



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Strategic Framework 2021–2026

Victoria University Strategic Framework 2021–2026

Victoria University champions a broad-based, inclusive education, where teaching and learning are driven by curiosity and conscience, inspired by challenging conversations, and sustained by meaningful personal interactions.

The aim of this Strategic Framework is to ensure that Victoria University continues to evolve as an outstanding place to pursue undergraduate studies in arts and science and graduate studies in theology, as we rise to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future.



President's Message

Victoria University occupies a unique place in Canadian higher education. Its supportive community and its beautiful campus in the heart of Toronto produce an ideal setting in which to engage and challenge students both inside and outside the classroom, with life-changing results. Victoria operates in federation with the University of Toronto, Canada's leading institution for discovering and sharing knowledge, and contributes to this common enterprise a welcoming, student-centred learning environment.

As it has done throughout its history, Victoria University continues to adapt the ideal of a broad-based, liberal education to meet changing needs. Academic curricula, student supports, physical infrastructure, and community partnerships are continually refreshed. Signature innovations launched over the last two decades include a suite of initiatives at Victoria College that foster high-impact student engagement, and the leadership role that Emmanuel College has taken in multireligious theological education.

This Strategic Framework gives voice to a shared understanding of Victoria University's distinctive mission and ethos, and provides a high-level vision of the overarching strategic aspirations of the University over the next five years.

This document, its main themes, and its commitments have emerged out of significant consultation with students, faculty, staff, alumni, and Board members. Even as this undertaking has been interrupted by the coronavirus pandemic, I have continued to work with the University's senior leadership group to distill the findings and insights from those consultations and to prepare this Strategic Framework. I would like to thank all participants for engaging in these conversations and for their ongoing commitment to our community.



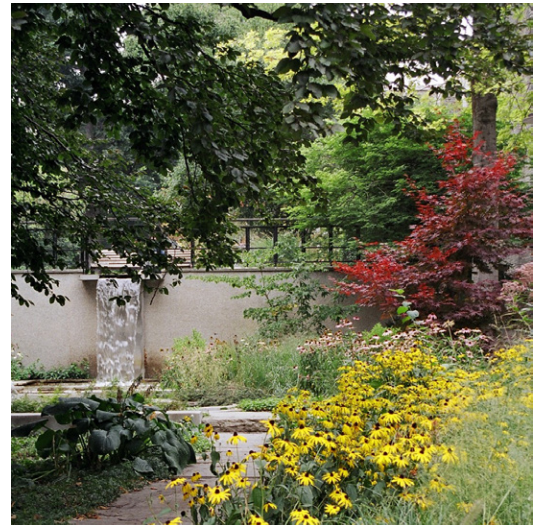
Overview

This Strategic Framework was developed following consultations with students, faculty, staff, alumni, and Board members that took place over the 2019-20 and 2020-21 academic years, interrupted for a time by the coronavirus pandemic. Several hundred people participated in focus groups, town halls, engagement sessions, and surveys, where they were invited to share their ideas about the opportunities and challenges facing Victoria University, keeping in mind the evolving contexts of postsecondary education today. The key aspirations and concerns that emerged during consultations are distilled in the themes and commitments below.

The framework identifies four themes that will be of fundamental significance for Victoria University as we build upon our distinctive ideals and history. These are: **a strong, inclusive community; an inspiring sense of place; outstanding academic offerings; and signature learning experiences.** All of the four themes are mutually reinforcing. Within each of these themes, the framework names a set of broad commitments that will shape our decision-making and resource allocation over the next five years. Each theme is also accompanied by a short list of representative directions, a list which is neither exhaustive nor restrictive, but which provides some examples of how these commitments can be realized in the coming years.

Many participants in our consultations emphasized how Victoria is, above all, a community: a close association of learners, teachers, advisors, creators, and problem-solvers. Accordingly, the themes are presented in light of how this learning community is experienced by individual students, faculty, staff, and alumni: **Belonging, Encountering, Exploring, and Transforming.**

Victoria University's distinctiveness lies in ensuring that all four of these aspects of engagement are prioritized, and that all four work together. To build on its strengths, in the coming years the University must function at a high level in all four of the areas described in our strategic themes.





Belong

THEME 1

Belong

A Strong,
Inclusive
Community

Belong



Victoria University fosters a strong sense of belonging within a supportive community by respecting and connecting the many voices, needs, and histories of its members. We commit to broadening and deepening this sense of belonging.

Recognizing that diversity and inclusiveness are essential components of a rewarding academic environment and of an equitable workplace, we strive to more fully realize our ideals of inclusion, helping students, faculty, and staff from all walks of life to flourish in our community, especially those from marginalized or under-represented groups. We will continue to expand and focus our supports and programs for students, with a special eye to their particular personal, cultural, racial, socio-economic, physical, and academic realities. Similarly, we will enhance supports for faculty, staff, and alumni tailored to their specific needs.

We will continue to cultivate as many opportunities as possible for students and others to participate in conversations, whether inside or outside the classroom, to engage with new perspectives at the university and beyond, and to build community on and off our campus. Knowing that the health of our community depends upon the health and wellness of all of its members, we will increase our capacity to support the resilience and well-being of individuals within our community.



A Strong, Inclusive Community

Commitments

We will broaden and deepen diversity, inclusion, access, and participation in the Victoria community

We will contribute meaningfully to processes of truth and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples

We will foster a culture of well-being

Some Representative Directions

Expand equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives across the University, with a special focus on anti-racism

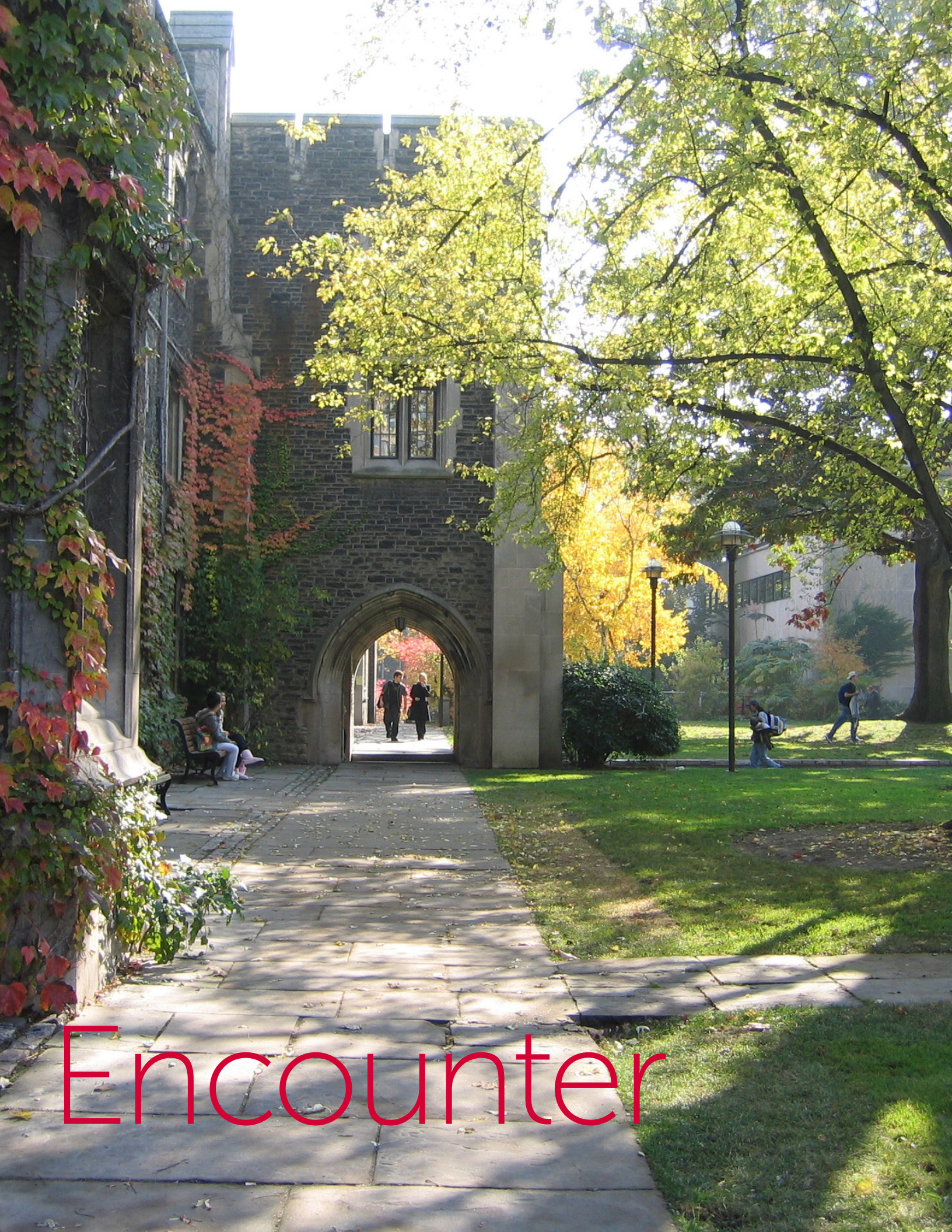
Heighten the presence and visibility on campus of Indigenous peoples, cultures, and cultural traditions

Increase financial awards, especially for students from under-represented groups

Enhance and personalize supports for students as they transition into, through, and beyond their university journey

Expand alumni engagement, including mentorship opportunities and engagement of new alumni

Deepen access to mental health supports and resources tailored to the needs of students and staff



Encounter

THEME 2

Encounter

An Inspiring Sense of Place

Encounter



Victoria University's beautiful campus enables the effective delivery of our courses and programs, and profoundly shapes how students and others experience the University and its mission.

Our buildings, open spaces, and sense of place promote the rhythms of a vibrant campus life, while the mix of historic and modern architecture sustains a learning environment where past, present, and future are in constant dialogue. A peaceful oasis with the city of Toronto at its doorstep, the Victoria campus provides the calm needed for study and reflection as well as the stimulation of engagement with the wider world. Our spaces also contribute to the intellectual and cultural life of society at large. The campus provides countless opportunities for encountering others and joining in conversations, making possible a relationship-rich environment for living, working, and learning.

In the coming years, we will further the campus's capacity to contribute to our academic mission and our strong sense of community. With this in mind, we will adapt learning spaces to emerging pedagogical needs, improve venues for academic, cultural and community events, and adopt new technologies for connecting. As we maintain the special beauty of our campus, we will also address issues of accessibility and inclusion. And, as we face the accelerating crisis of climate change, we will embed a deep attention to environmental sustainability into our planning and operations.

An Inspiring Sense of Place

Commitments

We will express our academic mission and sense of community in our buildings and grounds

We will maintain the special beauty and good repair of our campus

We will intensify sustainability initiatives across the entire university

Some Representative Directions

Create an integrated plan for buildings and capital projects across the entire campus

Reimagine the Northrop Frye Hall site for current and future academic needs

Plan to house more student services in the eastern wing of the Goldring Student Centre and some administrative units in the Birge Carnegie Building

Improve accessibility, especially in our historic buildings

Re-envision art on the campus and its role in teaching, learning, and diversity

Serve as an active cultural hub for the wider Toronto community

Invest in an online presence that complements our physical spaces

Develop a campus wide low-carbon action plan with clear sustainability metrics and goals



Explore

THEME 3

Explore

Outstanding Academic Offerings

Explore



Victoria University continues to build on a longstanding tradition of academic excellence combined with outreach to the community.

Victoria College involves Arts and Science students in intellectual curiosity, research and discovery alongside dedicated faculty and staff. We aspire to be leaders in conversation-based, small-class learning, from first-year foundation seminars to final-year capstone colloquia. Our academic programs prioritize interdisciplinarity, social responsibility, and critical thinking; provide experiential and international learning opportunities; and work with community partners including schools, museums, and creative and cultural institutions.

Emmanuel College, founded as the flagship theological school of the United Church of Canada and one of seven founding member colleges within the Toronto School of Theology, today is on the leading edge of multireligious theological education. In relationship with Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, and other religious communities, Emmanuel College equips leaders and scholars for rigorous theological inquiry and for inclusive practices of justice and care, contextual analysis, creative activity, and interfaith engagement.

All students at Victoria University have access to outstanding library resources, caring and knowledgeable advising staff, academic workshops, and career readiness programs, as they explore how to develop their talents and engage with many of the world's most important questions.

Outstanding Academic Offerings

Commitments

We will sustain and strengthen the academic programs at both Victoria College and Emmanuel College

We will promote a dynamic culture of research and creative inquiry

We will support our students through exceptional advising, learning, and library services

Some Representative Directions

Develop Victoria College's unique interdisciplinary programs, such as a new major in Creativity and Society

Undertake strategic enrolment planning at Emmanuel College and increase support for doctoral students

Incorporate online learning in selected programs, such as the M.Div. at Emmanuel College

Foster intercultural dialogue and understanding in curricular and co-curricular contexts

Increase support services for research and research grants

Enhance the library's special collections

Sustain and strengthen academic advising, career services, and learning supports

Broaden opportunities for international study and experiential learning



Transform

THEME 4

Transform

Signature
Learning
Experiences

Transform



Victoria University is a leader in Canadian university education, offering students the opportunity to engage in distinctive and transforming learning experiences that complement and catalyze our core academic offerings.

Victoria College's signature programs—Vic One, Vic Ready, Scholars-in-Residence, and Ideas for the World—offer students a variety of enhanced learning opportunities, including small-group conversations, personal advising, alumni mentoring, core skills development, research opportunities, and community outreach and awareness. At Emmanuel College, innovative multireligious programming equips students to be leaders and scholars in interfaith engagement and inclusive practices of justice and care.

Victoria University prepares students to step forward into a pluralistic and ever-changing world. Through the innovative, high-impact programs at Victoria College and the interreligious approach to theological inquiry at Emmanuel College, students become adaptable, resilient, and ready for what comes next. At Victoria University we engage, we encourage, and we transform students, preparing them to flourish in their life journeys.

Signature Learning Experiences

Commitments

At Victoria College, we will promote high-impact, conversation-based experiences and personal growth inside and outside the classroom

At Emmanuel College, we will advance multireligious teaching and learning

We will champion the values of a transformative, liberal education

Some Representative Directions

Maintain Vic One as our flagship first-year academic program

Expand Vic Ready as a leading readiness program

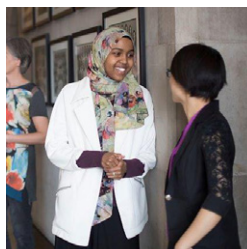
Support Ideas for the World and other innovative outreach experiences

Promote research opportunities for undergraduate students, such as the Scholars-in-Residence program

Support multireligious programs and pedagogy at Emmanuel College

Prepare Emmanuel College students for leadership in ministry and spiritual care

Encourage staff, faculty, students and alumni to be effective advocates for higher education





What's Next?

This Strategic Framework charts an ambitious path for Victoria University to take in order to build on its strengths, realize its aspirations, and adapt to change.

By emphasizing both specific commitments and the common purpose that animates them, this framework will facilitate collaboration across different departments and stakeholder groups, as we set in motion processes for implementing the Strategic Framework's themes. As a statement of our key priorities, it is also intended to be a useful reference for our many partners across the University of Toronto, the Faculty of Arts and Science, and the Toronto School of Theology.

Within Victoria University, this work will guide administrators, staff, faculty, librarians, Board members, and student leaders in their goal-setting, resource allocation, and decision-making over the course of the next five years.



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