



Supporting a Learner-Centred Institution

academic plan | service plan  
enterprise & community plan

# Our values are the promise of how we will behave

## VALUES

Learning is at the heart of Red Deer College. Six key values reflect both the reality and the aspirations of the organization.

### Exploration

The College is open to new ways of doing, being, and thinking. We foster a spirit of adventure and inquiry. We honour our past while focusing on our future and encouraging innovation and risk-taking.

### Inclusiveness

The College creates welcoming environments, making our programs and services accessible to diverse learners. We offer a range of choices in what and how people can learn. Our curricula, processes, and people honour diversity.

### Excellence

The College offers high quality learning experiences. Our staff demonstrate subject area expertise. We work to improve our processes, services, and learning opportunities. We celebrate achievement.

### Integrity

Communication at the College is honest, open, and timely. We follow fair and equitable processes. We treat people with respect and encourage individuals to take personal responsibility.

### Community

A sense of community is fostered within the College. We offer rich social, cultural, intellectual and recreational environments.

We collaborate effectively with partners and we involve ourselves in our local, regional, and global communities.

### Accountability

The College's programs and services meet learners' needs. We are responsive to the needs of our learning communities and business partners. We regularly evaluate our effectiveness and efficiency.



# Our brand pillars are the promise of how we will deliver

**Connected:** RDC offers a warm and social environment. As soon as you step foot on campus, people greet you by name. We are connected to one another through common goals and aspirations, connected to the community by our promise to serve their needs, connected to the urban centres of Calgary and Edmonton by the highway and connected to the world through technology. We actively maintain, nurture and grow relationships we have with our community, students, alumni, donors, faculty and staff.

**Practical:** RDC is the perfect choice for students who believe that their education should be a practical investment in their future. We offer a quality education that provides good value for money. We employ an interactive learning methodology while respecting the requirements for academics. We teach our students how to "do" and how to think. We are a logical and affordable choice for students looking for a more intimate learning environment in an affordable and safe city. Our classes are small because small classes make for better learning. Our instructors are good teachers because learning is why you go to college in the first place.

**Sustainable:** RDC is committed to being a sustainable institution from both a business perspective and an environmental perspective. We adapt to the changing economic and educational landscape by offering the latest in required programming, ensuring we always offer the courses that students are seeking and business require. We are responsible for sustaining both the interests of the students who pass through our doors, and the communities we serve. Colleges sustain community cultures and our commitment to the public is as strong as our commitment to our students. We are committed to minimizing the impact we have on our environment and operating in an environmentally sustainable, "green" manner.

**Genuine:** RDC is a "genuine" College - the way college is supposed to be. We are small enough to not be intimidating, but big enough to offer independence, experience, and a great education. RDC is full of genuine people. RDC remains committed to being a "College" ... in the truest, most genuine sense of the word. We offer all the educational advantages a genuine college does ... small classes, intimate learning environments, affordable tuition, a broad selection of programs and a quality education.

# academic plan

Supporting a Learner-Centred Institution 2012-2017

*Our Academic Plan sets out the framework that will establish Red Deer College as a destination of choice for learners. It leverages the strengths of our heritage and accomplishments of our institution and is built on our expanding reputation of academic excellence, providing enriching and supportive learning experiences. Guided by the RDC Strategic Plan, which was developed based on extensive input given to us by our stakeholders, the Academic plan focuses on the future through the eyes of our learners and the communities we serve.*

*RDC exists for one purpose: to deliver the best education possible in an environment where excellence is expected. This statement has deep implications for all that we are to be and do. It emphasizes our relentless pursuit of excellence and our focus on the needs of our learners. By pursuing our purpose we will deliver outstanding programs when and where they are needed, meeting the needs of the learners and communities we serve so they have the skills to function effectively in their chosen field and as positive contributors to the community.*

*Our College will function as an aligned organization with this purpose clearly demonstrated in all the programs and services we provide. We recognize that all faculty and staff are a community of learners and our roles and responsibilities will reflect this reality. We accept our responsibility to learn and to create a learning community that is based on supporting others along the way. Everyone will actively engage in constructing our new environment through continuous evaluation and assessment of our progress. We will hold ourselves to exemplary standards of performance and accountability.*

*We live in a world that is rapidly shifting, creating a future that will require solutions very different than those in the past. Conforming to the status quo is not an option for RDC and there is great opportunity for us as we are future focused, as we acknowledge and embrace the new reality. We will build on the strong foundations of our past and current areas of strength to create a vibrant future where we more consistently place priority on understanding and responding to learner needs.*

*Our Plan focuses on advancing our Learner-Centred culture, developing learning networks and, responsibility for learning, innovative delivery of programs and services, program assessment, development and renewal, academic excellence and enriched learning experiences and upon the expansion of scholarly activity. Through effective and responsible stewardship of our resources we will pursue our Academic Plan to ensure ongoing sustainability.*

*By following our Academic Plan, we will focus on the learners' needs and exceed their expectations. We will be one unified organization achieving our vision to be the post-secondary institution of choice, serving learners and communities through leadership, excellence, and innovation.*



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## 1 The academic divisions will be leaders in advancing a learner-centred culture.

**Learner-centred approaches to teaching, learning, and service** provision will positively impact student motivation and result in deeper learning experiences.

Leaders in the Academic Divisions will apply and model the following practices that characterize a learner-centred culture:

- Balance of power: Creating community through sharing power and control
- Function of content: Creating relevance by focusing on what the learner learns as opposed to what the knowledge is to be disseminated
- Role of teacher: Leaders assuming roles akin to the learner-centred teacher who is described as a facilitator, designer, or guide
- Responsibility for learning: Fostering a climate for learning by creating community
- Assessment and evaluation: Using assessment to monitor ongoing learning and gauge effectiveness. (From: Harris, M., & Cullen, R. (2010). *Leading the Learner-Centered Campus: An Administrator's Framework for Improving Student Learning Outcomes*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. P. 65, 66).

The commitment to this culture will be reflected and promoted in all education and service plans, resource allocation decisions, and communication processes.

RDC governance processes and committee structures will be aligned in support of the learner-centred paradigm characterized by collaboration and team work, with learning as the foundation for all decisions. Faculty and staff will model **"learning communities"**, building networks where we learn together and from each other.

Recruitment, orientation, performance review, and professional development of faculty and staff will reinforce RDC's learner-centred culture. RDC accountability reports, program and service reviews will support RDC's commitment to the learner-centred paradigm.

## 2 Every learner will be supported in developing personal learning networks communities and taking responsibility for their own success.

Each program will include high impact educational practices that provide a sense of community both inside and outside the classroom. Examples include, first-year seminars/experiences, learning communities, collaborative assignments and projects, diversity/global learning, service/community-based learning.

The environmental and co-curricular factors that maximize persistence and educational attainment include a peer culture and community in which students develop on-campus friendships, participate frequently in student and College sponsored activities, and participate in leadership and other co-curricular activities.

RDC will provide programs that help students learn to be resilient, independent, life-long learners where diversity and cultural engagement are embedded in the curriculum.

RDC will increase the participation of under-represented groups including aboriginal groups, persons with disabilities, new Canadians, first-generation students, seniors, and international students. Greater diversity of faculty and staff will be supported with new processes for hiring and professional development.

## 3 A strong learner-centred focus, stakeholder engagement and timely response will characterize the delivery of all programs and services.

Engagement with potential and current learners will guide the development of flexible program and service delivery options including non-traditional scheduling, online and blended delivery. Every learner will be provided with the opportunity to participate in an on-line learning experience.

**Faculty and staff will be empowered to work on behalf of learners.** Faculty and staff development will provide the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in a learner-centred college.

RDC will assess the effectiveness of programs and services on a continual basis making strategic adjustments that maximize the positive impact on the learner and learning

The academic divisions will participate in the development and implementation of a systematic college-wide strategy to establish and maintain connections with its communities.

The academic divisions will participate in the planning and development of land use and physical facilities that clearly reflect a learner-centred focus embracing universal design principles.



**4** Learners are attracted to the College by the **exceptional quality of teaching and learning** that is assured by program assessment, development and renewal processes.

The **comprehensive program mix** at RDC will be driven by stakeholder engagement, flexible delivery options and career/credential laddering including continuing education, certificates, diplomas, and degrees opportunities. RDC will clearly articulate learning pathways helping learners achieve their goals in the shortest and most effective manner possible. Degree granting or renegotiation of existing collaborative degrees will enhance the **academic and applied pathways for learners**. This will require a comprehensive and effective PLAR (Prior Learning Assessment Recognition) process that is timely, responsive, and meets the needs of learners. Learner pathways will be clearly communicated inside and outside the College.

Program development and redevelopment at RDC will incorporate learning outcomes including leadership, critical thinking, service orientation, and self-knowledge with each program providing hallmark applied learning experiences such as work experience, practicum, co-op, projects, research, studio-based, simulation and service learning.

**5** **Academic excellence** and the practice of enriching learning experiences of students will drive the development and communication of RDC's new image and identity.

Academic excellence and the **practical/enriching learning experiences** of students will be priorities in development and redevelopment of programs and services resulting in an improved academic reputation. This will provide support for a renewed RDC image that will contribute to marketing and recruitment strategies.

The Academic Divisions will establish processes that enable each department, faculty and staff member to convey consistent messaging that reflects the quality of RDC programs, services and successful learner outcomes and to know how their job connects to learner success.

**6** RDC will expand **scholarly activity** in the domains of discovery, application, integration, and teaching and learning.

The promotion of scholarly activity at RDC will serve to enhance the **academic reputation** of the College. Opportunities for learners will be provided for involvement in research and innovation.

Every faculty member at RDC will engage in scholarly activity. RDC will particularly encourage the scholarship of teaching and learning. The Research and Scholarship Committee will compile and disseminate an annual report on scholarly activity at RDC.

Increased opportunities for **applied research and scholarly work** will be provided through:

- Expanded collaboration with Bethany CollegeSide
- Integrating applied research into curriculum and programming
- Greater engagement of faculty and students in applied research projects through the Centre for Innovation in Manufacturing
- Establishment of an applied research fund
- Support and expansion of scholarly activity outside the current priority areas that include additional areas of academic excellence at RDC.

**7** Academic divisions will develop **innovative approaches** to create a stable, sustainable resource base that anticipates changes in funding and the needs of learners.

RDC will create strategic links between Deans' Council and Service Council providing shared ownership of design, implementation and accountability regarding:

- Program and service prioritization decision-making model
- Investigation of potential alternative sources of revenue
- Process-mapping to increase efficiencies at RDC
- Alternatives for service delivery.

Resources in the academic portfolio will be leveraged wherever possible to provide additional sources of revenue (for example, intellectual property such as program curriculum, faculty and staff expertise, and services that can be provided to external clients).

*Guided by the Strategic Plan, our Service Plan provides an opportunity for Red Deer College to think differently about how we integrate, develop and enhance services to continually meet or exceed the needs of our students, faculty and staff. We value the exceptional service we currently provide, but always seek out new ways to continue and grow that service.*

*At the core of our Service Plan is a commitment to engagement, innovation and sustainability all the while being learner-centred. While we value the uniqueness of each service area and their efforts to deliver exceptional service, we recognize the need for RDC to have common institutional service goals. These service goals provide an opportunity for us to learn from each other, develop better service pathways and help us promote hallmark service experiences throughout the institution.*

*In many ways, our Service Plan represents a service promise to our students and to each other. When we honour our service promise to each other, we fundamentally change the service experiences of our students, faculty and our staff.*

*Our ability to accomplish these service goals depends on our collective ability to see a greater institution and a greater future based on RDC 2017: A Learner-Centred Future.*

*When we look back, we want to see an institution that was transformed by the accomplishment of its service goals. The service promises we make to each other in the present will be a large part of that success.*

## 1 Learner-Centred

Services at RDC will demonstrate a commitment to a learner-centred culture through hiring, orientation, and continuous learning processes.

- Senior administrators, coordinators, service unit supervisors, and all staff will develop a shared vision of a learner-centred culture.
- Governance processes, committee structures, recruitment, orientation, performance review, accountability reports, and professional development will be aligned in support of the learner-centred paradigm.
- Service staff will develop learning communities that build **relationships where staff learn together and from each other.**
- Service areas will define and promote **hallmark service experiences.**

## 2 Engagement

Service Departments will facilitate opportunities for collaborative engagement with stakeholders that support a learner-centred college.

- Stakeholder engagement will determine a clear understanding of which services and the level of services that will be provided.
- RDC will develop a strong, college-wide communication strategy that asserts its new and evolving identity. Clear and transparent communication will characterize this strategy.
- RDC will explore new and innovative methods of communication with its various stakeholders that will enhance **collaborative development of service provision.**
- Service and academic areas will collaborate to deliver timely and responsive solutions for learner needs.
- The service divisions will play an active role in the planning and development of services, land use, and physical facilities that clearly reflect a learner-centred focus, universal design principles, and the RDC Strategic Plan.

## 3 Flexibility and Innovation

**Service pathways** will provide innovative and flexible delivery of services that supports the learner experience.

- Continuous assessment, innovation, and experimentation will be valued and considered the responsibility of all service providers.
- New approaches to service delivery will be implemented in a timely manner and evaluated to assure the full potential and effectiveness of their applications.
- Multi-modal delivery will characterize services that meet the needs of all learners.
- Universal design will characterize the delivery of services and the design of physical facilities, maximizing access for all learners.

## 4 Sustainability

RDC will **maximize value** in all the service we provide in response to learner needs and financial realities.

- RDC will be entrepreneurial in its service provision enhancing academic excellence and learner-centredness.
- RDC will seek ways of leveraging our activities using resources from: government, private business, donors, and internal reallocation.
- RDC will continuously assess its service programs to improve processes and efficiencies removing non-value added activities and revitalizing existing activities.

# enterprise & community plan

*The Enterprise and Community Plan complements the Academic and Service Plans of Red Deer College, and links directly to the RDC Strategic Plan to give specific focus to those activities that build community relationships, partnerships, ancillary business growth and additional revenue streams. The objective of each activity will help to ensure RDC is both learner-centred and sustainable for the long term.*

*The Enterprise and Community Plan builds on our current donor and client engagement activities, to develop a college-wide strategy for involvement by stakeholders in the community that is effective, selective and systematic. It also outlines ways to maximize existing revenue opportunities and seek out new sources of funding.*

*By fostering continued growth in donations that support scholarships and awards for our students, by building relationships with our alumni from all academic disciplines, and by aggressively pursuing growth opportunities in non-credit programs, we will support our Strategic Plan.*

*There are significant opportunities to build existing and new relationships with donors, community learners and business in central Alberta, taking advantage of synergies that exist within RDC and the greater community that we serve.*

*By following our Enterprise and Community Plan, we will identify such opportunities and deliver excellent experiences for our learners, donors and clients in order to achieve our vision, which is to be the post-secondary institution of choice.*



## Learner-Centred

Community and Enterprise activities will demonstrate a **commitment to a learner-centred culture** through an emphasis on relationship development, stakeholder engagement, and excellence in program and service delivery.

- All Community Relations Division staff will participate in the development of a college-wide shared vision of a learner-centred culture shaped by an existing strong service commitment in meeting the needs of our clients.
- Program and Service delivery within the Division will align with and support the goals of the Academic and Service plans.
- The Division will participate in and develop learning communities that enable it to build further on innovation, efficiency, vibrancy and evaluation.



## Engagement

Community Relations Division will lead in the development and implementation of a systematic college-wide strategy to establish and maintain strong connections with its communities.

- The Division will engage internal and external stakeholders to ensure a process that is effective, consistent and measurable.



## Flexibility and Innovation

Program and service pathways will provide innovative and flexible delivery that supports the learner experience.

- Continuous assessment, innovation, and experimentation will be valued and modeled throughout all areas of the Division.
- New approaches to service delivery will be implemented in a timely manner and evaluated to assure the full potential and effectiveness of their applications, aligned with Service and Academic Plans and departments.
- Expanded use of technology will advance on-line opportunities, including donations, events, contracts and access to non-credit programs.
- Through our special events, volunteer and recognition opportunities, we will continue to refine and **promote hallmark service experiences**. Emphasis will be toward **stewardship** and the opportunity to grow **sustainable, strong relationships** that lead to building RDC's financial sustainability and strategic vision.
- Non-credit programming will be innovative and flexible, able to quickly respond to the changing needs of the community



## Sustainability

The Community Relations Division will lead in the development of innovative and creative strategies that decrease reliance on government and increase financial sustainability.

- The Division will grow and refresh its donor, Alumni, volunteer and business contact bases.
- The Division will seek out **new and innovative partnerships** that reflect community needs and contribute to financial sustainability
- **Donor engagement** activities will follow the Fund Development model, aligning with RDC project funding priorities, while remaining consistent with donor aspirations and objectives.
- RDC will build relationships with former students from all academic disciplines, advance current affinity initiatives and establish a committed Alumni donor base for the long-term success of our learners.
- RDC will aggressively pursue **growth opportunities in non-credit programs**, including business and industry, health, community and conferences, with increased net contribution to RDC's revenue stream.