

# Department of Community Health Sciences

## Strategic Plan (April 2021 – March 2025)

Living Document

April 30, 2021

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### We thank everyone who contributed for all their valuable input. In particular, thank you to:

- All the faculty members who provided input through the Department Council and other feedback opportunities
- Dr. Tom Stelfox, Scientific Director of the O'Brien Institute for Public Health
- Dean Meddings, Cumming School of Medicine
- Dr. Pam Chu, Associate Dean, Professionalism, Equity and Diversity
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## Executive summary

The Department of Community Health Sciences (CHS) developed a 4-year strategic plan from April 2021 – March 2025 to guide the department's journey of advancing health with communities within a changing societal and institutional context and as a key contributor to the Cumming School of Medicine's mission of creating the future of health.

This strategic plan will remain a living document within the department, whereby progress will be monitored, and content and direction will be renewed through a process of evaluation and evolution – no conversation will be our last.

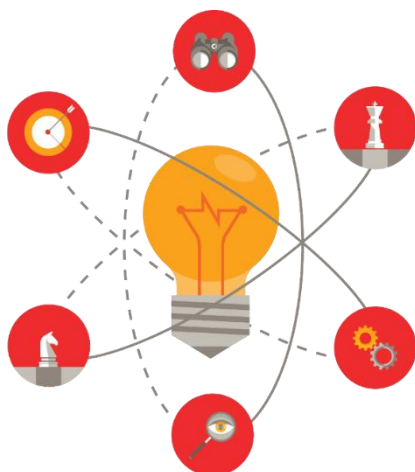
Key terms of *community* and *society* have purposefully not been defined to allow for different perspectives and inclusion.

It was developed in collaboration with internal structures (e.g., Student Advisory Committee, Department Council, O'Brien Research Institute, Dean of Cumming School of Medicine, the Office of Professionalism, Equity and Diversity, and the Indigenous, Local and Global Health Office. Ongoing dialogues will continue across internal organizational structures and expand to include external societies as determined by the annual action plans to inform and guide delivery and evaluation and evolution of our strategic plan.

This strategic plan outlines the current societal changes with respect to the overall environment in which we operate and our post-secondary educational environment. These societal changes frame our response or the context in which our mission needs to be achieved. This response is framed within the three strategic focus areas as defined by the University of Calgary: Research, Education and Service.

These strategic focus areas are connected and are meant to inform each other not to be undertaken in isolation. They not only set the framework for our strategic plan but also inform our strategic priorities over the next 4 years.

Moving forward detailed action plans will be developed with the support of a Leadership Team. These action plans along with the strategic plan will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to support us in achieving our mission of *advancing health with communities*. Our north star, our purpose of *healthy societies* will continue to guide our ambition and passion.



## Our Mandate

The mandate was to develop a 4-year strategic plan for the Department of Community Health Sciences from April 2021 – March 2025. To ensure the department is working towards common purposes, this strategic plan needs to align with the Cumming School of Medicine (CSM) and the University of Calgary (U of C) priorities as well as administrative structures and research institutes within and beyond our own ecosystem.

A 4-year timeframe was selected to align with the tenure of the Department Head. This strategic plan will remain a living document within the department, whereby progress will be monitored, and content and direction will be renewed through a process of evaluation and evolution – no conversation will be our last.

This strategic plan will be reviewed semi-annually along with annual action plans. The next leader of the department may choose to extend the current plan or create a new strategic plan.

## Our Approach

### Guiding Principles



#### **Respectful**

This strategic planning process was undertaken recognizing the fact that the department's faculty were responding to two public health emergencies, COVID-19 and the Opioid Crisis. Given this context the planning committee was asked to act not as a content creator, but rather a critical evaluator and content facilitator.



#### **Collaborative**

Key collaborators were identified (e.g., Department Council, O'Brien Institute for Public Health, Office of Professionalism, Equity and Diversity) and structures formed (e.g., the strategic planning and implementation committee, student advisory committee) to allow for broad engagement. Given this is a "living document" it will be renewed through a process of evaluation and evolution with internal and external collaborators.



#### **Authentic Engagement**

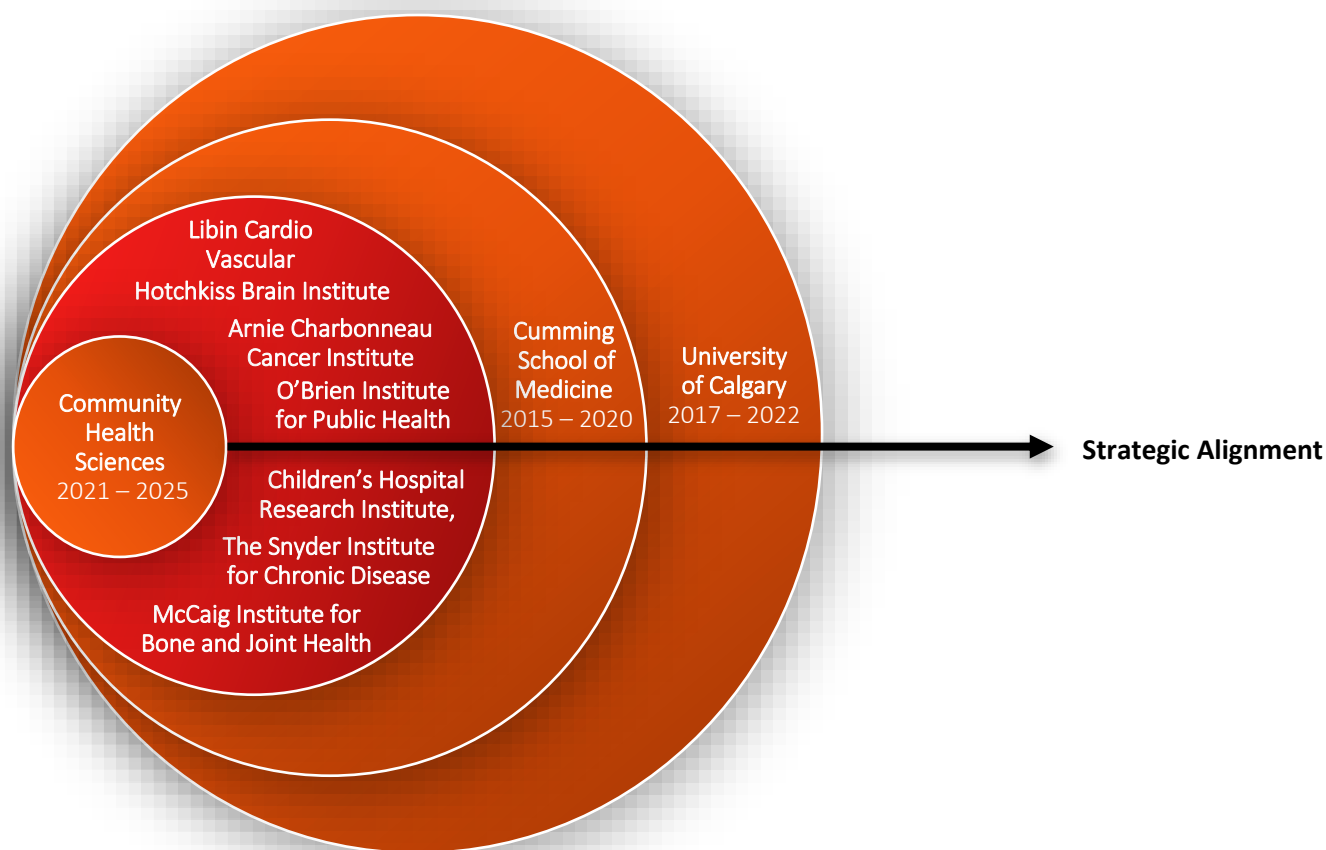
Throughout the engagement process, content was developed, shared, and refined based on feedback. This was an iterative process with various collaborators. Our focus was on listening during each engagement leading to refinement of the work and support of the recommended direction forward with each group.

## Our Framework

Given the evolving context within our organizational structures we selected a flexible strategic planning framework that supports strategic alignment. The framework outlines (1) the stable portions of the plan, (2) identifies our changing societal context and (3) the action we as a department can take to achieve our mission of *advancing health with communities*.

Our strategic plan must line up to the strategic direction of the University of Calgary and the Cumming School of Medicine. We are also influenced by the strategic plans of the Institutes and in particular the O'Brien Institute for Public Health. Our work is guided by the values set out by the University of Calgary.

Figure 1: Strategic Alignment Framework



## Stable Portion of the Plan

### Our North Star: *Health Societies*

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As a department we defined our ultimate purpose, a north star, to guide the development of this strategic plan in support of our mission.

From the perspective of the Department of Community Health Sciences our north star is *Healthy Societies*.

When we refer to health, we are using the WHO definition<sup>1</sup> representing physical, mental and emotional well-being. We intentionally adopt a broad view, expanding far beyond a bio-medical conceptualization, on the meaning of “healthy” to encompass a diverse understanding of what it means to be healthy.

We have intentionally not defined “societies” so that each person is able to define it from their perspective.

*Mission of the University of Calgary: By 2022, we will be recognized as one of Canada’s top five research universities, fully engaging the communities we both serve and lead.*<sup>2</sup>

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The University of Calgary is a global intellectual hub located in Canada’s most enterprising city. In this spirited, high-quality learning environment, students will thrive in programs made rich by research, hands-on experiences and entrepreneurial thinking. By 2022, we will be recognized as one of Canada’s top five research universities, fully engaging the communities we both serve and lead.

Our Eyes High strategic plan drives our institution at the highest level, and we report on our progress to our community every year through our Community Report. Whether it’s our overall direction, our foundational commitments or areas important to our community, such as sustainability and mental health, we have well-articulated plans developed through consultation with our community that help us progress towards our goals.

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<sup>1</sup> Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. The bibliographic citation for this definition is: Preamble to the Constitution of WHO as adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, 19 June - 22 July 1946; signed on 22 July 1946 by the representatives of 61 States (Official Records of WHO, no. 2, p. 100) and entered into force on 7 April 1948. The definition has not been amended since 1948.

<sup>2</sup> Source: University of Calgary, Eyes High Strategy, 2017-2022

## Mission of the Cumming School of Medicine: *creating the future of health*<sup>3</sup>

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The CSM exists to better the human condition through improved health care: to create the future of health. Our school, like most medical faculties around the world, has the tripartite mandate to engage in research, education and service. In our case the execution of this mandate takes place in Calgary, and increasingly across the province and globally as well.

We excel at it through our core strength and resource: people—our faculty, staff and students—who each day engage in the pursuit of excellence towards a common vision. It is through the individual and collective success of our people that the CSM will continue to grow as a premier academic health sciences centre. Our product is health, our strength is people.

## Mission of CHS: *advancing health with communities*

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We started with the mission of the Cumming School of Medicine of creating the future of health and defined our contribution as working with communities. We have purposefully not defined communities to allow for a broad interpretation and different perspectives.

Collaborating with communities is how together we will advance health. In alignment with the organizational structures our focus is on three strategic areas of research, education, and service. These strategic areas guide us on the strategic priorities required to achieve our mission.

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<sup>3</sup> Source: Cumming School of Medicine, Strategic Plan, 2015-2020



## Societal Changes



### Broad Societal Shifts

There are many broad environmental shifts that we need to respond to in our strategic plan. These include:

1. **Alberta's Changing Economy:** Alberta is in a changing time. Our industry is moving away from the traditional sectors in the province, including oil and gas, among others. In addition, COVID has fundamentally changed the way the economy is functioning. This disruption will have a lasting impact on communities, employment rates, and the need for social services.
2. **Evolving Public Health Emergencies:** The impact of COVID and the Opioid Crisis on communities is undeniable. These two public health emergencies have challenged, and fundamentally changed, the status quo. While these are the present two public health emergencies, we know there will be more in the years to come and our strategic plan must prepare us to respond.
3. **Explosive Change in Technology and Data:** There has been explosive growth in the data gathered through a variety of different mediums including personal data and system data. Accompanied with this there have been tremendous strides in making data more accessible and easily linkable, all within strong data governance frameworks. The roles of our community here are multiple: there is a need to prepare our students to succeed in an increasingly technology-driven world; we must develop accurate and precise methods to create useable information from these data; we must use existing data in meaningful ways driven by the community who owns the data.
4. **Deepening Health Inequities and Social Injustice:** The preceding shifts have deepened and amplified health inequities and social injustices, here in Alberta and across the globe. These limit our ability to achieve healthy societies and so shape our strategic plan.
5. **Demand for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:** The demand for equity, diversity and inclusion is shaping societies. Here too, we cannot achieve healthy societies without embedding equity, diversity and inclusion in purposeful ways.



## Post-Secondary Educational Shifts

In addition to the above environmental shifts, there are fundamental shifts within the post-secondary education sector that also shape the direction of our strategic plan.

1. **Disruption in post-secondary education:** The role of post-secondary education is changing. It is now an expectation that post-secondary institutions support learning and developing professional skills across a career's trajectory. There is decreased governmental funding and accompanying tuition increases making a University degree more and more financially inaccessible. The educational landscape is rapidly changing with increased access to virtual learning environments across the globe.
2. **Evolving role of the scholar:** Expertise and evidence and truth are challenged in ways that are unprecedented in recent history. In addition, the expectations of scholarship are changing. Exploring how to be a scholar in this environment is challenging. Alongside these contextual factors, the research enterprise is being redefined: research is now more than ever an interdisciplinary team activity.
3. **Fundamental change in the educational experience:** There has been a shift to recognize that education should be centred around the student. The expectation of direct and early connections to possible employers is becoming more widespread. Student's needs have changed. The way they want to learn is different. Demands on faculty have also changed: they are expected to do more. They need the tools and support to remain competitive in a changing landscape.
4. **Recognition of structural barriers to community inclusion:** There is a growing recognition that there are systemic and structural barriers to the University environment. There is a lack of culture of authentic community collaboration. There has been a shift to recognize that the University should be in lockstep with the community, responding to the need of community. As articulated by the University, we must be fully engaging the communities, we both serve and lead.

## Our Action

The diagram summarizes the portion of the strategic plan that defines our action, how we will respond to the societal changes to achieve our mission of *advancing health with communities*. It highlights each of the strategic focus areas of our mission: Research, Education and Service. It demonstrates that each of the strategic focus areas are not undertaken in isolation but rather they support and build upon each other. It also notes how we will achieve each of the strategic focus areas all within a set of values that will guide our actions and behaviours. This creates the foundation of our strategic priorities, the specific work we need to do to accomplish our mission over the next 4 years.

Figure 2: Our Action



## Strategic Priorities

These strategic priorities align with the strategic focus areas set out by the University of Calgary: Research, Education and Service. These are the priorities over the next 4 years as noted in the mandate and will evolve based on collaboration, evolving context, and progress. These are high level priorities and detailed action plans will need to be developed to ensure achievement of our goals.



### **Research: Pursuing meaningful research.**

We do this by...collaborating broadly on issues shaping societies.

1. Create the supports required to pursue meaningful stakeholder-engaged research with communities that shape the response to societal changes.
2. Build the capacity to respond to the expectation that research is approached with an equity, diversity, and inclusion lens.
3. Identify and remove barriers that impact scholars' ability to meet the changing demands.



### **Education: Reimagining education.**

We do this by...creating relevant and meaningful experiences with students and faculty.

1. Implement innovative and relevant programming that meet the demands of our changing economy.
2. Foster the development of student and faculty so they can contribute towards healthy societies.
3. Critically assess and take action to ensure the equity, diversity and inclusion of our programming from both a student and faculty perspective.
4. Create an educational experience that responds to student and faculty demand.



### **Service: Creating with communities.**

We do this by...developing with community a culture of authentic engagement.

1. Define and expect authentic community engagement.
2. Actively identify and remove the barriers within our structures to advance community inclusion.
3. Build with faculty and students the tools, language and methodologies and skills to engage in dynamic relationships.

## Our Strategic Plan on a Page

This is our completed strategic plan by which the Department of Community Health Sciences will achieve its mission of *advancing health with communities* recognizing the role of the broader organizational structures. This Strategic Plan as a living document that will continue to evolve as our context evolves and progress is achieved.

Figure 3: Our Strategic Plan on a Page.

<b>Our North Star</b> Purpose and Impact from our perspective	Healthy Societies			<b>Stable Part of the Plan</b>	<b>University of Calgary Values</b> (how we behave, our belief system)
<b>University of Calgary</b> Mission	By 2022, we will be recognized as one of Canada’s top five research universities, fully engaging the communities, we both serve and lead				
<b>Cumming School of Medicine</b> Mission	Creating the future of health				
<b>Department of Community Health Sciences</b> Our Contribution	Advancing health with communities				
<b>Societal Changes</b> How we shape the response to these changes to advance the health of communities	<b>Broad Societal Shifts</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alberta’s Changing Economy</li><li>• Evolving Public Health Emergencies</li><li>• Explosive Change in Technology &amp; Data</li><li>• Deepening Health Inequities and Social Injustice</li><li>• Demand for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion</li></ul>		<b>Post-Secondary Educational Shifts</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Disruption of Post-Secondary Education</li><li>• Evolving role of the scholar</li><li>• Fundamental change in expectation of the educational experience</li><li>• Recognition of structural barriers to community inclusion</li></ul>	<b>Societal Changes</b>	Disciplinary excellence
<b>Strategic Focus Areas</b> How we will achieve our mission	<b>Research</b> Pursuing meaningful research	<b>Education</b> Reimagining education	<b>Service</b> Creating with communities		Deep Collaboration
<b>Strategic Priorities</b> The specific work we need to do to deliver our mission	We do this by... collaborating broadly on issues shaping societies.  1. Create the supports required to pursue meaningful stakeholder-engaged research with communities that shape the response to societal changes. 2. Build the capacity to respond to the expectation that research is approached with an equity, diversity, and inclusion lens. 3. Identify and remove barriers that impact scholars’ ability to meet the changing demands.	We do this by...creating relevant and meaningful experiences with students and faculty.  1. Implement innovative and relevant programing that meet the demands of our changing economy. 2. Foster the development of student and faculty so they can contribute towards healthy societies. 3. Critically assess and take action to ensure the equity, diversity, and inclusion of our programming from both a student and faculty perspective. 4. Create an educational experience that responds to student and faculty demand.	We do this by... developing with community a culture of authentic engagement.  1. Define and expect authentic community engagement. 2. Actively identify and remove the barriers within our structures to advance community inclusion. 3. Build with faculty and students the tools, language and methodologies and skills to engage in dynamic relationships.	<b>Our Action</b>	Community engagement
					Commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion
					Respect

## Moving Forward

- Our strategic plan is meant to be our guide on this journey to realize our mission of *advancing health with communities*. Our north star of *healthy societies* is our inspiration on that journey and what is possible over time.
- Our next step on this journey is to develop detailed annual action plans that support our strategic areas of focus and how we will achieve our goals. This work is meant to begin this year and span the next 4 years and potentially beyond. The action plans need to pace the work based on current capacity, evolving context, and progress of the strategic plans of our organizational structures.
- The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be developed in conjunction with the University of Calgary's KPIs and demonstrate our contribution.
- The strategic plan is a living document that will be formally revisited every six months starting in October 2021. No dialogue is our last respecting the evolving context in which our societies operate.

