greater structure to program equipment renewal in the annual budget process.

Scheduling is complicated, requiring the alignment of many students' schedules with available physical spaces. Faculty members expressed concern regarding frequent changes in scheduling and are hoping for a different approach to scheduling.

ACTION 3.2.2

The Registrar will develop a more efficient process for scheduling courses.

In community education, the more pressing need is to align administrative support services and processes to the differing context of courses and programs offered in Post-Secondary Education Access Centres and other locations. Processes, such as contract training, time sheets, hiring, secondments, the assignment of UCN user accounts, and provision of computer hardware, are more complex in communities and take more time than perhaps is necessary.

ACTION 3.2.5

The Associate Vice-President of Access and the Associate Vice-President of Community and Industry Solutions will initiate a framework with Human Resources and Information Technology to streamline processes to support education away from main campuses.

ACTION 3.2.6

The Associate Vice-President of Access will work with Finance to identify a process whereby expert support is provided for the annual audits associated with Post-Secondary Education Access Centres.

All colleges and universities are working to increase access to courses and programs using technology. Such development must be aligned with the IT systems that can be supported at UCN, and must also conform to the principles of good pedagogy. Learning Council must lead this development.

ACTION 3.2.7

The Associate Vice President, Reconciliation, Research and Academic Innovation (RRAI) will work with instructors and deans to create policies and processes at UCN that ensure rigour and quality in terms of the development of courses and programs for delivery using learning technologies. These policies and processes must ultimately be reviewed by the Curriculum and Standards Committee and approved by Learning Council.

UCN works with many partners in the delivery of post-secondary education, which sometimes includes the use of curriculum that was not developed or approved through UCN's academic governance processes. Ensuring that third-party curriculum meets UCN's quality standards must be a priority.

ACTION 3.2.8

The Curriculum and Standards Committee shall develop a policy recognizing third-party recognition that details the conditions under which UCN will accredit third-party curriculum, as well as quality standards.

GOAL 3.2

Support Excellence in Academic Programming (cont'd)

Work integrated learning (WIL) opportunities (i.e., cooperative education, clinical experiences, practica, internships, etc.) are increasingly expected of students, employers and other stakeholders as a way to help ensure that academic programming is relevant to the careers for which students are training. While there are challenges faculties face in developing such relationships, it is noted that approximately 80% of UCN's programs already provide WIL opportunities.

ACTION 3.2.9

Learning Council will, by 2025, ensure that work integrated learning opportunities are available in 100% of post-secondary programs that fall under the approval process detailed in the provincial *Programs of Study Regulation*.

ACTION 3.2.10

The Associate Vice-President of Community and Industry Solutions will continue to expand contract training and continuing education in partnership with industry.

Program Advisory Committees (PACs) provide an important venue for industry and community partners to contribute to the revision and maintenance of an academic program. However, there is a great deal of variation in how PACs operate, and one size does not fit all.

ACTION 3.2.11

The Associate Vice President, Reconciliation, Research and Academic Innovation (RRAI) will work with programs and faculty members to revise the policy framework supporting PACs so as to ensure maximum flexibility in the process and to ensure that appropriate resources are assigned to maintaining PACs.

GOAL 3.3

Ensure Outstanding Instruction

An important part of ensuring excellence in our programs is ensuring that faculty members have opportunities to undertake training and professional development. Faculty members emphasized the need to revise how professional development is supported at UCN.

ACTION 3.3.1

The Associate Vice President, Reconciliation, Research and Academic Innovation (RRAI) will survey instructors prior to the end of each academic year as to professional development that should be offered in the orientation period prior to the start of the fall term each year.

There is general dissatisfaction with the Human Resources Development (HRD) process at UCN. The budget is insufficient to meet the needs, the process is too slow, and too few requests are approved.

ACTION 3.3.2

The Vice-President Academic and Research will work with Presidents Council and Human Resources to review the HRD process and ensure funding is appropriate to the need.

University faculty members benefit from Educational Leave (i.e. sabbaticals) as defined in the Collective Agreement. College Instructors, including those teaching in UCN's Adult Learning Centres, do not have a similar opportunity to reconnect with their professions during their tenure as instructors at UCN.

ACTION 3.3.3

Learning Council will establish a committee of College Instructors to investigate options for providing Educational Leave to College Instructors that could be included as part of a future Collective Bargaining process.

In collaboration, Aboriginal and Northern Studies (ANS) faculty and the Indigenous Curriculum Specialist are developing a program to support faculty in their learning and understanding of Indigenous knowledges. Throughout the program, faculty will develop the tools they need to respectfully and authentically incorporate Indigenous knowledges, perspectives, and voice, into their curriculum.

ACTION 3.3.4

Learning Council will support the development of a program for faculty members to develop and prepare them with tools to better incorporate Indigenous knowledges into curriculum.

Faculty members noted that they are being asked to do many things beyond teaching. While they understand that this is part of their responsibilities, they note that duties other than teaching have been growing over time, while the teaching load has remained the same or increased. Examples include setting up simulation scenarios for nurses, updating program-related computer programs, setting up and tearing down for lab sections of science courses, as well as activities related to recruiting (e.g. Try-a-Trade, Career Trek, Language Arts Festival, etc.).

Faculty members undertake this work because, otherwise, it would not be done. It is also noted that this plays out differently on each of the main campuses and in programs offered in communities. However, this means that instructors are not focusing on their teaching and on supporting students, and UCN is paying instructors to do work that could be done more efficiently by staff at a lower pay scale. Options such as hiring students to support activity are attractive, but it is noted that in some instances there does need to be expertise to support teaching and learning.

GOAL 3.3

Ensure Outstanding Instruction (cont'd)

ACTION 3.3.5

Each dean will review the need for Education Assistants and the opportunities to hire students to help with support functions around courses and programs. Human Resources must be included in the discussion to ensure that Collective Agreement issues are considered.

Faculty members also have a duty to ensure that courses and programs are current, and that new courses and programs are developed to meet the challenges of a changing world. Renewing and preparing new courses and programs requires a considerable amount of time. New developments in software and other changes often require complete revisions in courses, and external changes in curriculum, such as the new Bachelor of Nursing curriculum, resulting in workload increases. Resources have not been provided accordingly, and faculty members do not have sufficient support to develop new curriculum. This situation becomes exacerbated as UCN is increasingly successful in recruiting more students.

ACTION 3.3.6

The Senior Academic Leadership Team will consider the need for additional instructional positions in relation to program requirements.

Like all post-secondary institutions, UCN faces challenges hiring and retaining faculty members. These challenges are perhaps more acute at UCN given its northern locations and the fact that other institutions often offer broader arrays of programming. These factors have not prevented outstanding faculty members from being attracted to UCN, but they do present strategic challenges during search processes.

ACTION 3.3.7

The Senior Academic Leadership Team will work with Human Resources to develop a faculty recruiting and retention strategy.

This Plan seeks to establish actions that change behaviour, building reconciliation into systems and processes that help to guide the creation, communication, and management of knowledge to help ensure excellence in all that we do. Managing protocols around research and scholarship is a shared responsibility within UCN's administrative and collegial environment.

GOAL 3.4

Recognize and Respect Sources of Knowledge

Informed by federal research granting council policy and by norms in the academy, faculty members, administrators, and the Manitoba Government Employees Union (MGEU) each play a role in establishing a policy framework guiding research and scholarship at UCN. Concepts and protocols, such as Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP[©]) and the Manitoba Métis Community Research and Ethics Protocol (MMCREP),⁴ are critical considerations for scholarly activity at UCN and must be integrated into our systems and processes.

ACTION 3.4.1

The Vice-President Academic and Research will ensure that the Research Ethics Board, Animal Care Committee and Tenure and Promotion Committee review OCAP[©] and MMCREP so that their policies and procedures include protocols to make these principles real in UCN's research and scholarship support environment.

ACTION 3.4.2

Working with faculty members and the MGEU, the Associate Vice President, Reconciliation, Research and Academic Innovation (RRAI) will lead a process to consider how OCAP[©] and MMCREP are reflected in the Intellectual Property and Academic Freedom provisions in the Collective Agreement. Wording will be developed for consideration at a future round of collective bargaining.

ACTION 3.4.3

The Vice-President Academic and Research will review internal systems within UCN to determine how OCAP[©] and MMCREP principles are reflected in administrative processes, such as developing protocols for sharing sponsored student information with sponsoring agencies, and how student data is collected, stored, analyzed and reported by the Office of the Registrar, the Finance Department, and by Institutional Research.

These protocols, when fully incorporated into UCN, will help to guide faculty members as they pursue research and scholarship. Training will be required on these protocols.

ACTION 3.4.4

The Centre for Learning, Education and Research (CLEAR) will deliver training on OCAP[©] and MMCREP principles and protocols for faculty members.

ACTION 3.4.5

CLEAR will work with faculty members to strengthen curricula related to teaching students about OCAP[©] and MMCREP to ensure that the next generation of scholars incorporates these principles as part of their understanding of research methodology.

ACTION 3.4.6

The Associate Vice President, Reconciliation, Research and Academic Innovation (RRAI) will facilitate workshops to help First Nations governments and Indigenous communities develop a greater understanding of OCAP[©] and MMCREP principles, and to help them establish the capacity to manage these protocols.

UCN's archival system is overseen by the University College Librarian. Archiving is connected to language recovery and retaining knowledge about northern and Indigenous peoples.

⁴ Note that MMCREP is under development, so it is important that our thinking becomes flexible in terms of research protocols and rules that we consider in UCN.

GOAL 3.4

Recognize and Respect Sources of Knowledge (con'td)

ACTION 3.4.7

The University College Librarian will lead the development of partnerships to enhance community capacity to own, control, and store their knowledge. This may include developing specific projects and related funding proposals to external funders to support those projects.

These actions will help to establish a stronger foundation for research and scholarship at UCN, and will also help to change behaviour associated with UCN's raison-d'être as a post-secondary institution: the creation, communication, and management of knowledge. Learning Council is well aware that this will be complicated and perhaps controversial work, but Learning Council believes that this work is critical to pursuing an agenda of reconciliation in research and scholarship at UCN. Learning Council is well aware that this will be complicated and perhaps controversial work, but Learning Council believes that this work is critical to pursuing an agenda of reconciliation in research and scholarship at UCN.



GOAL 3.5

Support Research, Scholarship, and Creativity

Faculty members have noted a lack of resources supporting research and scholarship at UCN. The need is far-reaching, including providing funding to support scholarly projects, grant-writing support, and additional administrative support for managing grant applications.

ACTION 3.5.1

The Research, Education and Learning (REAL) Committee will review its Research Seed Funding program to determine if the program has, in fact, “seeded” additional scholarly activity. In pursuing this review, REAL shall examine funding levels, the projects undertaken, and whether or not applicants receiving Seed Grants have undertaken additional research and had success in obtaining external grants.

Faculty members are eligible for benefits under UCN’s Collective Agreement, including teaching release time plus a maximum of \$4,500 in Travel and Professional Development Allowances (TPDA) over a three-year period. Furthermore, in defined instances, faculty members may also be eligible for Human Resource Development (HRD) funding for scholarly activities, although success using the HRD process for such activity has varied considerably. In addition, Deans, the Vice-President Academic and Research and, on occasion, the President, have provided supplemental resources from other budgets on an as-available basis to support faculty members’ projects.

ACTION 3.5.2

The Associate Vice President, Reconciliation, Research and Academic Innovation (RRAI) will survey funding levels and mechanisms at peer institutions that support research, and make recommendations for changes at UCN.

The RRAI department was established in part to ensure that there is a continued focus on supporting research at UCN as a major priority.

ACTION 3.5.3

The Associate Vice President, Reconciliation, Research and Academic Innovation (RRAI) will lead a consultative process to create a Strategic Research Plan that will take a long-view on supporting, expanding and enhancing research, scholarship, and creative activities at UCN.

Many institutions establish research centres as part of their research strategy. While UCN may or may not choose to establish additional research centres such as the developing Northern Development Institute, the Centre for Aboriginal Languages and Cultures (CALC) was established in the 2000s to serve as the locus for research and training in Indigenous languages. In 2018, CALC was moved to the Faculty of Arts, Business, and Science to help create relationships with academic programming to strengthen its research focus.

ACTION 3.5.4

CALC will ensure that its teaching of Indigenous languages and cultures remains strong, and establish its role as UCN’s centre for research on Indigenous languages and cultures.

UCN’s system of libraries, consisting of collections at main campuses in Thompson and The Pas as well as three community libraries in Norway House, Pukatawagan and Chemawawin, provides a strong basis to support teaching, learning, and research at UCN. Ensuring the collection remains strong and grows is a priority for Learning Council.

ACTION 3.5.5

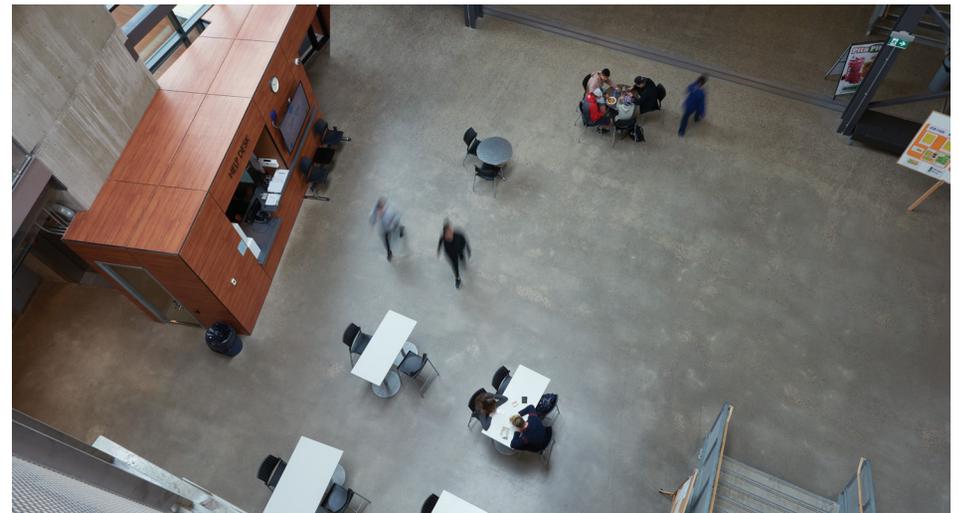
The Associate Vice President, Reconciliation, Research and Academic Innovation (RRAI) will develop a process in partnership with the University College Librarian and faculty members, to develop a collections plan for each program area.

Expected Outcomes

As a result of the actions in Pillar 3 of this Plan, Learning Council expects that, by 2025, UCN will have more students enrolled in preparatory programming who are moving into our post-secondary programs.

Additionally, UCN's programs will continue to be of the highest quality, with wide recognition of the relevance of those programs to improving students' lives, including connecting them to employment and further educational opportunities. As well, UCN's research activity will be a model for others in terms of recognizing Indigenous knowledges.

Finally, UCN will have more research activity and its funding from federal government granting agencies will have increased accordingly.





Building a relationship isn't easy. It requires diligence, discipline, communication, patience, trust, and time... We are all in this together and if we can share and work together we will build a better place for all our families and generations to come.

— A Member of UCN's Council of Elders

FINAL THOUGHTS

The three Pillars outlined in the *Academic and Research Plan 2020-2025* present 10 goals and 47 related actions that are intended to help achieve our potential for serving Indigenous and northern Manitobans. This Plan helps UCN continue its strong history of teaching, learning and research in northern Manitoba over the next five-year period. More importantly, the plan helps to create and maintain relationships in the north - relationships between UCN and students, students and their communities and workplaces, faculty and their research and scholarship, and UCN and Indigenous and northern peoples.

Relationships are critical to the future of northern Manitoba and to UCN. The *Academic and Research Plan 2020-2025* will see UCN's teaching, learning and research contribute to creating a better life for Indigenous and northern peoples through strengthening our connection to each other, to our communities, and to employment opportunities through the high-quality courses and programs that UCN delivers and the support provided to students as they take those courses and programs. UCN's research outputs will grow through increased supports to our researchers.

Over the five-year period of this plan, we can expect UCN's environment to keep changing, and how we manage that change while maintaining our relationships will be reflected in our approach to this plan. That might mean that we may augment, change, or abandon some actions. This does not reflect failure in this plan; rather, it reflects our responsiveness to our students, communities, and our industry partners. UCN's Learning Council, faculty members, and administration are committed to ensuring that our teaching, learning and research is relevant, high-quality, and strengthens reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

ANNEX A

Summary of Goals and Actions

This annex summarizes the actions outlined throughout *Academic and Research Plan 2020-2025*.

PILLAR 1

Kawi-ototemittuwīn Kiskinohamakewīnik mina Kiskinohmasiwīnik ako Kiskinohamakan Soniya Natohcikwewīn: Reconciliation in Teaching, Learning and Scholarship

1.1 UNDERSTAND RECONCILIATION IN UCN'S ACADEMIC CONTEXT

- 1.1.1 Learning Council will establish a process in collaboration and cooperation with the Council of Elders to better define the roles that the Elders can play with respect to teaching, learning, scholarship and governance.
- 1.1.2 Learning Council, the Associate Vice President, Reconciliation, Research and Academic Innovation (RRAI) will work collaboratively with all of UCN to define what reconciliation means in teaching, learning, research, and governance.
- 1.1.3 Drawing on the definition established above, Learning Council's Academic Planning Committee will lead the development of a framework to guide the inclusion of Indigenous worldviews and perspectives in teaching, learning, research, and academic governance.

1.2 SUPPORT INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

- 1.2.1 UCN will continue to expand Indigenous language programming that has meaning for northern Indigenous communities.

PILLAR 2

Kweskinakohewttaw kiskinwamakewin: Transformative Education

2.1 PREPARE STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

- 2.1.1 Learning Council will ask program areas to consider an option where attendance could be included as an assessment factor in courses in order to assist students in learning and engaging in behaviours to become independent which will serve them well in their professional lives.
- 2.1.2 UCN will make academic skills assessment mandatory for all applicants.
- 2.1.3 Greater support should be provided for those students accepted at UCN for whom English is not a first language.
- 2.1.4 UCN will continue to meet with sponsors annually and work towards building stronger mutual systems to share responsibility for student success with students and other stakeholders.
- 2.1.5 The Associate Vice-President of Access will work with deans to pursue the development of additional dual credit and hybrid programming opportunities as adult learning expands.

2.2 HELP STUDENTS SUCCEED WHILE ENROLLED IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

- 2.2.1 The Faculty of Arts, Business, and Science will develop a clear plan for UCN's Writing Centres that will situate the Centres appropriately within the portfolio of the Dean of Students, which is consistent with UCN's continuum of student academic support.
- 2.2.2 The Faculty of Arts, Business, and Science will develop options for consideration in the annual budget process in terms of the structure of the Writing Centres, including an appropriate and reasonable budget, how centres are led and how they are staffed.

2.3 ORGANIZE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

- 2.3.1 The Vice-President Academic and Research shall identify resources to hire a consultant to prepare a retention strategy for UCN. The Dean of Students and the Student Support Planning Committee will oversee the project.
- 2.3.2 The Dean of Students will work with deans to investigate options for delivering student support for programs offered in communities.
- 2.3.3 The Dean of Students will investigate peer programs available at other colleges and universities to help understand how UCN can help students organize to support each other in their academic programs.
- 2.3.4 The Office of the Registrar and the Dean of Students will use Jenzabar and UCNLearn as the primary systems for managing student success.
- 2.3.5 The Dean of Students will investigate mental health support usage at UCN and review approaches taken at other colleges and universities, and develop a plan accordingly, including professional development for faculty to better recognize it when it happens.

PILLAR 3

Kiskinohomakwewin mina kiskinawamakewin Natamakewin Ka ati isi nipwakayak: Academic and Scholarly Excellence

3.1 PURSUE RECONCILIATION IN THE CURRICULUM

- 3.1.1 Learning Council will advocate for the addition of a second additional Indigenous Curriculum Specialist to support instructors as they incorporate Indigenous worldviews, content and pedagogy into the curriculum.

3.2 SUPPORT EXCELLENCE IN ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING

- 3.2.1 The Vice-President Academic and Research will work with the Chief Administrative Officer to provide greater structure to program equipment renewal in the annual budget process.
- 3.2.2 The Registrar will develop a more efficient process for scheduling courses.
- 3.2.3 The Vice-President Academic and Research will advocate with President's Council for the development of a capital plan that aligns plans for renovation and new construction with plans for enrolment growth.
- 3.2.4 President's Council will create processes that optimize the allocation of space in UCN to ensure that student and program needs are at the fore front of space allocation.
- 3.2.5 The Associate Vice-President of Access and the Associate Vice-President of Community and Industry Solutions will initiate a framework with Human Resources and Information Technology to streamline processes to support education away from main campuses.
- 3.2.6 The Associate Vice-President of Access will work with Finance to identify a process whereby expert support is provided for the annual audits associated with Post-Secondary Education Access Centres.

- 3.2.7 The Associate Vice President, Reconciliation, Research and Academic Innovation (RRAI) will work with instructors and deans to create policies and processes at UCN that ensure rigour and quality in terms of the development of courses and programs for delivery using learning technologies. These policies and processes must ultimately be reviewed by the Curriculum and Standards Committee and approved by Learning Council.
- 3.2.8 The Curriculum and Standards Committee shall develop a policy recognizing third-party recognition that details the conditions under which UCN will accredit third-party curriculum, as well as quality standards.
- 3.2.9 Learning Council will, by 2025, ensure that work integrated learning opportunities are available in 100% of post-secondary programs that fall under the approval process detailed in the provincial Programs of Study Regulation.
- 3.2.10 The Associate Vice-President of Community and Industry Solutions will continue to expand contract training and continuing education in partnership with industry.
- 3.2.11 The Associate Vice President, Reconciliation, Research and Academic Innovation (RRAI) will work with programs and faculty members to revise the policy framework supporting PACs so as to ensure maximum flexibility in the process and to ensure that appropriate resources are assigned to maintaining PACs.

3.3 ENSURE OUTSTANDING INSTRUCTION

- 3.3.1 The Associate Vice President, Reconciliation, Research and Academic Innovation (RRAI) will survey instructors prior to the end of each academic year as to professional development that should be offered in the orientation period prior to the start of the fall term each year.
- 3.3.2 The Vice-President Academic and Research will work with Presidents Council and Human Resources to review the HRD process and ensure funding is appropriate to the need.

- 3.3.3 Learning Council will establish a committee of College Instructors to investigate options for providing Educational Leave to College Instructors that could be included as part of a future Collective Bargaining process.
- 3.3.4 Learning Council will support the development of a program for faculty members to develop and prepare them with tools to better incorporate Indigenous knowledges into curriculum.
- 3.3.5 Each Dean will review the need for Education Assistants and the opportunities to hire students to help with support functions around courses and programs. Human Resources must be included in the discussion to ensure that Collective Agreement issues are considered.
- 3.3.6 The Senior Academic Leadership Team will consider the need for additional instructional positions in relation to program requirements.
- 3.3.7 The Senior Academic Leadership Team will work with Human Resources to develop a faculty recruiting and retention strategy.

3.4 RECOGNIZE AND RESPECT SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE

- 3.4.1 The Vice-President Academic and Research will ensure that the Research Ethics Board, Animal Care Committee and Tenure and Promotion Committee review OCAP© and MMCREP so that their policies and procedures include protocols to make these principles real in UCN's research and scholarship support environment.
- 3.4.2 Working with faculty members and the MGEU, the Associate Vice President, Reconciliation, Research and Academic Innovation (RRAI) will lead a process to consider how OCAP© and MMCREP are reflected in the Intellectual Property and Academic Freedom provisions in the Collective Agreement. Wording will be developed for consideration at a future round of collective bargaining.
- 3.4.3 The Vice-President Academic and Research will review internal systems within UCN to determine how OCAP© and MMCREP principles are reflected in administrative processes, such as developing protocols for sharing sponsored student information with sponsoring agencies, and how student data is collected, stored, analyzed and reported by the Office of the Registrar, the Finance Department, and by Institutional Research.

- 3.4.4 The Centre for Learning, Education and Research (CLEAR) will deliver training on OCAP[©] and MMCREP principles and protocols for faculty members.
- 3.4.5 CLEAR will work with faculty members to strengthen curricula related to teaching students about OCAP[©] and MMCREP to ensure that the next generation of scholars incorporates these principles as part of their understanding of research methodology.
- 3.4.6 The Associate Vice President, Reconciliation, Research and Academic Innovation (RRAI) will facilitate workshops to help First Nations governments and Indigenous communities develop a greater understanding of OCAP[©] and MMCREP principles, and to help them establish the capacity to manage these protocols.
- 3.4.7 The University College Librarian will lead the development of partnerships to enhance community capacity to own, control, and store their knowledge. This may include developing specific projects and related funding proposals to external funders to support those projects.

3.5 SUPPORT RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVITY

- 3.5.1 The Research, Education and Learning (REAL) Committee will review its Research Seed Funding program to determine if the program has, in fact, “seeded” additional scholarly activity. In pursuing this review, REAL shall examine funding levels, the projects undertaken, and whether or not applicants receiving Seed Grants have undertaken additional research and had success in obtaining external grants.
- 3.5.2 The Associate Vice President, Reconciliation, Research and Academic Innovation (RRAI) will survey funding levels and mechanisms at peer institutions that support research, and make recommendations for changes at UCN.

- 3.5.3 The Associate Vice President, Reconciliation, Research and Academic Innovation (RRAI) will lead a consultative process to create a Strategic Research Plan that will take a long-view on supporting, expanding and enhancing research, scholarship, and creative activities at UCN.
- 3.5.4 Centre for Aboriginal Languages and Culture (CALC) will ensure that its teaching of Indigenous languages and cultures remains strong, and establish its role as UCN’s centre for research on Indigenous languages and cultures.
- 3.5.5 The Associate Vice President, Reconciliation, Research and Academic Innovation (RRAI) will develop a process in partnership with the University College Librarian and faculty members, to develop a collections plan for each program area.

ANNEX B

Final Status of *Academic Plan 2015-2020*

Academic Plan 2015-2020 was prepared during a time when “...UCN was maintaining the same suite of programs” (Usher and Pelletier, p. 134). The reality was that new programs were not being funded by government, and some existing programs had been terminated at UCN.

Accordingly, the strategy inherent in *Academic Plan 2015-2020* was one that prepared the ground for future growth. Objectives in that plan helped to Indigenize the curriculum, create structures to strengthen coordination of academic activity, improve engagement with industry and with communities, and ensure better planning, greater program relevance, and more robust quality assurance mechanisms.

Academic Plan 2015-2020 included three pillars:

1. **Wisdom, Truth, Honesty and Respect:** Teaching, Research and Learning
2. **Finding Our Courage:** UCN’s Academic Organization
3. **Sharing Love, Showing Humility:** Supporting Academic Excellence

Most actions in *Academic Plan 2015-2020* were completed, as shown below:

CATEGORY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Completed	34	54.0%
Discontinued*	22	34.9%
Subtotal (completed)	56	88.9%
In Process	4	6.3%
No Action	3	4.8%
Subtotal (not completed)	7	11.1%
TOTAL	63	100.0%

* An action may be discontinued for reasons such as the need for the action was no longer valid, the action was overtaken by events, etc. Discontinuation of an action represents a conscious decision to not pursue an action.

Much changed between 2015 and 2020, such as the appointment of a new President and Vice-Chancellor, the renewal of membership on the Governing Council, and implementation of a significant administrative reorganization. Some actions in the *Academic Plan* were overtaken by events while others were reinforced, such as those that sought to create a stronger focus on UCN’s Indigenous context, student recruitment and success, as well as greater focus on meeting community and industry needs.

Academic Plan 2015-2020 created a foundation for the *Academic and Research Plan 2020-2025*. A great deal of commitment was demonstrated by all members of UCN in pursuing the objectives and activities in *Academic Plan 2015-2020*. They should be proud of all that was achieved over the past five years as we look forward to the challenges presented to us for the next five years.

While some activities identified in the Plan continue to be finalized, this report represents the formal completion of UCN’s *Academic Plan 2015-2020*.

ANNEX C

Academic and Research Plan Development Process

In fall 2018, the Academic Planning Committee established a Subcommittee to create a new Academic Plan. Members were drawn from faculty, staff and administration.

MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE INCLUDED:

Joseph Atoyebi, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of English
Harvey Briggs, MA, Dean, Faculty of Arts, Business, and Science
Keith Hyde, PhD, Associate Professor of English
Kim Laycock, CGA, College Instructor, Business Administration
Josephine McKay, Indigenous Curriculum Specialist
Dan Smith, PhD, Vice-President Academic and Research (Chair)
Vicki Zerán, PhD, Dean, Faculty of Health

The Subcommittee developed a discussion paper to help generate discussion about the new *Academic and Research Plan* and to help define content and priorities. The Discussion Paper was completed and shared with faculty and staff in May 2019, and follow-up consultations were held with Faculty Councils and other groups within UCN throughout Fall 2019 and early Winter 2020, as follows:

August 20, 2019:	Council of Elders
August 29, 2019:	Arts, Business, and Science Faculty Council
September 20, 2019:	Research, Education and Learning Committee of Learning Council
November 21, 2019:	Writing Centre
December 6, 2019:	Aboriginal and Northern Studies Program Faculty Members
December 10, 2019:	Skilled Trades, Apprenticeship and Technology Faculty Council
December 16, 2019:	Office of the Registrar
December 17, 2019:	Faculty of Health
December 17, 2019:	Natural Resources Management Technology Program
January 24, 2020:	Council of Elders
January 29, 2020:	Kenanow Faculty of Education

Additionally, faculty and staff had the opportunity to share their thoughts either directly with a member of the Subcommittee, or using an email address – academicplan@ucn.ca – that was specifically set up for the development of the academic and research plan and available from May 2019 to March 2020. Overall, all staff at UCN had the opportunity to contribute to the Plan’s development, and nearly 190 individuals directly participated in the consultation process.

Drawing on the information received through the consultation process, a draft Academic and Research Plan was prepared in early 2020 and was distributed for further consultation in March 2020. A final draft of the *Academic and Research Plan 2020-2025* was prepared and was presented to the Academic Planning Committee in April 2020, and was reviewed and approved by Learning Council in June 2020.

The Subcommittee is grateful for the enthusiasm and high level of engagement shown during the development of this plan and is confident that such enthusiasm will infuse implementation!

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