



ALGOMA UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC PLAN

2021-2026





The campuses of Algoma University are located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabeg, the Mushkegowuk Cree and the Métis Nation, on sacred lands set aside for education as envisioned by Chief Shingwauk for our children and for those as yet unborn.

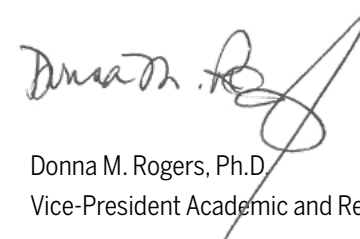
FOREWORD

Early in 2020, with Algoma University's 2016-21 Academic Plan ending the following year, the office of the Vice-President Academic and Research drafted a process and timeline for the development of the University's next Academic Plan. The process and original timeline were finalized at the beginning of March 2020; then the COVID-19 pandemic was declared, which as it continued meant that the original plan for consultation (surveys, world café-style in-person consultations with multiple stakeholders) had to be deferred and rethought. In our suddenly virtual world, we regrouped to carry out our planning and consultations in different ways (see below under Timeline and Consultations).

Any strategic document must be a living document, and this Academic Plan is no different. It must be assessed regularly, and the implementation of its actions measured and reported annually. In its third year, 2023-24, the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee (AppCom) will review the implementation of the Plan to that point and may choose to recommend to Senate that it be updated or adjusted.

As we emerge from the pandemic may we remember the lessons we have learned; may we keep alive the innovation, creativity and leadership it has revealed in us. May we continue to honour our commitments to our Special Mission and to equity, diversity and inclusion in all that we do in academics and research.

I am grateful to the many, many people who have contributed to the creation of this Academic Plan—to those who asked challenging questions, to those who provided suggestions and solutions, to those who noted where brevity or clarity was needed. My sincere thanks to you all.



Donna M. Rogers, Ph.D.
Vice-President Academic and Research



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FRAMING PRINCIPLES

Special Mission and Indigenization: Cross-Cultural Learning

It emerged from our consultations that understanding of and interest in our Special Mission and cross-cultural learning was uneven across the University. While some programs have responded by revising courses to include Indigenous content, others have either not known how to do this or have chosen not to. In this Plan we make an institutional commitment to the Special Mission and to decolonizing and Indigenizing our programs and curriculum.

Woven through all of our Key Directions is our commitment to the University's Special Mission ([Algoma University Act, 2008](#), Section 4):

It is the special mission of the University to,

- (a) be a teaching-oriented university that provides programs in liberal arts and sciences and professional programs, primarily at the undergraduate level, with a particular focus on the needs of northern Ontario; and**
- (b) cultivate cross-cultural learning between Aboriginal communities and other communities, in keeping with the history of Algoma University College and its geographic site.**

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

In 2020-21, Algoma University has made an institution-wide formal commitment to fostering equity, diversity and inclusion as a strategic priority in all aspects of our work, including in academics. Our EDI commitments are also woven throughout this Academic Plan in accordance with Algoma University's [EDI Charter](#).



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INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Since Algoma University's last Academic Plan was completed in 2016, the University has changed. Change is normal for any post-secondary institution, but in the case of Algoma University, the change has been rapid and substantial—it has been transformational.

COVID-19

The original timeline for the creation of this Academic Plan was developed early in 2020, with the consultation phase to take place through the summer and fall of 2020, and an expected submission to Senate for approval in spring 2021. The COVID-19 global pandemic declared in March 2020 necessitated revised timelines, incurring a delay of several months. Nevertheless, work on the Plan progressed through the latter half of 2020 and into 2021, with approval by Senate on October 1st, 2021, and by the Board of Governors on November 25th, 2021.

Enrolment Growth

The University launched a Strategic Enrolment Management plan in 2018, which has guided recruiting and significant enrolment growth, from 1413 FTE students in 2016-17—with a decline to 1107 FTE in 2017-18—to a projection of 2360 FTE in 2021-22. Growth is being achieved through diversification of the student body, recruiting domestic students graduating from high school, college pathway students (via 2+2 and pathway agreements), and international students taking certificates and degrees, among other groups of learners. Algoma University is also placing particular attention on the recruitment of Anishinaabe students in the SEM Plan. Additional opportunities will be available through expansion of eLearning programming, offering Algoma University programs to learners beyond our three campus communities. By the final year of this Academic Plan Algoma University will have grown to a stable enrolment of 3000 FTE students.



Campus Planning and Expansion

All three of our campuses—in Sault Ste. Marie, Brampton and Timmins—are essential to that growth. A Campus Master Plan was completed in 2020 for the Sault campus, resulting in renewal of classrooms, labs and student spaces, and guiding us to cohesive and sustainable future campus expansion. The Brampton campus has seen the most significant recent growth, due to the expansion of vibrant programs such as Business Administration, Computer Science and Psychology, with more to come in the near future. The campus itself has grown in Brampton, expanding from a small suite of classrooms, offices and lounges at 24 Queen Street East to extensive facilities at 8 Queen, 24 Queen and 52 Queen.

Academic Programs and Life-Long Learning

Even more importantly, our programming has expanded since 2016. New degree programs were approved in Environmental Science and Anishinaabe Studies, along with a relevant and appealing suite of graduate certificates. The next step in our program expansion is the introduction of select Master's degrees; this is possible due to the amendment in 2021 of the [Algoma University Act, 2008](#), authorizing the University to grant undergraduate and graduate degrees, certificates and diplomas in any and all branches of learning. At the time of writing, Algoma University is also working to create life-long learning opportunities (non-credit); these include Gabegendaadowin (formerly the SHIFT training program), a Cultural Safety Learning Program and microcredentials, among other initiatives. University initiatives such as [Mukqua Waakaa'igan](#) and the proposed [Ontario Mental Health and Addictions Research and Training Institute](#) (OMHARTI) will also bring new programming and partnership opportunities for Algoma.





Quality Assurance

Algoma University's academic quality assurance is guided by our [Institutional Quality Assurance Process](#) (IQAP), overseen by the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance. The IQAP ensures robust, consistent, transparent review and oversight of all academic programs, through vetting of all new program proposals and regular cyclical program reviews. Several of our academic programs are also accredited by external agencies.

Strategic Mandate Agreement, 2020-25 (SMA3)

In 2020, Algoma University signed its third five-year [Strategic Mandate Agreement](#) with the Ontario government. SMA3 has moved the University from enrolment-based funding to performance-based funding, determined by ten metrics set by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities. Certain metrics are directly aligned with Algoma University's strategic priorities, such as experiential learning, vibrant academic programming, and research; thus, they also inform the priorities set out in this Academic Plan.

Academic Plan Leadership

The creation of this Plan was led by the Senate Academic Planning and Priorities Committee (AppCom) in 2020 and 2021:

Laurie Bloomfield	Aaron Gordon	Andrea Pinheiro
Linda Burnett	Michael Graydon	Donna Rogers
Nairne Cameron	Sheila Gruner	Nicola Shaw
Rose Cameron	István Imre	Asima Vezina
Kelly De Luca	David Marasco	

Tiffany Gallivan, Paulette Steeves and Julia Duncan also contributed to the development of the plan.

Timeline and Consultations

We consulted a broad range of stakeholders in 2020-21, including students, alumni, faculty, staff, administrators, Board members and community partners. Due to COVID-19 constraints, we were unable to hold any on-campus consultations; nevertheless, we adapted, as all have had to do during the pandemic, and held virtual consultations. In the fall of 2020 surveys were conducted among all stakeholder groups: students, alumni, faculty, staff, administration, and community partners. The survey results were presented to a faculty town hall, to the Anishinaabe People's Council, and to Senate. Subsequently, in February and March 2021 AppCom hosted a series of virtual meetings for all stakeholder groups to gather additional feedback on the ten relevant areas, guided by Algoma University's 2016-21 Strategic Plan and the focused strategic priorities determined by the Board of Governors and the Senate Executive Committee. These were: Special Mission, Indigenization, Innovative Programming, Research and Innovation, Teaching and Learning, eLearning, Experiential Learning, Internationalization, College Pathways, and Academic Supports.

In shaping this Plan, we have distilled those priority areas into eight key directions, all informed by our Special Mission and commitment to Indigenization, and by our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion across the University:

1. **A Multi-Campus University**
2. **Faculty Growth and Support**
3. **Innovative Programming, Interdisciplinarity, Sustainability**
4. **Research and Innovation**
5. **Teaching and Learning**
6. **Experiential Learning**
7. **Internationalization**
8. **Academic Supports for Student Success**



KEY DIRECTIONS OF THE 2021-26 ACADEMIC PLAN

Many themes that emerged from the Academic Plan consultations are interconnected; even avoiding repetition wherever possible, it is clear that none of the key directions below exist in isolation. At a high level, the eight key directions that emerged were:

KEY DIRECTION

1. A Multi-Campus University

Algoma University has three campus locations: the founding campus on the Shingwauk site in Sault Ste. Marie, the Timmins campus at Northern College in South Porcupine, and the Brampton campus in the heart of downtown Brampton.

Enrolment growth and program growth are assumed for all three campuses during the life of this plan. Each campus will have its distinct program mix, and each campus will be home to full-time and part-time faculty and students.

Through the consultation process and the work of AppCom, the following institutional priorities were identified for Key Direction 1:

- 1A** University governance structures (departments, faculties, schools and Senate) must reflect and serve a multi-campus university and principles of equity, diversity and inclusion.
- i) **ACTION:** The Senate Executive sub-committee will complete consultations and present recommendations to Senate (2021-22).
 - ii) **ACTION:** Departments/programs will prepare evidence-based multi-year plans for submission to AppCom (updated annually), with rationale (for example, changes in enrolment trends, Cyclical Program Review implementation plans, new programs planned).
 - iii) **ACTION:** Departments, faculties/schools will provide opportunities for engagement and participation of faculty, staff and students from each campus where their program(s) are offered.

- 1B** Algoma University will offer full programs and supporting electives at each campus, in accordance with student demand, program commitment and capacity, and community context.

- i) **ACTION:** Per its [Terms of Reference](#), AppCom will annually assess program offerings at all campuses for quality and sustainability.
- ii) **ACTION:** Per its terms of reference and in consultation with academic programs, AppCom will annually recommend elective courses to be offered at the Brampton and Timmins campuses.

- 1C** Algoma University has made a commitment to at least ten net new full-time faculty positions during the life of this plan, as well as part-time contract faculty where needed. The University will strive to appoint full-time faculty where program demand, program structure and program data warrant, in accordance with faculty hiring processes and where there is budget approval.

- i) **ACTION:** Per its terms of reference, AppCom will annually call for hiring requests from individual and interdisciplinary academic programs, and prioritize those requests for recommendation to Senate, taking into account institutional strategic priorities, enrolment trends and departmental plans.
- ii) **ACTION:** Departments/programs will prepare evidence-based multi-year hiring plans for submission to AppCom, with rationale.

- 1D** Algoma University will work to provide opportunities for students to participate in academic and/or co-curricular activities at a campus other than their home campus.

- i) **ACTION:** Academic units, Experiential Learning and International Affairs, Student Success, Student Life and others to bring forward cross-campus mobility and engagement initiatives during the annual budget cycle.





KEY
DIRECTION

2: Faculty Growth
and Support

Through the consultation process and the work of AppCom, faculty members spoke compellingly of their wish for additional support and training opportunities.

The following institutional priorities were identified for Key Direction 2:

- 2A As Algoma University grows and matures, academic structures and academic governance must support the work of our faculty members (see also 1A above).
 - i) **ACTION:** Faculty and academic administrators will support the restructuring of academic governance, identifying and recommending resources needed for the appropriate functioning of academic units such as Faculties or Schools.
- 2B As faculty seek to strengthen program quality and innovation, Algoma University must provide appropriate training, mentoring and resources:
 - i) **ACTION:** The University will increase support for para-academic institutional offices such as Quality Assurance, eLearning, Experiential Learning, and other areas.
 - ii) **ACTION:** The University will create and offer a formal mentoring program for full-time faculty.
- 2C Algoma University is strongly committed to fostering diversity and inclusivity within our community and is an equal opportunity employer. In hiring, the University invites and encourages applications from all qualified candidates from equity-seeking groups, (Indigenous peoples, racialized persons, women, persons with disabilities, and LGBTQIP2SA+ persons).
 - i) **ACTION:** All members of the Algoma University community will act upon values of equity, diversity and inclusion in hiring, welcoming and supporting a diverse faculty body.
 - ii) **ACTION:** Academic units will embed EDI values when requesting hiring approval for all positions.

KEY
DIRECTION

3: Innovative
Programming,
Interdisciplinarity,
Sustainability

Algoma University continues to develop and offer academic programming that is relevant to today's world, as well as non-credit options such as life-long learning and microcredentials, with eLearning and hybrid options for access and flexibility wherever possible. The consultation process confirmed strong interest in experiential learning (see Key Direction 6), Indigenization of academic programs, support for interdisciplinary/cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural programs, understanding space needs for new/growing programs, support for the Library, and support for research (see Key Direction 4).

Through the consultation process and the work of AppCom, the following institutional priorities were identified for Key Direction 3:

- 3A The University will create and deliver in-demand Master's-level programs in at least three academic disciplines.
 - i) **ACTION:** Create and fund appropriate structures to implement and oversee policies and processes related to graduate programming and graduate students, and to support the academic units offering graduate studies.
 - ii) **ACTION:** AppCom will review requests for allocations of funded graduate spaces and make recommendations to the Vice-President Academic and Research, in accordance with funding levels received from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.
- 3B Growth and sustainability: Algoma University commits to investing in programs that can demonstrate student and societal demand with long-term sustainability.
 - i) **ACTION:** Per its terms of reference and in consultation with academic programs, AppCom will annually identify academic programming for expansion, continuation and contraction; AppCom will annually make relevant recommendations to Senate.





3C Strategic priorities: per the [2021-23 Strategic Plan Extension](#), Algoma University will identify and develop relevant, innovative academic programs aligned with significant institutional initiatives, including cross-cultural learning.

- i) **ACTION:** Interested academic units will identify and develop academic programs aligned with Mukqua Waakaa'igan.
- ii) **ACTION:** Interested academic units will identify and develop academic programs aligned with the Ontario Mental Health and Addictions Research and Training Institute.
- iii) **ACTION:** Interested academic units will identify and develop academic programs aligned with the Algoma University Centre for Social, Cultural and Economic Innovation.

At Algoma University, faculty are engaged in significant research activity across the institution, which informs and enhances their teaching by contributing to knowledge in their disciplines. Some students are involved in research, in both faculty-led research projects and their own. Every full-time faculty member is expected to engage in research; every academic program should build on its faculty's research activity and engage students whenever possible in the research enterprise of the University. Two of the ten metrics in our 2020-25 Strategic Mandate Agreement will be assessed on the basis of success in external research funding.

Through the consultation process and the work of AppCom, the following institutional priorities were identified for Key Direction 4:

- 4A** We will need a new Strategic Research Plan in 2022, as [the current plan](#) expires. We will ensure that research and innovation at Algoma University are inclusive of different knowledge bases (including Indigenous knowledge), knowledge generation and creative production.
 - i) **ACTION:** The Research Advisory Committee will develop a new five-year (2022-27) Strategic Research Plan in 2022, for recommendation to Senate.
 - ii) **ACTION:** The new Strategic Research Plan will embed EDI values.
- 4B** We are committed to respecting Indigenous ways of knowing, and to supporting and valuing Indigenous research methods and protocols.
 - i) **ACTION:** The VPAR, in consultation with the Research Advisory Committee and the broader community, will lead the development of an Algoma University Indigenous research policy.
- 4C** We are committed to increasing the number, value and impact of external research grants.
 - i) **ACTION:** The Office of Research and Innovation, under the direction of the VPAR, will plan for annual increases in the University's research budget, to support faculty applying for and receiving Tri-Agency and other external research grant funding.
- 4D** We will ensure that research facilities and initiatives are planned for long-term sustainability.
 - i) **ACTION:** The new Strategic Research Plan will address start-up and sustainability needs for research programs, space and equipment.

KEY
DIRECTION

**4: Research
and Innovation**





KEY DIRECTION

5: Teaching and Learning

One of the clearest directions to emerge from our consultations for this Academic Plan was the mandate to create a Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) for Algoma University. The TLC could include support for faculty in areas such as competency/outcomes-based learning, instructional design, eLearning, teaching with technology, academic integrity, literacy and numeracy, accessibility and inclusion (Universal Design for Learning, or UDL), Indigenous pedagogies, professional development related to teaching and learning, and others.

Through the consultation process and the work of AppCom, the following institutional priorities were identified for Key Direction 5:

- 5A Algoma University commits to the development of a Teaching and Learning Centre.
 - i) **ACTION:** During the 2021-22 academic year, the VPAR will engage a team of faculty, staff, students and administrators to create a plan and draft budget for the Algoma University TLC.
 - ii) **ACTION:** The development team will recommend to the VPAR an appropriate organizational structure and leadership for the TLC.
- 5B Determining the scope of the TLC.
 - i) **ACTION:** The development team will recommend to the VPAR the essential elements and functions of the TLC (might include such matters as: capacity building for high-impact practices, training/awareness re new and evolving trends in higher education, student success and career readiness, connection to our Special Mission, Indigenous cultures and pedagogies, internationalization of teaching and learning, networking/partnership opportunities)



KEY DIRECTION

6: Experiential Learning

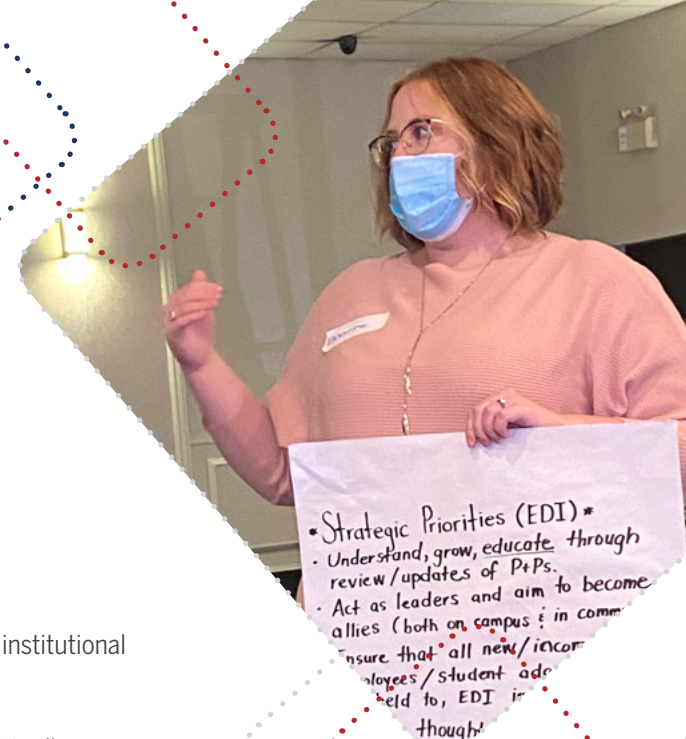
Experiential learning (EL) engages students in hands-on experiences that connect theory to practice and builds transferable skills highly sought after by employers. The Experiential Learning (EL) Hub at Algoma University is a central resource for students to learn about the wide range of experiential learning opportunities available at Algoma University. The Hub also supports faculty and staff in the development, delivery, and sharing of resources for experiential learning.

Experiential learning includes a broad range of practices for learning by doing, from co-op placements and work-integrated learning to laboratory projects to study abroad/study away mobility opportunities. Every program at Algoma University includes some experiential learning opportunities for students, and faculty are actively developing and implementing new ones.

Through the consultation process and the work of AppCom, the following institutional priorities were identified for Key Direction 6:

- 6A Strong engagement with the Department of Experiential Learning and International Affairs (ELIA) for faculty and students.
 - i) **ACTION:** ELIA will engage academic programs in a review of the EL components in their programs.
 - ii) **ACTION:** ELIA will work with Senate to update the EL inventory and course tagging.
 - iii) **ACTION:** Academic programs will identify areas/partnerships where they wish to develop additional EL opportunities for students, in consultation with ELIA.
- 6B Flexible EL spaces are needed on Algoma University campuses.
 - i) **ACTION:** ELIA will engage academic programs to identify the requirements for flexible EL spaces, consistent with the Campus Master Plan (SSM campus).
- 6C Funding is needed to support EL initiatives (CityStudio is cited as one example).
 - i) **ACTION:** The Director of ELIA will budget for increased support for EL initiatives, in consultation with the Office of the VPAR and academic units.





KEY
DIRECTION

7: Internationalization

The four pillars of Algoma University's [Internationalization Strategy](#) are:

i) International Research & Innovation/Partnerships:

Position Algoma U to attract international research, scholarship and educational collaborations by showcasing our international expertise and successes. Strategically build and foster international partnerships that align with and support the University's Strategic Priorities and Special Mission

ii) Mobility:

Increase comprehensive and multifaceted range of international mobility opportunities for students, faculty and staff to thrive in and contribute to an increasingly interdependent world

iii) Internationalization at home/training & support:

Increase the number of Algoma University graduates, staff, and faculty who are internationally knowledgeable and culturally aware through cross-cultural learning experiences, both at an Algoma campus and abroad

iv) International Experiential Learning & Entrepreneurship:

Develop and execute high-quality international experiential learning opportunities through innovative and interdisciplinary approaches within and outside the curriculum, and support the integration of intercultural competencies in all EL programming (tri-campus approach)

Through the consultation process and the work of AppCom, the following institutional priorities were identified for Key Direction 7:

7A Support for international engagement and mobility (physical and virtual).

- i) **ACTION:** Academic programs will identify, as part of their multi-year planning (see 1A), potential opportunities for student and faculty mobility and/or international engagement.
- ii) **ACTION:** The Department of Experiential Learning and International Affairs will identify additional opportunities for international mobility (exchange and study) for students and faculty.
- iii) **ACTION:** ELIA will create additional opportunities for virtual international mobility (for example, COIL) for students and faculty.

7B Continued opportunities for cultural safety learning and cross-cultural training.

- i) **ACTION:** ELIA will continue to work collaboratively with the Nyaagaaniid-VP Anishinaabe Initiatives, Equity and Student Success, EDI Officer and Academic Lead: EDI to support the offering of such learning and training programs to members of the Algoma University community.

7C Additional opportunities for international Experiential Learning.

- i) **ACTION:** Academic programs will work collaboratively with ELIA to develop opportunities for international EL (such as international internships).

Note: for information about international recruiting, please consult the [Strategic Enrolment Management Plan](#).



KEY
DIRECTION

**8: Academic Supports
for Student Success**

From the consultation process, it is clear that all stakeholders recognize the critical importance of academic supports that will help students to be successful in their studies. The most frequently mentioned supports that students utilize and faculty/staff recommend to students are the Learning Centre, peer tutoring, writing and math labs, academic advising, counselling, accessibility services, library services, bursaries and scholarships. As Algoma University's enrolment grows, we must invest in and expand these supports.

Through the consultation process and the work of AppCom, the following institutional priorities were identified for Key Direction 8:

- 8A** There is a need for additional and/or expanded academic supports, including library services (such as research help, information literacy, Indigenous-focused resources), tutoring services, accessibility services, greater faculty engagement in academic advising, more bursaries and scholarships, career counselling, online labs and tutorials, culturally appropriate Indigenous and international student supports.
- i) **ACTION:** The VPAR will work with the University Librarian to assess additional needs for student-facing library services at all campuses.
 - ii) **ACTION:** Student Success Central multi-year planning will support additional services in tutoring (including peer tutoring), accessibility services, counselling, and focused international student supports.
 - iii) **ACTION:** Academic programs will ensure that their faculty members are well prepared to advise students in their programs and engaged in academic advising.
 - iv) **ACTION:** ELIA will investigate ways to expand their career counselling services to students and graduates.
 - v) **ACTION:** The Anishinaabe Academic Resource Centre (AARC) will support Indigenous students in culturally appropriate ways; in collaboration, AARC and the library will ensure that Indigenous-focused resources are available to the Algoma University community.



8B Additional support for the Learning Centre would benefit students in such matters as workshops on academic integrity, workshops on time management, literacy and numeracy programs.

i) **ACTION:** The VPAR and the Nyaagaaniid will endeavour to identify additional support for the Learning Centre to enable it to offer more services.

8C Additional academic writing supports for students.

i) **ACTION:** Academic programs, Student Success Central and the academic administration to assess whether students' needs are being met with current resources (tutoring, Writing Lab, library services), and to identify what (if any) additional supports may be needed (such as a Writing Centre).

8D Additional numeracy supports for students.

i) **ACTION:** Academic programs, Student Success Central and the academic administration to assess whether students' needs are being met with current resources (tutoring, Math Lab), and to identify what (if any) additional supports may be needed.

8E Leverage existing programs, such as the Early Feedback Policy and Early Alert.

i) **ACTION:** Dean(s) and academic units to ensure that all faculty are aware of these programs and how to use/follow them.





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