

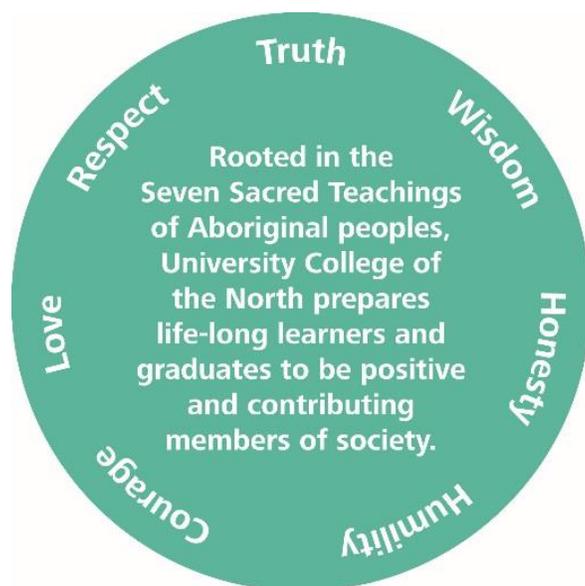


UCN's ACADEMIC PLAN 2015-2020

FOREWORD

UCN's vision is rooted in the Seven Sacred Teachings, and ensuring that the Seven Sacred Teachings have meaning in our everyday lives requires that they frame our activity. As Elder George Martin said, "Living a good life and serving the people is not done dishonestly, disrespectfully, carelessly, haphazardly or cavalierly [arrogance]." (Calgary Board of Education, n.d.). If UCN is to proceed in a good way, we must consciously and deliberately make choices that strengthen and respect our relationships with each other, with our communities, and with our environment and the world around us. Accordingly, the Academic Plan 2015-2020 is framed by the Seven Sacred Teachings, defining for each of us how our work connects us to those teachings, and ultimately, how we find truth for ourselves, apply it to how we live our lives, and how we share it with others.

In this spirit, Academic Plan 2015-2020 defines our actions over a five-year period. This Academic Plan identifies new directions as well as more clearly articulates things that we are already doing, defining the path that we must take to realize *kiskinohtahiwewin*¹, UCN's Strategic Plan for the period from 2015 to 2020. The Academic Plan helps to identify where we need to do more, and how we can better do the things that we are already doing. By achieving this Academic Plan, we help to make real in our lives and the lives of our students, the Seven Sacred Teachings, and to realize UCN's vision by ensuring research excellence and creating well-prepared, life-long learners who contribute positively to the community.



¹ Pronounced kis-kin-oh-ta-hey-way-win, *kiskinohtahiwewin* means teaching and guiding, also inferring helping to learn.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Framed by the Seven Sacred Teachings, UCN's Academic Plan 2015-2020 seeks to strengthen our academic and research organization to help ensure that UCN's faculties and academic departments have the systems, resources, policies and procedures required to achieve excellence and to support UCN's four Strategic Directions found in *kiskinohtahiwewin*.

Specifically, this document defines the academic environment that will exist at UCN by the year 2020. The Academic Plan identifies how UCN can provide post-secondary education in innovative ways, from a northern and Aboriginal perspective. UCN will offer programming reflective of the ever-changing landscape of current and future needs, and that is attractive to students, who will receive outstanding support from the moment they are recruited until their graduation. Exemplifying the term 'university college,' UCN's research, and its college and university programs will complement each other, helping students to understand and contribute to the north while they learn in their communities. The Academic Plan also helps to define how UCN can continue to partner with others by continuing to provide responsive, accessible and highest quality educational courses, and programs close to home. Accordingly, this plan presents 11 objectives in three pillars, shown below:

Pillar 1 - Wisdom, Truth, Honesty, and Respect: Teaching, Research, and Learning

- Ensure Relevance to Aboriginal and Northern Manitobans
- Strengthen Quality in All Courses and Programs
- Strengthen UCN's Research Culture
- Focus on Community and Industry Needs
- Improve Student Success

Pillar 2 - Finding our Courage: UCN's Academic Organization

- Create Processes to Support Course and Program Oversight
- Ensure Effective Partnerships with IUS and CBS
- Establish Equitable Experiences for all UCN Programming

Pillar 3 - Sharing Love, Showing Humility: Supporting Academic Excellence

- Create a Planning Culture
- Establish a Division-Wide Understanding of Workload
- Promote the Better Use of Technology in Teaching and Learning

Actions related to each of the 11 objectives are identified throughout the body of the paper, and are summarized in the Annex.

INTRODUCTION

Replacing the 2011 Academic Plan, the Academic Plan 2015-2020 provides direction for programming, organizational structure, and resource allocation related to teaching, learning, and research at UCN. This plan establishes a critical link between *kiskinohtahiwewin* and the activities undertaken by UCN's faculties and academic departments.

The May 2015 discussion paper, *Developing an Academic Plan for UCN*, included a detailed scan of UCN's environment. That scan suggests UCN's strategic situation has changed since UCN was created in 2004, and *kiskinohtahiwewin* identifies the strategic priorities for the institution over the next five years.

Why Have an Academic Plan?

To Ensure Responsiveness: UCN's strategic situation has changed since it was established in 2004. *Kiskinohtahiwewin* identifies the strategic directions for UCN over the next five years. Further, in June 2015, the Government of Manitoba released *Manitoba's Post-Secondary Education Strategy*, defining direction for post-secondary education in the province as a whole. These two documents provide primary strategic guidance for UCN's academic activities. Other important and relevant work has strategic impact, such as the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and helps to guide the selection of courses of action for the Academic Division. Together, this guidance creates a *strategic environment* that helps us to understand where emphasis should be placed in terms of the teaching, research, service, and sustaining functions of the Academic Division. The Academic Plan helps to guide the Academic Division through this new strategic environment.

To Establish the Rules of the Game: UCN's Academic Plan is an *operational* plan – sitting below the level of *kiskinohtahiwewin*, yet above the level of a faculty or departmental action plan. An operational plan defines and regulates the playing field, setting the rules of the game. The Academic Plan establishes an organizational framework allowing faculties and departments to deliver and support programming, and conduct and support research while at the same time guiding those activities to achieve UCN's four strategic directions.

UCN's Strategic Plan

Vision: Rooted in the Seven Sacred teachings of Aboriginal Peoples, UCN prepares life-long learners and graduates to be positive and contributing members of society.

Mission: To ensure Northern communities and people have access to educational opportunities, knowledge and skills, while being inclusive and respectful of diverse Northern and Aboriginal values and beliefs.

Strategic Directions:

- Northern and Aboriginal culture
- Innovative and responsive education
- Trades & industrial skills
- Student centred

To Prepare for the Future: UCN's Academic Plan establishes a foundation for UCN's future academic activity, and supports *kiskinohtahiwewin* within the context of a larger post-secondary system in Manitoba and Canada. UCN has much to offer northern communities and peoples, and has much to offer to Manitoba. This Plan helps to define how UCN's education and research activities contribute to our communities and to the larger society.

Development Process

- 11 May 2015: discussion paper distributed
- 15 June 2015: responses to the discussion paper received
- 15 September 2015: preliminary draft of the Academic Plan is shared with faculties and Academic Division departments for comment
- 15 October 2015: faculty/staff feedback received
- 30 October 2015: revised draft considered by deans at retreat
- 20 November 2015: Academic Planning Committee approves draft Academic Plan and recommends it to Learning Council
- 08 December 2015: Learning Council considered draft Academic Plan for approval

UCN's Academic Plan will be managed and reviewed on a regular basis by the Academic Planning Committee of Learning Council.

Organization of the Academic Plan

The Academic Plan 2015-2020 is presented in narrative format, with explanatory remarks followed by related actions. Actions are summarized in an Annex and an implementation plan will be developed by the Academic Planning Committee based on this Plan. The three pillars of this plan and related objectives and actions are outlined in the pages that follow, and conclusions are presented.

Connection to UCN's Strategic Plan 2015-2020

This Academic Plan seeks in part to ensure that the Academic Division contributes to the achievement of *kiskinohtahiwewin*. While overlap is inevitable, and many actions contribute to more than one strategic direction, throughout the Academic Plan icons representing UCN's four strategic directions appear (see below) to indicate which strategic direction is supported. In other cases, the support for our four strategic directions is indirect or touches more than one strategic direction. In these cases, no icon appears.

UCN's Planning Framework

Strategic plans provide higher level direction that defines *what* you are trying to do (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985; Mintzberg, 1987).

At UCN, strategic level activity is defined by the *vision, mission, strategic directions*, and related *goals* as well as the Governing Council's *ends* statements.

Operational plans detail medium order activities relating to coordination, scheduling, aligning and sequencing of activity, resource allocation, oversight, etc. Operational plans set the framework within which tactics occur.

At UCN, *objectives* articulate intended outcomes at this level.

Tactical plans present specific tasks or actions of a unit to 'deliver' education, research and other support on the ground.

At UCN, the tactical level is represented by *action plans*.

UCN's Four Strategic Directions



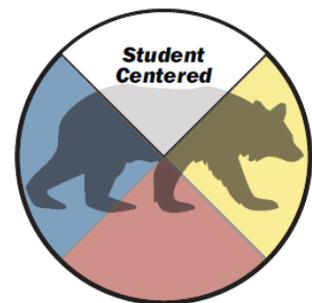
UCN believes Northern and Aboriginal cultures, worldviews and history are the foundation upon which we conduct our day-to-day operations as an institute of higher learning.



UCN will work with our partners to provide educational opportunities that respond to the community and labour market needs of Northern Manitoba.



UCN recognizes the current labour market needs and the importance of providing education and training that will develop a skilled workforce for Northern Manitoba's economy.



UCN understands the importance of a positive student experience, be it in the classroom, distance delivery, practicums, community based, or in our hallways.

PILLAR 1

Wisdom, Truth, Honesty, and Respect: Teaching, Research, and Learning

“The traditional way of education was by example, experience, and storytelling. The first principle involved was total respect and acceptance of the one to be taught...”

- Art Solomon, Anishinaabe Elder

This pillar is about education – the act of teaching and conducting research, and the learning that results from that act. The action is placed in the context of establishing and maintaining honest and respectful relationships – with students, industry, communities, and with other post-secondary institutions. This Academic Plan seeks to ensure that UCN teaches, and that students learn, in ways that speak to them and to their needs and the needs of the north.

UCN is a learning-intensive institution with an important research mandate that continues to grow and develop. Educating students and conducting research takes place physically in northern Manitoba and in a context where more than 70% of our students are Aboriginal. Without having to refer to mission statements, these facts tell us important things about how we do our business: if we are to be student-centred, we must start where our students are, be connected to northern and Aboriginal peoples, and understand and respond to their social and economic needs. This first pillar seeks to strengthen those connections in UCN's learning and research activities.

Objective 1.1 Ensure Relevance to Aboriginal and Northern Manitobans

Indigenization is an objective pursued by nearly every college and university in Canada. UCN has the potential to be a leader in this field and indeed, given its student population and its physical location, UCN should be ahead of other institutions. Serving in such a leadership role sometimes requires that one stands alone. UCN should not shy away from this leadership role.

Being relevant to northern and Aboriginal Manitobans may require more support for teaching northern and Aboriginal perspectives in all courses and programs at UCN, better connections of our programs to industry and the workforce, and stronger responses to provincial priorities through appropriate structures, policies, resources, programs, curriculum and student services.

A first step can be to respectfully acknowledge UCN's location on Treaty lands.

Action 1.1.1: Modify the course outline template to ensure acknowledgement that UCN operates on Treaty lands.



Defining Indigenization in UCN's Context

It is not the role of the Academic Division to dictate the content of courses or the direction of faculty members' research projects – which would be a violation of the Collective Agreement provisions on academic freedom. It is the role of the Division, however, to ensure that the supports are in place for faculty members as they develop their courses and their research agendas. Few supports currently exist, and it is a leadership responsibility to ensure that such supports are available.

Faculty/Staff Comment

“... we need to understand what indigenizing academic programs means...”

Careful consideration must be taken. UCN's strategic mandate in relation to Aboriginal and northern priorities has been developed and defined over the years. How this strategic priority plays out operationally and in the classroom, however, has not been as thoroughly discussed. This is a delicate

process that must consider, among others, advice provided by Elders, the expressed perspectives of communities and other stakeholders.

From the Lobdell Report

“Recommendation 8: The leadership of UCN should encourage an open, free-form discussion about the phrase “Aboriginal and northern values and beliefs” and how it can best be applied to academic programming, student recruitment, employment, and career progress within UCN.” (p. 5, 13)

There is broad agreement on UCN's strategic direction. This Academic Plan must ensure that this strategic direction is defined operationally so that it is understood by faculty and staff so that it can be made real in the classroom, laboratories and in our other activities. “Learning is not a culture-neutral transfer of data. It involves conceptual frameworks embedded in worldviews and values” (Paquette & Fallon, 2014, p. 1). The problem faced by those seeking to offer post-secondary education that addresses and integrates Aboriginal worldviews and perspectives is complex:

At the first level, it raises complex and conflicted issues about what is currently and, more to the point, what ought to be “Aboriginal” in Aboriginal post-secondary education, why, and on whose terms. To what degree and in what ways should Aboriginal post-secondary education mirror mainstream post-secondary programming, and where and how should it differ? Powerful normative and institutional forces, of course, limit the degree to which Aboriginal education at any level can simply go its own way. The credentialing and certification agenda of post-secondary education militates strongly against a completely separate and different institutional form and structure or radically different content for Aboriginal post-secondary education. On the other hand, Aboriginal post-secondary education which is solely a mirror image of mainstream post-secondary education can hardly lay claim to being an authentically Aboriginal instantiation of post-secondary education or to leading toward renewal of Aboriginal ontologies and epistemologies... (Paquette & Fallon, 2014, p. 2).

UCN must be a leader in Aboriginal post-secondary education, but must also ensure that its courses and programs are recognized by other post-secondary education institutions and by employers.

It is true that many other post-secondary institutions are working on this problem. However, UCN has a strategic advantage in this respect: UCN exists to address Aboriginal and northern issues, and thus the institution can dedicate a large proportion of its resources towards this objective. Other institutions are obligated to, at least in some measure, continue to maintain a primarily Western model of higher education, representing a potential barrier, economically, to pursuing indigenization (Paquette & Fallon, 2014).

At the same time, UCN also operates in a northern context. Section 3 of *The University College of the North Act* states that a purpose of UCN is “to serve the educational needs of Aboriginal and northern Manitobans” (emphasis added). A number of faculty and staff in their responses to the discussion paper identified this as an issue that must be clarified.

Action 1.1.2: The Academic Planning Committee will initiate a process to collegially develop a detailed understanding of the indigenization of the curriculum in an Aboriginal and northern context. This understanding should:

- be included in a revised Policy AC-01-09 Aboriginal Curriculum. This policy should also be revised so as to clarify responsibilities, relationships and processes;
- be included in an Academic Charter that helps to define how programming is delivered at UCN;
- be appropriate for adult upgrading, college and university level programming; and,
- recognize that UCN operates within a larger post-secondary environment and that UCN must carefully consider the articulation of this understanding in the context of other norms of the academy, such as intellectual property and academic freedom.

Post-secondary institutions in Manitoba continue to work together to improve the system's responsiveness to Aboriginal students. The Council of Presidents of Universities in Manitoba (COPUM) has struck a body, the Indigenous Education Working Group, which is nearing completion of a collaborative approach to indigenization within Manitoba's colleges and universities. The Academic Division will need to develop a response to the blueprint being finalized by the Working Group.

Action 1.1.3: Develop an action plan to implement the blueprint developed by the Indigenous Education Working Group.

Supporting Indigenization of the Curriculum

When the Faculty of Arts & Science was created in the mid-2000s, expectations existed at that time that faculty members teaching in the Aboriginal and Northern Studies (ANS) program would serve as the primary resource for instructors in other faculties and programs to better understand how to integrate Aboriginal and northern perspectives into the curriculum. Nearly ten years after the program was established, it is clear that the numbers of students in the ANS and the breadth of the courses taught in

the program demand the full attention of the ANS faculty members. In short, the initial expectations, while reasonable and workable, have not endured as the ANS program changed.

The need for support is explicitly recognized by UCN in its 2013 response to the Lobdell Report when it stated "...structures, resources and processes need to be established to support the integration of Aboriginal and northern perspectives into the curriculum" (p. 3). Additionally, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in its Summary Report suggests that resources are needed to support educators as they integrate "indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into the classroom" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 289).

Faculty/Staff Comment

"UCN needs to have a curricular expert who can work with and help faculty to incorporate methods of indigenizing programs."

Action 1.1.4: Hire an Aboriginal Curriculum Content expert, reporting to the Dean of Research & Innovation, to assist faculty members in including Aboriginal content and methods in the classroom.

Recognizing Indigenous Knowledge Keepers

Faculty/Staff Comment

"Certification of traditional knowledge keepers will add to UCN's goal of becoming a leader in indigenizing academic programs. The certified traditional knowledge keepers can also help with UCN's land based training. They can also support on-line training."

An advantage that UCN has over other post-secondary institutions seeking further indigenization is the existence of a cadre of Indigenous Knowledge Keepers who are already committed to UCN and to education in the north. Western approaches to post-secondary education tend to downplay traditional sources of knowledge, and does not recognize or respect other ways of knowing (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001). Formally recognizing this expertise will help to integrate traditional knowledge into academic life, changing how UCN operates as an academic institution and providing leadership within the larger post-secondary system.

Action 1.1.5: The Vice-President Academic & Research will work with Human Resources and others as necessary to clarify how Traditional Knowledge Keepers can be awarded tenure at UCN.

Online Education and Indigenization

In 2015, the Government of Manitoba has released a strategy that focuses significantly on online education. This presents unique challenges to UCN in that online technologies are disintermediating, separating the student from both the institution and the instructor in terms of location and, for asynchronous education, time. The challenge then relates to the development of effective community – not impossible in a technologically mediated environment – and also delivering programming that is sensitive to Aboriginal methodology (e.g. how do you "do" land-based education online?).

Action 1.1.6: The Aboriginal Curriculum Consultant will lead the development of a technologically-mediated education strategy that will ensure that Aboriginal content is effectively included in courses offered using distance technology.

Engaging First Nations in Program Development

AFN Vision Statement: Lifelong Learning

First Nations lifelong learning is a process of nurturing First Nations learners in linguistically and culturally-appropriate holistic learning environments that meet the individual and collective needs of First Nations and ensures that all First Nations learners have the opportunity to achieve their personal aspirations within comprehensive lifelong learning systems.

An important focus later in this Plan is a discussion of how UCN can work more closely with industry partners on program development. However, just as important for UCN is further consideration of how First Nations communities can be engaged in program development, and in particular for programming relating to language, culture, governance, education and other areas that affect First Nations peoples. Since first articulated in 1972 by the organization that ultimately became the Assembly of First Nations, an important principal has been 'First Nations control of First Nations education' (Assembly of First Nations, 2010). As part of demonstrating its leadership in indigenization of the academy in Manitoba and in Canada, UCN must recognize the value and importance of including First Nations communities in program development.

Action 1.1.7: UCN will explore mechanisms for how First Nations communities could be included in program development.

Recognizing Increasing Diversity in the North

The growth of international students and immigrants in Canada is a reality that cannot be ignored, and the Academic Division acknowledges that this additional diversity brings tremendous strength to our communities and to our classrooms. However, the impact of this increased diversity is relatively undefined vis-à-vis UCN's northern and Aboriginal context. How UCN responds to internationalization within its northern and Aboriginal context is important.

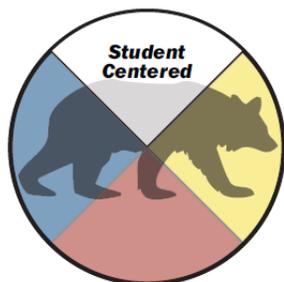
Action 1.1.8: As part of the discussions related to developing a detailed understanding of the indigenization of the curriculum, the Academic Planning Committee will also consider how increasing numbers of immigrant students factor into how the "Northern and Aboriginal Culture" strategic direction is implemented.

Action 1.1.9: UCN's Adult Learning Centre and the Faculty of Education will investigate the requirement for English as an additional language and seek external funding sources.

Faculty/Staff Comment

"The discussion paper that was circulated uses story-telling as a theme. Picking up on this theme, I'd add that the story that UCN is telling about itself is largely a bi-cultural one, involving only two populations: aboriginal peoples and European-descended peoples. This is a critical story to tell, but it's not the only story to tell. Clearly the north is becoming a more multicultural place..."

Objective 1.2: Strengthen Quality in All Courses and Programs



The Academic Division is responsible for the quality of all programming offered at UCN. In many respects, this is about students: UCN must provide programming that offer curricular completeness, cultural appropriateness, rigorous assessment, a positive classroom experience, content that is relevant to social and economic needs, content that can be – where appropriate – transferred and applied to other programs, and an experience that is equitable regardless of which UCN campus students attend.

“Quality” is all of these things, and more. The Academic Division must intentionally approach program and course delivery with quality in mind. Clear expectations for quality must be established and resources must be allocated accordingly.

Action 1.2.1: The Vice-President Academic and Research will lead the development of an Academic Charter that includes, among other things, quality standards for courses and programs regardless of where they are delivered, and resource them appropriately.

Reviewing Programs Regularly

All colleges and universities undertake regular reviews of their programming. In 2012/13, Since UCN approved a program review process, just one program, Natural Resource Management Technology, has completed the process. Other programs, including Aboriginal and Northern Studies, English, and History have completed internal reviews, and are expected to undertake external reviews in the near future. However, these reviews were initiated as a result of external factors, and not based on a regular schedule of reviews.

From the Lobdell Report

“There has not been a regular schedule for program reviews at UCN but a process has been agreed by the Learning Council and these reviews are expected to begin in the near future” (p. 13).

Action 1.2.2: The Academic Division will establish a schedule for regular program reviews for Faculties to follow, guided and supported by the Academic Specialist.

Teaching Excellence

Program quality largely rests on the quality of instruction. UCN's hiring practices help to ensure that the appropriately qualified candidates are hired into instructional positions. However, not all successful candidates have the same level of experience in the classroom, whereas other candidates and existing faculty members are masters at the craft. Additional supports for less-experienced instructors, and those who wish to strengthen their instructional skills, can help to ensure continued teaching excellence. Further, the existence of such supports can help to mitigate the risks associated with hiring candidates who have less teaching experience, such as recent doctoral graduates or industry experts who have not previously taught. In addition to managing quality, this approach can help to strengthen the numbers of new Aboriginal Ph.Ds. hired into instructional positions, ensuring subject matter experts are able to teach, while at the same time mitigating the risk that is associated with hiring a less-experienced instructor.

Action 1.2.3: The Academic Division will establish a Centre for Teaching Excellence.

Resources are at a premium. Consideration in the establishment of a Centre for Teaching Excellence can include assigning experienced instructors and professors with workload in the Centre, reducing the need for dedicated staff in the Centre and ensuring exposure of participants to a range of experienced instructors.

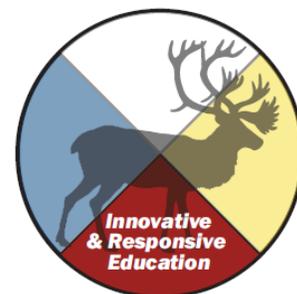
Evaluating Instruction

UCN has had a teaching evaluation process for some time. An important feature of that process has been classroom visits by the faculty deans. As programming has become more varied and complex in each faculty, it is becoming less possible for a dean to effectively provide evaluation as different disciplines have widely varying content, and often use different teaching techniques.

Action 1.2.4: Deans' Council will review the teaching evaluation process at UCN with a view to ensuring greater structure and use of expertise with how faculty members' instruction is evaluated.

Objective 1.3: Strengthen UCN's Research Culture

Research is the search for, and a commitment to, the truth, no matter how difficult. For example, the application of the concept of genocide to Canadian society in the context of Residential Schools has been an uncomfortable truth for many Canadians to accept. Yet, we must face such truths regardless of the difficulties, and find the wisdom to place it in context, heal, and move forward. This is an important value of research and creative works – when we speak honestly and truthfully, we know ourselves and each other better. From our research comes understanding and wisdom. Furthermore, UCN researchers adhere to a canon of ethics that helps to ensure that new knowledge is discovered and communicated respectfully.



Increasing the Research Profile at UCN

We strengthen our research culture when we think of research as part of our everyday activities, whether we support research through activities such as publishing, presenting at conferences, or processing interlibrary loans, handling books and other research-related activities in the mail room, processing research-related financial documents, or serving as the principal investigator on a research project. Research is an important and complex activity, and its success at UCN cannot be attributed to any one individual.

Action 1.3.1: Change the name of the division to the “Academic and Research Division” to highlight and reinforce the importance of research at UCN.

Action 1.3.2: Create knowledge hubs to recognize research excellence in faculty to support opportunities for knowledge mobilization.

Understanding Research Impact

Without restricting any faculty or staff member's ability to participate in research, the Collective Agreement gives to those faculty members appointed to a professorial rank the obligation to conduct research – meaning that only a small number of individuals within UCN are required to conduct research as part of their work duties. However, many non-professorial faculty members, administrators and other staff are actively pursuing research, and UCN's research successes are significant. Indeed, in 2014/15, faculty and staff at UCN were pursuing 103 separate research projects.

UCN enjoys a growing research reputation. For example Sue Matheson and John Butler from UCN's English program co-edit *the quint: an interdisciplinary journal from the north*, which disseminates new knowledge in the areas of literature, history, the arts, popular culture, education, the social sciences, and Aboriginal studies. Many may not be aware that *the quint* is listed on the MLA database, has an international advisory editorial board, and all issues of *the quint* are archived in Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa. In just eight years of hard work, *the quint* has become an important journal in its field, and it was started and is managed at UCN.

UCN is involved in important research partnerships. Selvin Peter and Maureen Simpkins from Arts, Business, and Science are participating in CREATE H2O, a "science-engineering research training program in Canada combining technical water and wastewater management training with Indigenous theory, law and methodological skills training" (NSERC, n.d.). The ultimate purpose of this project, which includes UCN, the University of Manitoba, and Trent University, is to help ensure clean water on First Nations' reserves, a direct and meaningful benefit to northern Manitobans.

UCN is undertaking other important, relevant research for the north. For example, the VOICE project, involving UCN (investigators Jennifer Davis, Brenda Firman, and Al Gardiner from Education), Brandon University, and the University of Manitoba focuses on effective education strategies. Additionally, Maureen Simpkins and Mark Matiasek from Arts, Business, and Science are undertaking research in partnership with the University of Manitoba on homelessness in Thompson, also demonstrating UCN's research relevance and importance.

While anecdotal evidence appears to support that research contributions being made by UCN are of value to a range of interests in the north, we have a limited understanding of the impact of that research in a larger context. There are services available that can help UCN to understand its research impact in comparison to other post-secondary institutions. At this point in UCN's existence, it would be useful to know, from a strategic perspective, how UCN stacks up in terms of research impact.

Action 1.3.3: Investigate methods for assessing UCN's research impact, be they bibliographic or other metrics, and obtain a one-time snapshot to understand UCN's research impact as compared to other Canadian universities.

Once we have this snapshot, UCN can consider investigating ongoing methods for assessing UCN's research impact.

Promoting Applied Research

The Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines applied research as “original investigation undertaken in order to acquire new knowledge. It is, however, directed primarily towards a specific practical aim or objective” (OECD, 2012). Not only is applied research focused on a specific practical objective, that objective is often related to a local issue, and the research also often conducted with an industry and/or community partner. Applied research at colleges across Canada is growing, and at UCN it is in its infancy.

Action 1.3.4: Develop and share examples of applied research conducted at colleges and institutes across Canada, categorized by field, to help to clarify for potential researchers the types of applied research activities that could be undertaken.

Action 1.3.5: Work with the union to investigate the possibility of including in Article 63 applied research as allowable workload for College Instructors.

Strengthening UCN's Library

The libraries at UCN consist of two campus libraries, and three joint academic/public libraries at Regional Centres. All of the libraries purchase materials to support the programs and courses offered at UCN. A specific mandate of the Oscar Lathlin Research Library at The Pas campus is to develop resources to support the research areas of Aboriginal and Northern Studies.

Action 1.3.6: Continue to support the mandate in providing the resources necessary to build the research library collection in Aboriginal and Northern Studies.

Understanding and Celebrating our Research Success

As a young, teaching-intensive institution that values research, UCN's accomplishments to date are impressive. More can be done, however, to celebrate our successes internally, and to build a better understanding of where research fits within UCN, and of the benefits that research at this institution is bringing to our communities and to our world.

Action 1.3.7: Research and Innovation will prepare and issue a newsletter once or twice annually to communicate to UCN staff what research has been done, what has been discovered, and the impact that research has had locally, nationally and globally.

The actions proposed for research in this Academic Plan help to ensure innovation at UCN, and are admittedly modest. The Research and Scholarship Committee of the Learning Council is preparing a Strategic Research Plan that will help to further establish an environment for research excellence and success at UCN. While it is appropriate for the Academic Division to be active in the research arena, it is important that the Research and Scholarship Committee provide principal leadership for research at UCN.

Nevertheless, it is important that UCN continue to focus on its research mandate. The Academic Division acknowledges that UCN is a teaching-intensive institution. However, it is also a 'research active' institution. Research being conducted at UCN has important benefits to UCN in terms of its reputation and important benefits for northern and Aboriginal Manitobans.

Objective 1.4: Focus on Community and Industry Needs

Strengthening our Partnerships

UCN is an important institution for northern communities, and for Manitoba. We show respect for those who benefit from UCN, and for those from whom UCN benefits, when we work with them in partnership.

Working with Other Post-Secondary Institutions

Faculty/Staff Comment

"I think partnering with other indigenous-based institutions and current leaders in indigenized studies across Canada would enhance our position and direction through these engagements."

The Community Based Services Division has established a program relationship with the First Nations University of Canada (FNUC) and Opaskwayak Cree Nation (OCN) to partner on the delivery of a social work program in OCN. Similarly, through the ITOUR agreement, the Academic Division worked in partnership with Blackfeet Community College in Montana to offer graduate credits through the Summer Institute held by the University of Manitoba, UCN and Brandon University (BU) in July 2015. Such partnerships help to strengthen UCN.

Action 1.4.1: The Academic Division will continue to seek out opportunities to work with other post-secondary institutions in Canada and elsewhere, and particularly those that share a similar mandate.

Making Education Connections Locally

Partnerships provincially and beyond are important to any post-secondary institution. However, a distinctive feature of UCN is that it looks to discover research findings and to offer educational opportunities locally in people's communities to further social and economic development in the north. To further support this agenda, an Associate Vice-President of Career and Workforce Development was established in the Academic Division in 2014/15 to work to establish and manage a training strategy related to the delivery of trades, industrial skills and dual credit initiatives. Additionally, a partnership is being pursued with the Province of Manitoba and the School District of Mystery Lake with regard to the construction of a trades training facility for the Thompson campus.

Action 1.4.2: Strengthen the vision of the newly created Career and Workforce Development division to efficiently respond to trades and industrial skills training for northern Manitoba.



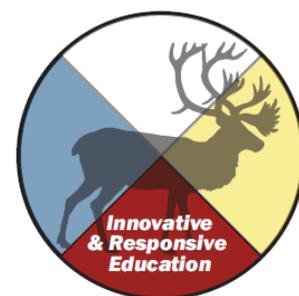
Action 1.4.3: Integrate the industrial skills and trades training strategy into faculty academic action plans, and in particular with that of the Faculty of Trades and Technology, to ensure that the training strategy is made operational through courses and programs.

Like industry connections, community connections are vital for UCN. Libraries are a strategic resource in a community – they help to improve literacy, and are connected with higher levels of education and employment. For UCN, developing partnerships with communities in the establishment of libraries is also a strategic activity, helping UCN to link to the communities through academic and community programming.

Action 1.4.4: Develop partnerships with other communities to establish public libraries.

Meeting Industry and Community Needs

Partnerships with other post-secondary institutions and industry will help to strengthen UCN's ability to meet the social and economic demands of the north. An important element of this mandate is to work with industry to help ensure that skilled employees are available for industry in the north. While the majority of programming initiatives are to be addressed by individual faculties in their own Academic Action Plans (See **Action 3.1.3**, below), some programming decisions are strategic priorities for UCN as a whole. Helping to meet industry demand for skilled employees in the north from the north is a key mandate of UCN. The initiatives below represent important steps in ensuring that this mandate is achieved.



Expanding Diploma Practical Nursing in the North

The need for nurses in the north continues to create pressure on the health care system and on UCN. Several discussions have been held with the Vice-President Academic and Research and the Dean of Health with respect to an additional cohort for Diploma Practical Nursing in Flin Flon. These discussions have been productive, and an evaluation of the program and enrolment will be ongoing through the 2016/17 year.

Action 1.4.5: The Faculty of Health will pursue the delivery of an additional cohort in Diploma Practical Nursing in Flin Flon. Delivery of this new cohort will be in collaboration with the DPN program in Swan River.

Meeting the Demand for Skilled Trades

The top ten trades and skills program list was established as a direct result of the Trades Consultation and the first of four additional programs were offered starting in the 2014/15 academic year. Extensive work was done by the Faculty of Trades and Technology to build productive working relationships with the Northern Technical Training Centre, situated in Cranberry Portage. Vocational high school students have had the opportunity to engage in week-long specialized learning opportunities in the areas of



welding and culinary arts in the 2013/14 academic year. UCN has furthered this partnership by entering into a joint partnership with Frontier Collegiate to cost-share a full time welding instructor who provides teaching to a number of high school students for the Engaged Learners program as well as the Extended Options Programs that are offered by Frontier School Division.

In addition to that, UCN has signed MOUs with both Kelsey School Division in the Pas and the Opaskwayak Education Authority to provide more opportunities for dual credit high school programming. This increases dual credit programming in The Pas/OCN.

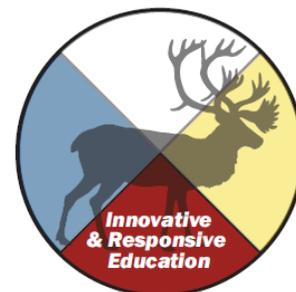
The Northern Construction Trades Training program, where UCN partners with the Northern Manitoba Sector Council (NMSC) and Manitoba Hydro on a project which began in fall of 2014, continues to be supported by UCN. UCN and Apprenticeship Manitoba provided level 1 training in the spring of 2015 for the students in the Industrial Electrician and Industrial Mechanic (millwright) programs.

Action 1.4.6: Working closely with industry and community partners, several new certificate programs will be implemented. For example, demand for supervisory skills development within northern industries has led to a partnership with the NMSC for the development of certified leadership training. Likewise, northern employers have requested that the Civil/CAD Technology and Civil/CAD Technician Certificate be re-instated at UCN as there is demand for graduates in the north.

The challenge for UCN in meeting industry demands will be to ensure responsible management and planning of programming activity is balanced with an ability to be nimble, responding efficiently to changing needs and demands.

Ensuring Ongoing Industry Input

When properly structured, program advisory committees (PACs) are powerful vehicles for industry and stakeholder engagement to ensure currency and relevance of programming. While many certificate and diploma programs have operated PACs in the past, the majority of these committees have become moribund for various reasons. Ensuring ongoing program relevance and connection to community and industry needs will require these committees to be re-initiated.



Interestingly, the 2013 Lobdell Report recommended PACs for degree programs. Reflecting on how degrees are treated at other degree-granting institutions in Manitoba, UCN's response to this recommendation emphasized that PACs may not be appropriate for all degrees. However, it was noted that there are programs and course patterns within degree programs that might benefit from the input that comes from a PAC. For example, language programming, or the Bachelor of Business Administration program might benefit from community and/or industry input and reflection. It is noted that the Northern Manitoba Social Work Program holds successful PAC meetings twice per year, and the dialogue at those meetings helps to illuminate issues in the north in relation to social work as well as inform choices made in the Social Work program itself.

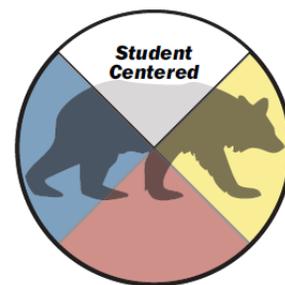
Action 1.4.7: Re-initiate program advisory committees in all certificate and diploma programs, and where appropriate, in degree programs.

Program Advisory Committees, along with regular trades consultation, and the Linkages conferences are all ways that UCN engages with communities and industry partners. However, there are other mechanisms that could be explored to ensure that UCN is comprehensively engaging with its partners.

Action 1.4.8: Working with Deans, Career and Workforce Development will create an engagement strategy for the Academic Division to increase connections with current and potential communities and industry partners.

Objective 1.5: Improve Student Success

The objectives and actions that have been articulated above are important for the success of UCN and for our students. However, without student success – students graduating and/or moving successfully into other programs or other colleges and universities – our plans will be of little import.



Whereas other objectives are about teaching or research – this objective is about learning. In many respects, ‘learning’ is the other side of ‘teaching;’ if faculty members *teach*, students *learn*. This is an important distinction, because excellence in teaching does not necessarily guarantee *learning*. We must acknowledge that many of our students may face unique barriers. For example, some students may be intergenerational survivors of Residential Schools. Additionally, many northern students (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) come from a family background where post-secondary education was not part of the familial landscape; education after high school may have appeared unobtainable. Such considerations have helped to define how we support students. For instance, UCN has a system of campus Elders and counselors who understand the barriers to learning that many of our students face.

Improving Student Supports

Post-secondary education is hard work, and when our students are not prepared for that work, we must have open and honest discussions with them, and provide support and guidance to help them to be better prepared. We must be fair with students, which sometimes means that students need to hear things they may not want to hear – a low mark, probation, or suspension, for example. Our honesty with them is done out of our love and respect for them as learners, and for ourselves as stewards of the academic enterprise in the north, an enterprise that must have integrity if it is to have any meaning at all.

Faculty/Staff Comment

“We should be capable of delivering programming that delivers graduates.”

Action 1.5.1: The Academic Division will investigate additional methods for supporting students through to graduation that protects the integrity of UCN’s academic programming.

Expanding Educational Pathways for Students

Manitoba's Post-Secondary Education Strategy, released in 2015, in part focuses on student mobility – ensuring that students have multiple pathways in their education. UCN agrees with this, and has been implementing such a strategy for a number of years. For example, the Business Administration Diploma Program allows students to exit after one year with a Basic Business Principles certificate. Those students who chose to carry on can complete and graduate with a diploma after their second year of study. For those wishing to either continue their business studies, or return at a later date, the Business Administration diploma program is transferable into a Bachelor of Business Administration at UCN, or into a Bachelor of Commerce degree at the University of Manitoba.

UCN can do more to help facilitate transferability of courses within UCN and between institutions.

Action 1.5.2: Formalize transferability of courses between Arts, Business, Education and Nursing degree programs offered within UCN without students having to complete additional forms and paperwork.

Action 1.5.3: Examine all programs with a view to maximizing laddering opportunities and multiple exit and re-entry points.

Action 1.5.4: Increase the numbers of courses that offer dual credit with local school divisions and internally with UCN's own ALC.

The Government of Manitoba has established a provincial Student Advocate to help students navigate credit transfer processes within Manitoba's post-secondary system. UCN can help ensure the success of this process by ensuring that its credit transfer processes are well documented and adhere to best practices.

Action 1.5.5: Student Development will ensure that UCN has a solid body of policy around credit transfer so that UCN can work effectively with the Student Advocate.

Improving Student Success

Student success is typically conceptualized as an issue of retention and attrition. Kirkness and Barnhardt (2001) emphasize that the typical institutional approaches to retention and attrition conceptualize the problem from the perspective of the institution, and not from the perspective of the student. Accordingly, institutional responses are often centred on adapting students to the culture of the post-secondary institution, often at the expense of the student's own cultural perspectives. In UCN's context, this approach can have negative repercussions where the majority of the student population may respond more positively to an approach that is respectful and relevant to their world view and to their circumstances.

Kirkness and Barnhardt argue for an "education that respects them for who they are, that is relevant to their view of the world, that offers reciprocity in their relationship to others, and that helps them exercise responsibility over their own lives" (2001, p. 15). Accordingly, the efforts outlined above to

better define and realize an 'indigenized institution' will help to align UCN with the perspectives of the majority of our student population, helping them to see how the institution responds to their needs, instead of asking students to respond to the needs of the institution. Indeed, this is a vitally important perspective if UCN is to be a student-centred institution.

In addition to ensuring that UCN's overall institutional approach is student-centred, we must also recognize that a critical issue associated with student success relates to student preparation as they first enter UCN. Some of UCN's students enrol without having all of the skills needed to help them to be successful. Community Based Services, the Faculty of Education, and the Faculty of Arts, Business, and Science have been delivering general studies courses to students in communities prior to undertaking a first-year course of study in Arts. This has proven successful in improving student success, and it is anticipated that this type of approach can help ensure student success in all programs.

Action 1.5.6: Develop and introduce an introductory to post-secondary education program with an objective of providing students with the skill base required for subsequent post-secondary programs.

Action 1.5.7: Consider if individualized learning plans for each new student might contribute to student success.

Action 1.5.8: Student Development will investigate and pursue the development and resourcing of a Strategic Enrolment Management System (SEMS) for UCN.

Ensuring Academic and Research Excellence

When fully realized, the objectives associated with Pillar 1 will help to reinforce an environment of teaching, research and learning excellence that is respectful and relevant to our student population. Connected to its communities and to industry and responsive to its students, UCN will create and communicate knowledge as a leader in indigenized curriculum that is respectful of the demographic, social and economic realities of the north. Students will enter certificate, diploma, or degree programs that are relevant to their lives, and they will be prepared for the rigors of those programs, and will have every opportunity to complete their programs successfully.

PILLAR 2

Finding Our Courage: UCN’s Academic Organization

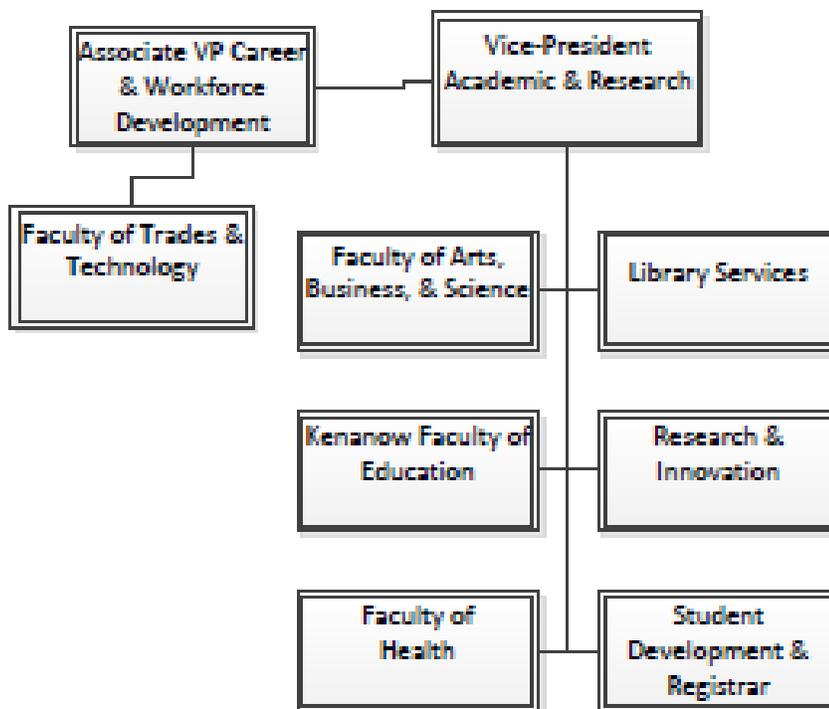
“Order or disorder depends on organization”

– Sun Tzu

Organizational structure includes policies, processes, procedures, and people who have specific roles, responsibilities and relationships with each other. The Academic Division will give us strength by ensuring that we are all working together towards shared objectives, and that no one of us is alone in that task. Structure supports us, guides us, and gives us courage. A well-functioning organizational structure ensures that the strength of us all is within each of us. The goals in Pillar 2 identify actions that will help to ensure that the Academic Division operates as one with the strength of many by examining and finding ways to improve our relationships with others.

The Academic Division’s relationship with others starts with our own internal relationships. The Academic Division was reorganized throughout 2013/14 and 2014/15 to bring together faculties and departments to help ensure that our work is supported effectively.

The Academic Division is well structured to undertake its tasks. Faculties are established to lead the delivery of academic programming. Additionally, a number of departments, Library and Information Services, Research and Innovation, and Student Development & Registrar, support teaching, research and learning. An Associate Vice-President, Career and Workforce Development helps to maintain our focus on industry needs and the Faculty of Trades & Technology works closely with the Associate Vice-President in this regard.



While no changes are contemplated for the internal structure of the Academic Division, the Academic Plan 2015-2020 highlights areas where the Academic Division can strengthen its relationships with other parts of UCN, and with our external communities.

Objective 2.1: Create Processes to Support Course and Program Oversight

Ensuring Faculty Oversight of Courses and Programs

The May 2015 discussion paper identified the relationship between the Academic Division, Community Based Services (CBS), and Inter University Services (IUS) as being sub-optimal. While having different organizations involved in delivering academic programs has a historical basis, the outcome is not always a coordinated delivery of courses and programs.

Examples are helpful. In 2014, UCN entered into a relationship with R.D. Parker High School in Thompson where a psychology course was delivered for dual credit at the high school and at UCN. This was done through IUS and without involvement of the Faculty of Arts, Business, and Science, the faculty that would have otherwise been responsible for the delivery of the courses. Similarly, CBS entered into a partnership agreement with OCN and the First Nations University of Canada to deliver social work courses at OCN, creating awkwardness in the existing relationship between the Faculty of Arts, Business, and Science and the University of Manitoba's Northern Social Work Program with respect to the delivery of social work programming in northern Manitoba. Similarly, CBS works with the Faculty of Education to deliver teachable subjects (English, History, Math, etc.) in communities in support of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program, sometimes with the knowledge of the Faculty of Arts, Business, and Science, and sometimes without.

Faculty/Staff Comment

"I would not be able to adequately explain how the [faculty] fits in with CBS or IUS. I understand the role of the parts ([faculties], IUS, CBS) to the whole (UCN), but I don't really understand the role of the parts to each other. They seem to function separately, independently."

Faculties are responsible for the quality of courses and programs that fall within their remit. The lack of formal communication regarding decisions around program and course delivery creates confusion in terms of course oversight, as well as creates a perception that quality may be compromised.

This situation belies organizational difficulties. There are few formal mechanisms in place to ensure regular communication between Faculties, and with IUS and CBS. Decisions as to what to deliver in communities, when and with what modality (i.e. F2F, VC, audio conference, D2L, Adobe Connect, etc.) are often made in isolation, without reference to academic subject matter experts. Consistent quality management processes do not exist, and there are no established, written standards to help manage quality oversight – hiring decisions are made often without reference to the faculties, not all course outlines are received by faculties or reviewed, there is no teaching evaluation conducted in the communities, and student evaluations are not consistently conducted and/or reported to deans.

Action 2.1.1: Working with the Vice-President of CBS, the Vice-President Academic and Research and deans of faculties, the Dean of Library Services, the Dean of Student Development, and the Dean of Research and Innovation will develop a written plan for contract training and community delivery, ensuring support of courses and programs offered in UCN's Regional Centres and elsewhere.

Action 2.1.2: The Vice-President Academic and Research will lead a committee of deans and faculty members to work with IUS and CBS to establish formal, written processes to create oversight processes for all courses and programs at UCN.

Action 2.1.3: The Dean of Arts, Business, and Science and the Dean of Education will cross-appoint Arts professors appointed into the Faculty of Education and establish the necessary arrangements to negotiate their workload as appropriate.

Improving Library Collections Development

The Library relies on faculty members as subject matter experts in their fields, and seeks input from these subject matter experts to develop the library collection. To this point, collections development has been reactive, with the Library purchasing materials recommended by faculty members. Efforts are underway to make this process more proactive and regular, with the Faculty of Arts, Business, and Science beginning the process of working with the Library to develop collections.

Action 2.1.4: The Library will work with faculties to develop proactive mechanisms to develop the Library collections.

As an example, in the 2015/16 academic year, a member of the Faculty of Education who teaches into UCN's English program was granted a three-credit hour course release to help develop the Library's English collection.

Managing Course Outlines

Course outlines are one important way that course content is managed by the instructors and by faculties. Using collegial processes, many programs already ensure greater alignment between different sections of the same course by agreeing on elements of the course outline, such as learning outcomes, textbooks, assessment techniques, sequencing of topics, etc.

Faculty/Staff Comment

“To align programs and faculties to ensure consistency in delivery of courses, courses with the same code should have the same content and same level of instruction. Policies should be in place to ensure that the outcomes are equal.”

Where instructors agree, there is no issue of academic freedom.

However, UCN is committed to academic freedom, and better alignment of the content course outlines must not be so prescriptive that UCN's reputation as an academic institution suffers.

Negotiated changes for the 2014 – 2018 Collective Agreement saw changes in how course outlines are managed within UCN. The new Collective Agreement states that “Intellectual property does not include course outlines, or courses and program titles and descriptions as they appear in the University College calendar and as they appear in the forms used in the approval process of course and programs.”

This new provision cannot be interpreted so boldly that it interferes with provisions relating to academic freedom. Efforts must be made to ensure that there is agreement within the Academic Division – between deans and faculty members – as to what this means. It is presumed that a syllabus and how a

faculty member approaches the subject will remain within the sole remit of the faculty member. Learning outcomes, however, represent what skills and knowledge students will get from the course. There may be more room to come to agreement on learning outcomes.

Action 2.1.5: The Dean of Research and Innovation will lead a committee composed of faculty members and others to determine how to address recent changes in the Collective Agreement with respect to the management of course outlines with the express purpose of maintaining course and program quality while ensuring a more equitable experience for students regardless of where the course is offered.

Objective 2.2: Ensure Effective Partnerships with IUS and CBS

Respondents to the May 2015 Discussion Paper suggested three options to addressing the issue of the relationship between the Academic Division, IUS, and CBS: (1) dissolve the CBS Division and decentralize its functions within faculties; (2) reorganize CBS as a department within the Academic Division reporting to the Vice-President Academic and Research; and, (3) develop formal mechanisms between the three Divisions for coordinating the delivery of courses and programs in UCN.

Faculty/Staff Comment

“The Academic Division should have oversight of all programming regardless of the whether it is an IUS, CBS or core-funded... Having this type of structure will ensure academic oversight in which our programming will be better monitored and reflect academic consistence and rigor.”

While the first two options may appeal to those looking for organizational simplicity, these options fail to take into account the complexity of negotiating and delivering programming in the communities, activities that would be inefficient if replicated by each faculty. Furthermore, they fail to consider the very important fact that the CBS Division is a concrete, very visible manifestation of UCN's commitment to education in communities. The third option, developing formal mechanisms, helps to ensure that details continue to be taken care of, as well as ensuring a tangible organization with the specific task of maintaining UCN's commitment and focus on the communities.

The pursuit of formal mechanisms of coordination for IUS and CBS academic activities could include greater planning, including (but not limited to):

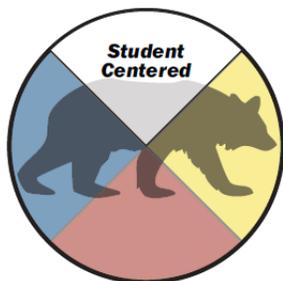
- Regularly monitoring and reporting on student success rates and comparison of progress to students on main campuses;
- Holding regular meetings at scheduled times with IUS/CBS to monitor operations (e.g. Project Management Team (PMT) meetings);
- Undertaking course planning earlier than is currently the case, moving from 4-6 months to 12-18 months in advance of the start of an academic year;

- Providing more supports for students in communities, such as resources required by faculties to manage quality oversight properly, and resources required by Student Development and the Library to provide students with more services that are available to on-campus students; and,
- Involving the communities more in helping to ensure First Nations' control of First Nations' education (Simon, Burton, Lockart, & O'Donnell, 2014).

Action 2.2.1: The Vice-President Academic and Research will lead the development of an Academic Charter that includes established standards for course and program delivery (e.g. quality standards, student success monitoring and reporting requirements, guidelines and standards for hiring, course outline procedures, expectations for equitable experiences, etc.) that will apply to all courses and programs at UCN, regardless of where those courses and programs are offered.

Action 2.2.2: The Academic Planning Committee will work with Community Based Services, IUS, and others to more clearly define programs at UCN, and in particular the relationship between base budget programs, continuing education, contract training, and other courses and programs offered in the communities.

Objective 2.3: Establish Equitable Student Experiences in all Programming



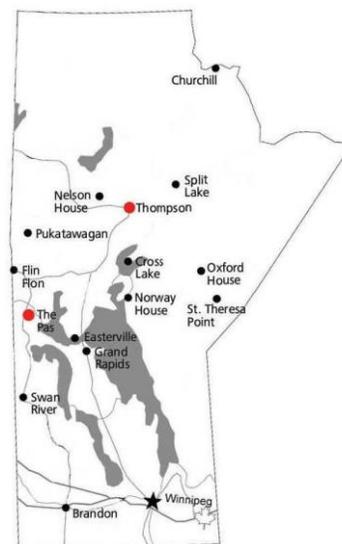
There is an inconsistency between what happens on a main campus and in the communities. The reality is that the Academic Division has not developed the processes or resources to manage community activity in the same manner as on campuses. This is reified in a number of ways. While Deans are responsible for quality oversight for courses and programs, including those offered in communities, faculties have few resources to achieve such oversight in the communities.

For example, the Faculty of Arts, Business, and Science in 2015/16 is responsible for programming being offered by CBS in 12 different communities. CBS budgeting allows for a community visit by the dean per term. However, it is

unrealistic that the Dean of FABS could travel to and review activities in 12 different communities in a given term to conduct classroom visits and teaching evaluations – there is simply not enough time in a 90-day term for such activity.

Faculty/Staff Comment

“UCN currently does not have the infrastructure to provide equitable educational experiences in communities.”



UCN's Regional Centres

The distributed nature of UCN's academic activity creates challenges to offering quality educational experiences that the Academic Division must overcome.

Student services offered in the community are limited in terms of advising and counseling – often available over the phone or with the regional coordinator. Similarly, Library services are limited, often just to electronic resources available through UCN's website. Indeed, the Library has been reluctant to send print resources to communities because experience has shown that there is a low probability of those resources being returned.

Action 2.3.1: The Vice-President Academic and Research will lead the development of an Academic Charter that includes, in addition to the items listed elsewhere in this Plan, minimum library and student services required to effectively offer courses and programs.

Organizing Ourselves for Academic Excellence

When we achieve the objectives associated with Pillar 2, we will have an academic organization that works together to support quality oversight and give our students an outstanding education. Achieving these objectives will help to ensure that our students will have similar experiences, whether they're taking their program in Chemawawin, Mathias Colomb, or The Pas. Furthermore, our students, regardless of where they take their UCN course, will be able to move to a main campus, or to another university, and be equally well prepared for further studies.

The relationships we create amongst ourselves in the Academic Division, within UCN as a whole, with other universities and colleges, and with communities in the north are essential to creating an environment where we can have strong, positive relationships with our students. When fully developed, our academic organization will give each of us the strength of UCN as a whole, allowing each of us the courage to do our work, knowing that all of us together act as one with the strength of many.

PILLAR 3

Sharing Love, Showing Humility: Supporting Academic Excellence

“Love one another and help one another”

- Cree Proverb

When we provide support, we show both love and humility. We typically think of supporting roles as somehow being secondary adjuncts to the ‘stars of the show’. But there is no role that is unimportant: those who support academic activities – deans, directors, librarians, administrative assistants, and clerks – know the depth of our commitment to our students and we know the value of our work, but acknowledge and accept that regardless of how essential that support is, it is often invisible and always behind the scenes. Nevertheless, we know that we are involved in something bigger than ourselves, and we also know that no one person alone can achieve all that needs to be done at UCN for our students.

Objective 3.1: Create a Planning Culture

Making Data-Driven Decisions

Managing a post-secondary institution – even a relatively small institution such as UCN – is complex. We must purposefully and intentionally select our actions to ensure that those actions support UCN’s strategic direction. This means that we seek honesty – we must know how we are doing, even when we might not like the answers. Facts and data must be developed and used to help us determine the right courses of action, to assess results, and to adjust direction as required. This information helps us to make wise choices, ensuring that we’re getting the best results for our students, understanding the impact of our research, and contributing effectively to achieving UCN’s Strategic Plan.

Academic planning at UCN must be better than it is. Earlier in this plan, we established an action that will see better planning between the Academic Division, the Community Based Services Division, and Inter University Services. We must go further, acting to establish a planning and data-driven organization, ensuring intentionality in our actions and assessing whether or not we’re getting the results intended.

Faculty/Staff Comment

“We should have access to statistical information such as enrolment, retention, graduate, and employment rates.”

Action 3.1.1: The Vice-President Academic and Research will establish a committee that will include Institutional Research with the objective of developing data reports and reporting protocols to ensure that data are available to Deans and others regarding enrolment, retention, attrition and how students move between programs within UCN. These data and reporting requirements will be included in the Academic Charter.

Action 3.1.2: Deans will identify targets in terms of graduation and retention by program, and will establish plans to achieve those targets.

Improving Faculty Planning

As noted above, this Academic Plan establishes a framework within which faculties conduct their business. Faculties themselves must have a sense of where they are going, and how their direction aligns with this Academic Plan and with *kiskinohtahiwewin*. It is important to note that each Faculty is different, and that a standard, one-size-fits-all model of planning will not work well for all Faculties. Consistent with the principles of academic freedom, and ensuring the best possible results, the subject matter experts in each field must be responsible for developing their own plans.

Faculty/Staff Comment

“Each area of the university college, FABS, Trades, etc. should be setting its own agendas.”

It is expected that all faculties and departments within the Academic Division will produce their own academic action plans that dovetail with UCN's academic plan, and will include the revision, development, continuation or consolidation of courses and programs to meet faculty objectives as well as support UCN's Academic Plan and *kiskinohtahiwewin*.

Action 3.1.3: Each Faculty will establish an Academic Action Plan that identifies objectives for courses and programs within the faculty, details future human resource needs to support programming, a plan for greater outreach, a learning technologies strategy, general management issues and a research strategy. In accordance with the Terms of Reference of the Academic Planning Committee, these plans will be submitted to the Chair of APC for committee review, and ultimately be approved by the Learning Council.

Action 3.1.4: Deans will continue to provide a three-year course plan and will establish mechanisms and processes to ensure that course scheduling and assignment are coordinated well in advance of the start of an academic year.

In their course plans and their academic action plans, Faculties must consider the long-term implications of past commitments. For example, the Faculty of Trades & Technology must plan to implement a trades strategy, and the Faculty of Health must plan to build capacity so as to be in a position to be able to offer courses into the Joint Bachelor of Midwifery (JBM) program starting in 2020, in accordance with the current plan for the JBM.

A structured faculty academic action plan with an outlook of three to five years, as well as a three-year rolling course plan, will help establish corporate memory, and ensure that Faculties are able to act over the long-term to achieve objectives that support *kiskinohtahiwewin*. The planning process that has been undertaken through *kiskinohtahiwewin's* Joint Implementation Team is a good start to this process.

Objective 3.2: Establish a Division-Wide Understanding of Workload

A significant dissatisfier for faculty members in the Academic Division is how workload is assigned. The potential for resentment is significant when there are wide variations in workload assignment among instructors, and among programs. Much of this comes from a poor understanding of the limitations and obligations established by the Collective Agreement for both college faculty and for university faculty. In some areas of the Collective Agreement, expectations are clearly established. In others, there is more room for interpretation.

The issue is significant. As a teaching-intensive institution, it is reasonable to expect that workload will concentrate on teaching assignments. However, UCN must also be responsive to community and industry needs, ensuring that our programming continues to align with the social and economic requirements of the north. Program and curriculum reviews do not just happen, and new programs do not develop themselves. These essential activities must be assigned as workload. In addition, as a 'research active' institution, and one where growing research capacity among all faculty is seen as a priority, issues around workload must also include support for research for more than just those in the professorial ranks.

In this light, the Academic Action Plans referred to in [Action 3.1.3](#) are essential tools for Faculties to identify the long-term program development needs, helping Deans in ensuring that faculty workload

assignment includes necessary program development activities with clear deliverables, timelines and outcomes. This will ensure that workload is assigned realistically to achieve faculty objectives, and also help to ensure that workload can be assigned fairly and with broad understanding by all.

Faculty/Staff Comment

“[Ensure] instructors and professors have adequate time to: meet with students outside the classroom when they are having difficulties in their studies, update curriculum (including incorporating aboriginal content), course/lab preparation and marking, participate on committees, develop appropriate e-learning curriculum material, research, make and maintain connections with industry, support students in gaining employment, etc.”

From the Lobdell Report

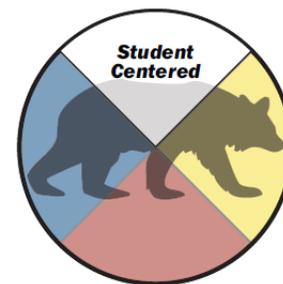
“A common indicator of instructor work load is the number of students per instructor. An alternative (and probably better) measure of work load is the number of courses the average instructor teaches. At UCN the ratio of courses to instructors is quite high, often four courses per academic term. This greatly reduces the time available to meet other expectations such as the development of new courses or academic research. Thus, newer academic faculty members are concerned with their career progress compared to their peers at larger post-secondary institutions, and this may contribute to the relatively high staff turnover of early-career academic staff at UCN. One consequence of this turnover is that over time UCN is likely to find it increasingly difficult to fill senior academic administrator positions from within the institution” (p. 18).

Action 3.2.1: The Academic Division, Human Resources and the MGEU will work together to develop common understandings of workload in the Collective Agreement to help ensure effective and fair workload assignment.

Action 3.2.2: Identify a way that UCN staff members who are not instructors but who are subject matter experts can teach courses on a stipendiary basis

Objective 3.3: Promote the Better Use of Technology in Teaching and Learning

UCN’s operating environment – offering programming in two major campuses and 12 Regional Centres – suggests that UCN must be a leader in the use of distance technology. This is not simply about equipment and software. Better use of technology in teaching and learning is about technique and pedagogy, and better support of students who are



Faculty/Staff Comment

“In 10 years, institutions like colleges & universities will look very different. We are limiting ourselves by trying to teach inside our four walls. We are quickly falling behind the other MB institutions.”

taking courses that use distance technology.

Students come to UCN from various different backgrounds, and some are better prepared than others for post-secondary education. Our respect for our students can be shown by recognizing that the use of distance technology is generally unfamiliar to students, and that some preparation may be required before exposing students to video-conferencing and other distance learning techniques. UCN needs to develop wisdom through developing and adopting best practices in

the use of technology in learning.

Action 3.3.1: The Academic Charter will include, in addition to the items listed elsewhere in this Plan, a statement of minimum pedagogical and technical requirements to ensure delivery of quality courses involving the use of distance technology, be they synchronous or asynchronous.

Action 3.3.2: Faculties will consider methods as to how to introduce students to technology-mediated modalities in courses such that they are better prepared for this mode of instruction.

Supporting Academic and Research Excellence

Achieving the objectives associated with Pillar 3 will help to create an environment within the Academic Division that supports our activities through ensuring thoughtful and intentional effort that is undertaken by all faculty members and staff fairly. Further, it will help to ensure that our approaches to teaching and learning in a distributed environment are conducive to the best learning experiences possible for our students.

CONCLUSION

Taken as a whole, Academic Plan 2015-2020 charts a new path, recognizing the changing environment within which UCN operates, and connecting our actions with the principles and teachings that help to underpin northern and Aboriginal culture. By pursuing this Plan, we are pursuing UCN's vision and contributing significantly to the realization of *kiskinohtahiwewin*.

This Academic Plan is intended to create an environment that fosters teaching, research, and learning excellence that is informed by its connections to communities in the north, to industry and other stakeholders better to help UCN contribute to the social and economic development of northern and Aboriginal Manitobans. This plan helps UCN realize its potential to be a different type of post-secondary institution, serving as a leader in indigenized and northern post-secondary education, while ensuring that students entering certificate, diploma, or degree programs are prepared for the rigors of post-secondary education, and will have the skills and support needed to complete their programs successfully. The peoples of the north deserve nothing less.

Where to Next?

While this Academic Plan is time-bound to the period 2015-2020, it will remain a work in progress. Ongoing management and evolution of the plan, including tracking and measuring progress, falls to the Academic Planning Committee of the Learning Council. We can expect and indeed demand that this Plan change to reflect changes in UCN's circumstances and to reflect changes in UCN's strategic environment. Much can be expected to change between 2015 and 2020. If this plan is managed properly, the outcome that we are planning for today will – and should – look different in 2020.

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ANNEX: SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

Pillar 1: Wisdom, Truth, Honesty, and Respect: Teaching, Research, and Learning

Objective 1.1 Ensure Relevance to Aboriginal and Northern Manitobans

Action 1.1.1: Modify the course outline template to ensure acknowledgement that UCN operates on Treaty lands.

Action 1.1.2: The Academic Planning Committee will initiate a process to collegially develop a detailed understanding of the indigenization of the curriculum in an Aboriginal and northern context. This understanding should:

- be included in a revised Policy AC-01-09. This policy should also be revised so as to clarify responsibilities, relationships and processes;
- be included in an Academic Charter that helps to define how programming is delivered at UCN;
- be appropriate for adult upgrading, college and university level programming; and,
- recognize that UCN operates within a larger post-secondary environment and that UCN must carefully consider the articulation of this understanding in the context of other norms of the academy, such as intellectual property and academic freedom.

Action 1.1.3: Develop an action plan to implement the blueprint developed by the Indigenous Education Working Group.

Action 1.1.4: Hire an Aboriginal Curriculum Content expert, reporting to the Dean of Research & Innovation, to assist faculty members in including Aboriginal content and methods in the classroom.

Action 1.1.5: The Vice-President Academic & Research will work with Human Resources and others as necessary to clarify how traditional knowledge keepers can be awarded tenure at UCN.

Action 1.1.6: The Aboriginal Curriculum Consultant will lead the development of a technologically-mediated education strategy that will ensure that Aboriginal content is effectively included in courses offered using distance technology.

Action 1.1.7: UCN will explore mechanisms for how First Nations communities could be included in program development.

Action 1.1.8: As part of the discussions related to developing a detailed understanding of the indigenization of the curriculum, the Academic Planning Committee will also consider how increasing numbers of immigrant students factor into how the “Northern and Aboriginal Culture” strategic direction is implemented.

Action 1.1.9: UCN’s Adult Learning Centre and the Faculty of Education will investigate the requirement for English as an additional language and seek external funding sources.

Objective 1.2: Strengthen Quality in All Courses and Programs

Action 1.2.1: The Vice-President Academic and Research will lead the development of an Academic Charter that includes, among other things, quality standards for courses and programs regardless of where they are delivered, and resource them appropriately.

Action 1.2.2: The Academic Division will establish a schedule for, and will undertake, regular program reviews guided and supported by the Academic Specialist.

Action 1.2.3: The Academic Division will establish a Centre for Teaching Excellence.

Action 1.2.4: Deans’ Council will review the teaching evaluation process at UCN with a view to ensuring greater structure and use of expertise with how faculty members’ instruction is evaluated.

Objective 1.3: Strengthen UCN’s Research Culture

Action 1.3.1: Change the name of the division to the “Academic and Research Division” to highlight and reinforce the importance of research at UCN.

Action 1.3.2: Create knowledge hubs to recognize research excellence in faculty to support opportunities for knowledge mobilization

Action 1.3.3: Investigate methods for assessing UCN’s research impact, be they bibliographic or other metrics, and obtain a one-time snapshot to understand UCN’s research impact as compared to other Canadian universities.

Action 1.3.4: Develop and share examples of applied research conducted at colleges and institutes across Canada, categorized by field, to help to clarify for potential researchers the types of applied research activities that could be undertaken.

Action 1.3.5: Work with the union to investigate the possibility of including in Article 63 applied research as allowable workload for College Instructors.

Action 1.3.6: Continue to support the mandate in providing the resources necessary to build the research library collection in Aboriginal and Northern Studies.

Action 1.3.7: Research and Innovation will prepare and issue a newsletter once or twice annually to communicate to UCN staff what research has been done, what has been discovered, and the impact that research has had locally, nationally and globally.

Objective 1.4: Focus on Community and Industry Needs

Action 1.4.1: The Academic Division will continue to seek out opportunities to work with other post-secondary in Canada and elsewhere, and particularly those that share a similar mandate.

Action 1.4.2: Strengthen the vision of the newly created Career and Workforce Development division to efficiently respond to trades and industrial skills training for northern Manitoba.

Action 1.4.3: Integrate the industrial skills and trades training strategy into faculty academic action plans, and in particular with that of the Faculty of Trades and Technology, to ensure that the training strategy is made operational through courses and programs.

Action 1.4.4: Develop partnerships with other communities to establish public libraries.

Action 1.4.5: The Faculty of Health will pursue the delivery of an additional cohort in Diploma Practical Nursing in Flin Flon. Delivery of this new cohort will be in collaboration with the DPN program in Swan River.

Action 1.4.6: Working closely with industry and community partners, several new certificate programs will be implemented. For example, demand for supervisory skills development within northern industries has led to a partnership with the NMSC for the development of certified leadership training. Likewise, northern employers have requested that the Civil/CAD Technology and Civil/CAD Technician Certificate be re-instated at UCN as there is demand for graduates in the north.

Action 1.4.7: Re-initiate program advisory committees in all certificate and diploma programs, and where appropriate, in degree programs.

Action 1.4.8: Working with Deans, Career and Workforce Development will create an engagement strategy for the Academic Division to increase connections with current and potential communities and industry partners.

Objective 1.5: Improve Student Success

Action 1.5.1: The Academic Division will investigate additional methods for supporting students through to graduation that protects the integrity of UCN's academic programming.

Action 1.5.2: Formalize transferability of courses between Arts, Business, Education and Nursing degree programs offered within UCN without students having to complete additional forms and paperwork.

Action 1.5.3: Examine all programs with a view to maximizing laddering opportunities and multiple exit and re-entry points.

Action 1.5.4: Increase the numbers of courses that offer dual credit with local school divisions and internally with UCN's own ALC.

Action 1.5.5: Student Development will ensure that UCN has a solid body of policy around credit transfer so that UCN can work effectively with the Student Advocate.

Action 1.5.6: Develop and introduce an introductory to post-secondary education program with an objective of providing students with the skill base required for subsequent post-secondary programs.

Action 1.5.7: Consider if individualized learning plans for each new student might contribute to student success.

Action 1.5.8: Student Development will investigate and pursue the development and resourcing of a Strategic Enrolment Management System (SEMS) for UCN.

Pillar 2: Finding Our Courage: UCN's Academic Organization

Objective 2.1: Create Processes to Support Course and Program Oversight

Action 2.1.1: Working with the Vice-President of CBS, the Vice-President Academic and Research and deans of faculties, the Dean of Library Services, the Dean of Student Development, and the Dean of Research and Innovation will develop a written plan for contract training and community delivery, ensuring support of courses and programs offered in UCN's Regional Centres and elsewhere.

Action 2.1.2: The Vice-President Academic and Research will lead a committee of deans and faculty members to work with IUS and CBS to establish formal, written processes to create oversight processes for all courses and programs at UCN.

Action 2.1.3: The Dean of Arts, Business, and Science and the Dean of Education will cross-appoint Arts professors appointed into the Faculty of Education and establish the necessary arrangements to negotiate their workload as appropriate.

Action 2.1.4: The Library will work with faculties to develop proactive mechanisms to develop the Library collections.

Action 2.1.5: The Dean of Research and Innovation will lead a committee composed of faculty members and others to determine how to address recent changes in the Collective Agreement with respect to the management of course outlines with the express purpose of maintaining course and program quality while ensuring a more equitable experience for students regardless of where the course is offered.

Objective 2.2: Ensure Effective Partnerships with IUS and CBS

Action 2.2.1: The Vice-President Academic and Research will lead the development of an Academic Charter that includes established standards for course and program delivery (e.g. quality standards, student success monitoring and reporting requirements, guidelines and standards for hiring, course outline procedures, expectations for equitable experiences, etc.) that will apply to all courses and programs at UCN, regardless of where those courses and programs are offered.

Action 2.2.2: The Academic Planning Committee will work with Community Based Services, IUS, and others to more clearly define programs at UCN, and in particular the relationship between base budget programs, continuing education, contract training, and other courses and programs offered in the communities.

Objective 2.3: Establish Equitable Experiences for all UCN Programming

Action 2.3.1: The Vice-President Academic and Research will lead the development of an Academic Charter that includes, in addition to the items listed elsewhere in this Plan, minimum library and student services required to effectively offer courses and programs.

Pillar 3: Sharing Love, Showing Humility: Supporting Academic Excellence

Objective 3.1: Create a Planning Culture

Action 3.1.1: The Vice-President Academic and Research will establish a committee that will include Institutional Research with the objective of developing data reports and reporting protocols to ensure that data are available to Deans and others regarding enrolment, retention, attrition and how students move between programs within UCN. These data and reporting requirements will be included in the Academic Charter.

Action 3.1.2: Deans will identify targets in terms of graduation and retention by program, and will establish plans to achieve those targets.

Action 3.1.3: Each Faculty will establish an Academic Action Plan that identifies objectives for courses and programs within the faculty, details future human resource needs to support programming, a plan for greater outreach, a learning technologies strategy, general management issues, and, where appropriate, a research strategy. In accordance with the Terms

of Reference of the Academic Planning Committee, these plans will be submitted to the Chair of APC for committee review, and ultimately be approved by the Learning Council.

Action 3.1.4: Deans will continue to provide a three-year course plan and will establish mechanisms and processes to ensure that course scheduling and assignment are coordinated well in advance of the start of an academic year.

Objective 3.2: Establish a Division-Wide Understanding of Workload

Action 3.2.1: The Academic Division, Human Resources and the MGEU will work together to better understand workload in the Collective Agreement, and develop common understandings of workload to help ensure effective and fair workload assignment.

Action 3.2.2: Identify a way that UCN staff members who are not instructors but who are subject matter experts can teach courses on a stipendiary basis.

Objective 3.3: Promote the Better Use of Technology in Teaching and Learning

Action 3.3.1: The Academic Charter will include, in addition to the items listed elsewhere in this Plan, a statement of minimum pedagogical and technical requirements to ensure delivery of quality courses involving the use of distance technology, be they synchronous or asynchronous.

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