

Ryerson University

## **Developing the next academic plan 2014 – 2019**

### **Draft planning framework**

Office of the Provost and Vice President Academic

#### **INTRODUCTION**

It is a pivotal time for Ryerson University as it develops its next academic plan. Fortunately, the university could not have begun from a more positive starting point. The impressive success of the 2008-13 academic plan, *Shaping Our Future*, confirmed that Ryerson's approach to creating positive impact on the economy, culture and society is distinctly different from other post-secondary institutions. Ryerson is connected to its city, sees diversity as an asset, and forges partnerships with industry, community and professional practice to ensure that applied knowledge and research address real-world problems, and programs are designed to be relevant to changing careers and professions. Students are provided with diverse experiential learning opportunities, helping them become graduates who enable change and go on to make significant contributions to their fields of practice and in broader society.

#### ***A passionate, engaged community***

With over 850 students, faculty, staff and key external partners attending over 40 sessions, the first phase of the academic planning consultations brought the community together to celebrate successes, share ambitions, and identify opportunities and a vision. The consultation process and the level of engagement are a testament to the passion and dedication of Ryerson's diverse academic community and the university's upward trajectory.

#### ***Proposed planning framework***

The proposed planning framework that follows reflects community input and contains the following components:

- A university profile;
- A mission and vision section;
- A set of shared values;
- Four core priorities with supporting strategies; and
- A statement on tracking progress.

It is important to understand that this document is not the complete academic plan. It is intended to serve as the basis for the second phase of consultations that will be held over the coming months. Input received from this phase will inform a final draft academic plan that will be presented to Senate for consideration in spring 2014.

**UNIVERSITY PROFILE:** The starting point for the framework is a snapshot of Ryerson and its distinguishing factors – those components of **having impact** and **fostering innovation**, as well as its **reputation for excellence** – that have contributed to Ryerson’s remarkable transformation and distinct path. This is the “past influencing the future” section.

## **BUILDING ON *SHAPING OUR FUTURE***

In just over two decades, Ryerson University has transformed to become a comprehensive university with an array of undergraduate, master’s and doctoral programs and related scholarly, research and creative (SRC) activity. *Shaping our Future*, the university’s 2008-13 academic plan, identified priorities that contributed to Ryerson’s remarkable success and development. The dedicated efforts of many talented people within the university and in the broader community moved Ryerson far beyond the expectations set by the last academic plan.

Ryerson’s evolution as an institution of academic, SRC and operational excellence continues to gain momentum. Students, faculty and staff are passionate and committed to the university’s future and have set priorities with **a clear vision to lead Ryerson to become Canada’s leading comprehensive innovation university**. Over the next five years, this vibrant, diverse academic community can make Ryerson a destination where rich and meaningful learning experiences abound, where research and innovation thrives, and where organizations in Toronto and around the world come to solve complex problems, find innovative solutions and create new possibilities.

### ***Economic, Social and Cultural Impact***

Ryerson’s approach to responding to the changing and complex needs of society is distinctly different from that of other post-secondary institutions; applied knowledge and SRC activity address real-world problems in community, government and the private sector. Programs are designed to be relevant to changing careers, professions and scholarly disciplines, and develop enterprising, creative graduates who can enable change and make significant contributions in their fields of practice and in broader society. Ryerson has forged deep connections and partnerships with leading institutions, community agencies, government, companies, organizations and professional practices in its drive to provide students and external stakeholders alike with high-quality, responsive academic programs and SRC activity. These deep connections also enable the university to provide students with valuable experiential learning and research opportunities on a campus and in a city that is one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse in the world.

### ***Fostering Innovation***

For Ryerson, innovation in its defining terms means challenging its academic community to develop new solutions and apply new ways of thinking that transform the world. Ryerson is – and always has been – very much a part of its community and city. Through thousands of meaningful engagements with the community around it, Ryerson has enriched and contributed to public life in Toronto and become a place where what happens within its classrooms, labs, studios and workshops has a positive and transformative impact on society.

Ryerson's diverse community of faculty researchers, graduate and undergraduate students are driving innovation. In collaboration with a network of Canadian and international partners, they are tackling pressing issues, developing new technologies and approaches, and launching new economic, cultural and social ventures. At the same time, Ryerson is taking leadership to address the entrepreneurship gap in the university sector. Through its successful zone learning concept – a new approach to experiential learning that is transforming entrepreneurial education in Canada – Ryerson is shaping the next generation of Canada's innovators and entrepreneurs who will contribute to the future economic and social well-being of the city, province and country.

### ***Reputation for Excellence***

Ryerson has earned a reputation for high-quality professional and career-related education and related SRC activity, and its programs are in high demand. As of the 2012-13 academic year, it has grown to almost 40,000 students with 140,000 alumni worldwide. It offers more than 100 undergraduate, master's and PhD programs. Ryerson has become the first choice for more undergraduate applicants than any other Ontario university, relative to available spaces, and its graduate school has grown significantly in recent years. Nearly all of its undergraduate programs provide experiential learning – a hallmark of Ryerson's learning experience – and two-thirds of its undergraduate students are in professionally accredited programs. Ryerson is a leader in online university education in Ontario, and home to The G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education, Canada's largest continuing education provider with over 1,400 courses and 80 certificate programs to promote lifelong learning.

Ryerson's SRC activity, local and international partnerships, and external funding are growing steadily and contributing to its rising reputation. Total research funding doubled between 2008 and 2013, and in 2012-13, Ryerson ranked fifth in sponsored research among Ontario non-medical/doctoral universities. In addition, Ryerson has established academic and research partnerships with over 132 institutions in 34 countries.

Released on: February 22, 2014

Ryerson has also garnered a reputation as a “city-building university.” Situated in the heart of Toronto – among the five largest cities in North America – Ryerson enriches the city in broad ways; it attracts diverse students, researchers, faculty and leading innovators to Toronto who make meaningful contributions to the city’s economic development, as well as its civic, cultural and social vitality. Ryerson has also revitalized its campus and the city’s downtown by adding world-class, design-forward facilities which have engaged the broader community through sports, recreation and culture.

**MISSION AND VISION:** The next section of the framework contains the mission and vision statements.

## MISSION

Ryerson's distinctive and core mission – to serve societal need by providing professional and career-related education and SRC activity – is taking the university forward into a world that is demanding highly skilled and creative thinkers who devise innovative solutions for increasingly complex problems.

Ryerson creates positive impact on the economic, social and cultural health of the city that surrounds it, throughout the province and across the country. Its diverse faculty and graduate students drive new lines of inquiry to foster responsive and robust research, innovation, scholarly and creative endeavours. The university cares that students are not only prepared for future careers and professions but that future jobs are created. Relevant knowledge, experiential learning and entrepreneurial thinking empower students to go out and build their careers, and even new companies and social innovations. Awareness of international perspectives and practices, and appreciation of the linguistic and cultural diversity of campus and the city, helps them to be responsible global citizens. Through experiences inside and outside the classroom, Ryerson prepares students to bring intellectual curiosity, the ability to solve problems, create change, and apply thought leadership to whichever path they choose to pursue.

*Ryerson University Mission Statement, 1994: "The special mission of Ryerson University is the advancement of applied knowledge and research to address societal need, and the provision of programs of study that provide a balance between theory and application and that prepare students for careers in professional and quasi-professional fields. As a leading centre for applied education, Ryerson is recognized for the excellence of its teaching, the relevance of its curriculum, the success of its students in achieving their academic and career objectives, the quality of its scholarship, research and creative activity and its commitment to accessibility, lifelong learning, and involvement in the broader community."*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The mission statement is derived from the Objects of the University as outlined in the Ryerson University Act: 1) The advancement of learning, and the intellectual, social, moral, cultural, spiritual, and physical development of the University's students and employees, and the betterment of society. 2) The advancement of applied knowledge and research in response to existing and emerging societal need and in support of the cultural, economic, social, and technological development of Ontario. 3) The provision of programs of study that provide a balance between theory and application and that prepare students for careers in professional and quasi-professional fields.

**VISION: To be recognized as Canada's leading comprehensive innovation university**

Ryerson's vision is to be **Canada's leading comprehensive innovation university** – to be a leading institution in making a positive and meaningful impact on the economic, cultural and social vitality and sustainability of Toronto and beyond.

To achieve its vision, Ryerson will be the leader in high-quality, career-relevant education and related SRC activity. Innovative research in key areas of SRC strength will be encouraged; the focus will be on areas where there is direct impact and benefit for partners in industry, government and communities, where prosperity is created, and quality of life improved.

Ryerson will extend its community engagement, enlarging its sphere of influence and relevance to broader society, and lead the way as a city-building university. Ryerson will continue to take leadership and new approaches in programs, emerging sectors and areas of knowledge, and support innovation and entrepreneurship.

Throughout its recent history, Ryerson has challenged conventional approaches to post-secondary education and notions of what a university can do. Innovation – rooted in Ryerson's culture and infused in the community's thinking – is central to its vision.

**VALUES:** This section of the framework proposes a set of values. It was clearly heard in the consultations that the community desires an academic plan that **states the university's values**, which would serve as the foundation for the plan's academic aspirations and priorities alongside the university's historic mission. These proposed values, presented in an unranked order, have been derived from the mission statement and Ryerson Act, previous academic plans, Senate policies, community consultation session summaries, and various Ryerson publications.

Ryerson holds these values that illustrate its commitment to creating an open and accessible environment that is vibrant, inclusive and representative of an institution of excellence.

### **EMBRACING ACADEMIC FREEDOM, EXCELLENCE AND INTEGRITY**

**Academic freedom:** The university embraces unequivocally freedom of thought and expression in support of teaching, learning and SRC activity within a culture of mutual respect.

**Excellence:** The university strives for the highest standards in its teaching and learning, SRC activity, administration and governance.

**Integrity:** The university expects students, faculty and staff to act in accord with the highest standards of conduct in their teaching, learning, evaluation, research, and professional and personal behaviour. The university strives to always manifest responsibility, respect, honesty, transparency, trust, fairness and accountability in its processes of decision-making, administration and governance.

### **RESPECTING THE WHOLE PERSON**

**People First:** The university is committed to the success of its students, faculty and staff by creating a safe, secure environment that puts people first, is supportive of the whole person and enhances the development of physical, mental and spiritual well-being.

**Collegiality:** The university fosters a collegial environment and collegial institutions where students, faculty and staff work in collaborative ways to support the university's shared mission.

**Lifelong learning:** The university encourages learning as a lifelong activity through accessible, responsive and comprehensive continuing education, and professional development and learning opportunities for faculty and staff.

## **BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE, EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY**

***Equity:*** The university values the fair and just treatment of all members of the Ryerson community through the creation of opportunities to address historic and current disadvantage for underrepresented populations.

***Diversity:*** The university values and respects the diversity of individual differences and diversity of group/social differences, and how they benefit the educational process.

***Inclusion:*** The university values the active, intentional, and ongoing engagement of diversity within every facet of university life and the shared responsibility of all community members to create, foster, strengthen and enrich our learning, teaching, research and work environment such that it is inclusive.

***Respect for Aboriginal perspectives:*** The university is committed to cultivating and developing relationships with Aboriginal communities, both within and outside the university. It will continue to build and maintain a campus environment that embraces, supports and ensures Aboriginal people provide leadership in the advancement of Aboriginal education at Ryerson.

***Access:*** The university is committed to providing access to education and employment opportunities for students, faculty and staff of all types and backgrounds, in particular those from marginalized and under-represented groups.

***Community:*** The university sustains its commitment to ensuring a strong sense of belonging for students, alumni, faculty and staff, and values mutual and reciprocal relationships with the broader community.

***Enterprising:*** The university champions innovation and entrepreneurship, and empowers its students, faculty and staff to think creatively, take initiative and demonstrate resourcefulness.

***Sustainability:*** The university takes responsibility for its shared future and aims to pursue environmental, social and economic sustainability through its programs, SRC activity, policies, built environment, and fiscally sound operations.

**PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES:** The next section of the plan focuses on priorities and strategies. The four core priorities proposed below capitalize on opportunities to develop the best possible learning environment for students and to advance Ryerson's reputation as an innovation-intensive research institution and destination for top researchers. These priorities focus on how Ryerson can foster and accelerate new solutions that improve society, culture, economy and quality of life at home and abroad. They envision a university where industry, government, professional practices and the broader community – both locally and where appropriate, internationally – come for real-world solutions to complex problems and the creation of new possibilities, and in turn, where students and faculty enrich and strengthen the community and city surrounding them.

**Supporting strategies** for each priority are also proposed. Strategies are deliberately expressed at a macro level and are presented in an unranked order. Doing so is meant to give ample opportunity for the university's various schools, departments, faculties, and non-academic units to activate the strategies locally in ways that make the most sense in hundreds of unique circumstances and operations.

Over the next five years, Ryerson will pursue its vision **to be Canada's leading comprehensive innovation university** by:

1. **Creating student engagement and success through exceptional experiences**
2. **Increasing SRC excellence, intensity and impact**
3. **Fostering an innovation ecosystem**
4. **Expanding community engagement and city-building**

These four priorities will be supported by strategies for **operational excellence and a collegial environment where students, faculty and staff can develop and succeed.**

### **Proposed Priority 1: Create student engagement and success through exceptional experiences**

Students are Ryerson's top priority. Faculty and staff work continuously to offer exceptional student experiences that provide graduates with the transferable skills and knowledge needed to build their careers and professions, become responsible global citizens and enable positive change. Students are trusted to learn and Ryerson recognizes that learning happens inside and outside the classroom. Learning occurs through interactions with diverse faculty, industry practitioners, peers and organizations in the community, and through experiential learning opportunities, co-curricular activities, and active participation in a vibrant and inclusive campus life.

This priority aims to develop a holistic approach to creating exceptional student experiences inside and outside the classroom. It envisions a rich intellectual, cultural, physical and technological environment where students are inspired and fully engaged in their education, supported to do well, and encouraged to take advantage of diverse curricular and co-curricular activities and opportunities to expand their horizons. This priority creates a shared responsibility for excellence in every aspect of Ryerson's environment so that students at all levels – undergraduate, graduate, and part-time adult learners – can experience broad intellectual and personal growth during their academic studies, and be part of a truly equitable and inclusive environment.

This priority supports the continued strengthening and nurturing of Ryerson's existing academic programs, as well as professional programs, including professional master's, that respond to student and societal demand. Likewise, continued attention will be paid to student retention, interdisciplinarity and curriculum innovation, access and transfer pathways, and greater opportunities for transferable skill development. This priority encompasses existing and new initiatives to foster teaching excellence and assess the educational experience with the best use of a variety of learning methods, including a strategic direction for e-learning and expanded traditional and non-traditional approaches to experiential learning.

Through this priority, consideration can be given on how to best support faculty members' development to meet students' changing expectations and to contribute to students' experiences inside and outside the classroom. Interactions with a faculty that reflects the diversity of Ryerson's student body are an important element affecting students' perceptions of the learning experience and their level of engagement with their programs.

The demand for student services, including support for mental health, is growing and there is a recognition that Ryerson needs to offer the right level and type of support, for all students – from graduate students and continuing education students to Aboriginal students and students with disabilities. The university will make strong efforts to meet rising demand for all services. Through this priority, the aspiration to create a stronger sense of an inclusive community for all students – through on-campus experiences that are enriched by diversity, cultural events and lecture series, student life activities, athletics and recreation, welcoming spaces and so forth – can also be realized.

The following are possible strategies to support Priority One:

***Prepare graduates to build careers, enter diverse professions, and enable change***

1. Evolve Ryerson’s curriculum and increase the flexibility of program revisions so that programming and its delivery remain innovative and responsive to students and relevant to external developments in professions, industries and scholarly fields.
2. Enhance the curriculum model so that students have greater interdisciplinary choice, enhanced transferability, and courses made more accessible through an increase in the flexibility of course scheduling.
3. Foster greater interdisciplinary curriculum and programs giving consideration to development, delivery, administration, support and related policies.
4. Provide undergraduate and graduate students with increased opportunities to develop marketable knowledge and competencies including broad transferrable skills, such as critical and entrepreneurial thinking, to succeed in their chosen careers and professional lives.

***Access to education***

5. Provide access opportunities and support for marginalized and under-represented groups, including Aboriginal students, first-generation students, students with disabilities and internationally educated professionals.
6. Encourage partnership between academic departments and The G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education to support growth in continuing education through on-campus and distance offerings.
7. Enhance pathways and transition support for students transferring from other post-secondary institutions.

### ***Teaching and learning excellence***

8. Enhance processes to maintain a high level of quality and rigour across all courses and programs.
9. Recognize high-quality teaching, including faculty efforts to mentor and interact with students outside the classroom, and to nurture and develop strong external industry and community connections in support of Ryerson's educational mandate.
10. Provide opportunities for faculty, instructors, and teaching and graduate assistants to continually develop their teaching practices and skills, and encourage the use of new and diverse learning and teaching methods.
11. Enhance the Library's role as a provider of exceptional spaces for teaching, learning and collaboration, support the continued growth of print and digital collections, and encourage innovative uses of technology.
12. Develop a university-wide e-learning strategy, which incorporates the principles of inclusive design and accessibility, in order to expand technology-enhanced learning and online offerings.
13. Evolve and expand traditional and new experiential learning opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students.

### ***Exceptional experiences***

14. Offer services, supports, spaces and improved engagement opportunities that enable the success of students at all levels – undergraduate, graduate, part-time and continuing education – and that encourage high retention and timely completion of students' academic goals.
15. Offer a nationally recognized program of varsity athletics and create strong intramural and recreation programs with opportunities for all to participate.
16. Offer co-curricular activities for a diverse student population and encourage involvement in and collaboration between student organizations and clubs, competitions at the national and international levels, and other student-led activities.
17. Encourage and support staff to improve administration and services, and to find new ways to work together in support of students and faculty.
18. Evaluate potential enhancements to the university's IT assets, digital communication channels and enterprise platforms in order to provide better administrative support to faculty and staff, and to enhance the learning experience inside and outside the classroom.
19. Enhance space utilization to better serve students.

## **Proposed Priority 2: Increasing SRC excellence, intensity and impact**

Scholarly, research and creative (SRC) activity is fundamental to Ryerson's excellence and reputation as a comprehensive innovation university. Ryerson's unique approach to SRC activity recognizes different definitions of excellence across disciplines. Consistent with its mission of meeting societal needs, Ryerson focuses on creating community impact as well as on developing and engaging students. The university focuses on engaging more students and faculty in order to continue to build its research culture and its strong trajectory in funding growth. Creativity among its diverse students and faculty inspires new knowledge, forms of expression and achievements, and drives innovation across sectors.

Ryerson aspires to become one of Canada's top 10 non-medical research universities in terms of research funding, and a leader in applied SRC in collaboration with industry, community and government partners. This goal can be achieved by increasing external funding, enhancing partnerships, supporting researchers at every stage, and strengthening Ryerson's research enterprise by aligning structures, processes and resources to support this critical part of its mission as a comprehensive university.

Ryerson has doubled its SRC funding in the last five years and continues to grow its share of the increasingly competitive Tri-Council funding. While Ryerson's SRC activity is growing at a strong pace, the research landscape is changing. With increased attention being paid to Canada's "innovation gap," the focus on demonstrating the impact and relevance of university-based research is intensifying. External funding is shifting toward collaborative projects and moving away from traditional Tri-Council sources. These external factors are changing the types of internal administrative supports needed for SRC activity in the coming years. By continuing to focus on SRC intensity while building on its unique strengths and transformative past, Ryerson has the opportunity to increase its research pursuits and be broadly recognized for the excellence of its SRC activity and the value and impact it has on society. Ryerson also has an opportunity to define leading practices in this area and to advance its understanding of SRC processes and impacts on innovation, prosperity, culture and social development.

To sustain the university's research trajectory, this priority enables the strategic hiring of Ryerson researchers and support for all researchers at every stage of their research journey. It also supports the continued development of collaborations with leading institutions domestically and internationally, and recognizes that strengthening institutional supports for SRC activity and ingraining its importance in Ryerson's culture at all levels is essential to the next stage of the university's evolution.

This priority also envisions strengthened collaborations across the university and with partners on cross-disciplinary themes including:

- Digital Media and Technology
- Energy and Sustainability
- Health and Wellbeing
- Technological and Industrial Innovation
- City Building and Social Justice
- Design, Culture, and Creative Industries
- Management, Entrepreneurship and Competitiveness
- Teaching and Learning for the New Economy

Promoting Ryerson's SRC successes and contributions to society is critical in many ways and builds reputation. By raising awareness of Ryerson's appealing research and innovation story, the university can attract research opportunities and talent.

### ***Strengthen graduate education***

Graduate education has a vital role in the long-term success and sustainability of a robust SRC culture at Ryerson; in turn, success in SRC activity is critical to attracting and supporting graduate education as more than half of research funding at Ryerson goes to developing highly qualified personnel. This priority enables the strategic expansion of master's and PhD programs, and gives attention to supporting the administration and delivery of graduate education.

Improving support services for graduate students and maturing Ryerson's graduate programs is also central to this priority. There is a broad desire to create cohesiveness between graduate and undergraduate studies, and enrich both levels of education by better integrating teaching and research. For example, graduate students' role in the university can be made more visible by engaging them to mentor undergraduates and share their fields of research. Conversely, students at the undergraduate level can play a meaningful role in Ryerson's research enterprise, helping them prepare for SRC pursuits.

The following are possible strategies to support Priority Two:

### ***Increase SRC excellence, intensity and research funding***

1. Increase participation in SRC activity by providing a range of supports suited to researchers at every stage of the research process and throughout their careers.
2. Strengthen Ryerson's research culture by aligning structures, processes and resources.
3. Expand overall SRC funding by increasing the number of grant applications and the size of the grants.

***Collaboration with industry, community and government partners to increase impact***

4. Expand SRC partnerships with industry, government, and community organizations as well as other academic institutions, locally, nationally and internationally to meet societal needs and drive innovation.
5. Leverage expertise across disciplines to expand commercialization, knowledge translation and mobilization capacity of researchers and the institution.
6. Build understanding of research and innovation processes and impacts.

***Sharpen focus on interdisciplinary themes***

7. Strengthen collaboration across the university and with partners on identified cross-disciplinary themes.

***Build SRC reputation locally, nationally and internationally through active research dissemination***

8. Publicize the SRC achievements of Ryerson faculty and students to build reputation, attract high quality students, faculty and partners.
9. Support research dissemination of the university's SRC output.

***Strengthen graduate education***

10. Attract leading graduate students by developing a strategic approach to domestic and international recruitment, providing competitive funding offers and fostering excellence in graduate student supervision.
11. Improve services, supports, spaces and engagement opportunities for graduate students across disciplines, and increase their opportunities to develop transferrable skills.
12. Strengthen graduate education by introducing a new funding allocation mechanism, identifying ways to improve the administration and delivery of graduate education, and implementing policies that support program quality and timely program completion.
13. Subject to appropriate government funding, continue master's and doctoral program development.
14. Encourage faculty to increasingly incorporate SRC activity into classroom learning, and provide increased opportunities for undergraduate and graduate student involvement with research.

### **Proposed Priority 3: Foster an innovation ecosystem**

Ryerson's vision is to be recognized as Canada's leading comprehensive innovation university. Numerous questions were raised during the fall consultation about Ryerson's definition of innovation. In response, a clear and meaningful definition of innovation needs to be developed as part of the plan.

Taking the mission into consideration, **innovation at Ryerson will be defined as challenging the academic community to develop new solutions and apply new ways of thinking that transform the world around it.** This definition includes creative, cultural and social innovations that can enrich the fabric of society and improve quality of life, as well as innovations that create new companies, products and jobs, and drive change in existing organizations.

This priority concerns deliberate efforts to do something new and distinctly different in the university sector – to accelerate innovation, in part by expanding Ryerson's zone learning concept that is transforming entrepreneurial education in Canada.

This priority recognizes that innovation already happens at Ryerson in several ways. Fostering an innovation ecosystem means intentionally creating a conducive environment where innovation can happen on a larger scale, where it can flourish across the university and involve more people. For example, it might include bringing more visiting entrepreneurs to Ryerson to inspire innovation and act as mentors, or creating courses or zone learning opportunities through which students can pursue entrepreneurial pathways for their ideas and passions. In a structural sense, fostering an innovation ecosystem means having mechanisms in place to support exciting organic developments at all levels (department, faculty and institution) that demonstrate synergy and momentum focused on innovation, entrepreneurship and transformative change.

Strengthening interdisciplinary connections, SRC activity, partnerships and support for commercialization, knowledge translation and mobilization are other important parts of creating a favourable environment for innovation. More than one hundred labs, institutes and centres at Ryerson create opportunities for students, faculty and staff to develop new products and services, to create new ventures and to drive change in existing for-profit and non-profit organizations. Innovation depends on fostering new approaches in existing organizations. Ryerson's "Collaborate to Innovate" initiative is helping hundreds of for-profit, non-profit and government organizations find new solutions to real problems to address the innovation gap.

Collaboration is an important aspect of this priority. When Ryerson has future opportunities to build or renovate its facilities, consideration should be given to enabling collaboration and knowledge sharing across disciplines or departments. By creating "collision points" for people and knowledge, there is a greater chance for interactions that can spark creativity and innovation.

Through this priority, more students and faculty members are supported to innovate. The university can create new partnership models and pursue more opportunities for organizations and partners to connect with Ryerson to solve problems, develop innovative approaches and create new possibilities. It also enables Ryerson to push its recognized leadership in experiential learning into the emerging areas of interdisciplinary, entrepreneurial zone learning. This pursuit builds upon the success of the Digital Media Zone, the Centre for Urban Energy and the growing network of zones in fashion, design fabrication, transmedia and beyond, as well as the work in its many research labs, institutes and centres. Additionally, as Ashoka Foundation's first Canadian "Changemaker Campus," Ryerson's focus on entrepreneurship presents leadership research opportunities to examine and create new understanding of innovation processes and how they advance both economic and social development, what constitutes entrepreneurship, and how it can best be taught and developed in its students.

The following are possible strategies to support Priority Three:

***Create more opportunities for students, faculty and staff to develop innovative ideas***

1. Implement university-wide mechanisms and initiatives to leverage and coordinate entrepreneurship building activities across the university, and provide structures and frameworks to permit and support multidisciplinary participation.
2. Support and encourage entrepreneurship and innovation across a greater number of disciplines through curriculum, courses and programs.
3. Be a leader in zone learning by developing and expanding Ryerson's experiential zone learning concept in a manner that encourages the participation of students and faculty from a greater number of disciplines.
4. Be a leader in applied research on entrepreneurship, innovation and entrepreneurship education to drive best practices.
5. Increase opportunities for student and faculty initiatives outside the classroom to facilitate the development, translation, mobilization and commercialization of new ideas.
6. Embed a greater number of entrepreneurs in residence, visiting fellows and practitioners, including successful alumni, across all faculties to broaden access to skills, mentorship and experience for students.

***Connect with more community, government and industry partners to drive innovation, fuel prosperity and quality of life***

7. Build more opportunities to engage with external organizations in order to increase relevant and productive innovations, and facilitate greater knowledge transfer into the community.
8. Increase Ryerson's presence and visibility, nationally and internationally, in terms of innovation and entrepreneurship activities by expanding its relationships with external organizations across sectors.
9. Increase funding from various sources, to support interactions with industry, not-for-profit and government collaborators to drive innovation across a greater number of disciplines.
10. Extend relationships with the broader community to provide greater access to Ryerson's facilities and expertise to support entrepreneurial education and innovation through collaborative programs.
11. When future opportunities are presented to build or update facilities, develop spaces that reflect the principles of the Master Plan, encourage collaboration across multiple disciplines and enable chance interactions that can spark creativity and innovation.

#### **Proposed Priority 4: Expand community engagement and city-building**

Engaging with communities is a hallmark of Ryerson's approach. It creates channels through which Ryerson can work with and benefit those around it, and has contributed to Ryerson's reputation as a city-building university.

This priority focuses on expanding and strengthening engagement within the university and externally. It considers the need to build a culture of philanthropy to achieve the goals of its academic plan. It envisions Ryerson developing an international reach and influence, and taking the lead in Canada's university sector for city-building efforts that have a positive impact on Canada's largest city and beyond.

Internally, Ryerson's students, faculty and staff function best when they are highly engaged in day-to-day activities that create a sense of community and common purpose, and bring together disparate ideas and capabilities that invigorate the university community as a whole. This priority recognizes that through collaboration, Ryerson's talented university community of students, faculty and staff can pioneer new ways of working together in support of students and Ryerson's core priorities. Ryerson's diverse academic community is the university's most important asset and it will look for new ways to foster engagement, inclusion and interactions across the university.

An important part of this priority concerns building a strong culture of philanthropy and recognizing the key role alumni play as representatives in and connection to the larger community. Increased philanthropy is essential to the university's ability to realize its ambitions. Donor support enhances the teaching and learning agenda, helps build and improve campus infrastructure, provides financial support to students, supports faculty research and more. A strong sense of community, shared belonging and awareness created among students, faculty, staff, and alumni, is a key driver in the impetus to give. Alumni are the university's greatest accomplishment and greatest resource as ambassadors, mentors, and more. When current students are truly invested and connected with their programs, their faculty mentors, campus life and so forth, the foundation for building loyal and engaged alumni begins. This is equally true of Ryerson's ability to engage with private support; Ryerson's reputation within the community and as part of the community will determine to a large extent its ability to create stakeholders and draw investment. The desire is a community of stakeholders whom are invested in the university and its success so they will work in various ways to see it thrive.

Externally, Ryerson has a strong history of engagement with local organizations and has earned respect as a city-builder. Ryerson has many opportunities to augment both the level of local engagement and its impact as a city-builder. It will continue to realize the vision of the Master Plan but it will also expand the notion of city-building to include the deliberate recognition of building a community of scholars, innovators, and creative practitioners who contribute their intellectual capital to the development of the city, province and country. Its downtown location is within easy reach of major institutions, industries, government, and community agencies with which Ryerson can build more extensive relationships and regularly bring Toronto's leaders into its classrooms and forums. Similarly, Ryerson can pursue new opportunities for increased student, faculty and staff civic engagement through connections with more community organizations, including Aboriginal groups. This priority also recognizes that new pathways should be created for the external community to readily and effectively engage with the university.

While the mutual and reciprocal benefits of local engagement are many, Ryerson is also aware of its responsibilities as a global citizen and has a highly diverse community of students, faculty and staff with meaningful connections to cities around the world. Adding this strength to those already mentioned, Ryerson is ready to establish an international reach for its community engagement and city-building efforts. These relationships with community organizations, industry and government, locally and globally, will help Ryerson to develop and maintain relevant programs and curriculum, provide students with experiential learning opportunities, enrich SRC activity, and contribute to the economic, social and culture development of Toronto, Ontario, Canada and the world.

Through distance education and other innovative initiatives, Ryerson will reach out strategically to emerging markets and societies internationally where its students and faculty will collaborate with their peers in studying global issues and devising solutions for challenges the world currently faces. The transition to a more global perspective can be assisted by technologies that can bring international experts and issues into classrooms and labs, and partnerships with like-minded institutions around the world.

With its talented people, broad diversity and respected expertise, Ryerson can become an institution whose contributions and influence are felt internationally, as well as locally.

The following are possible strategies to support Priority Four:

***Internal engagement***

1. Foster collegiality and a culture of respect for equity, diversity and inclusion through opportunities for greater faculty and staff interactions, and by recognizing the university community's collective successes and the value derived from working together to achieve common purposes.
2. Attract and retain high quality faculty and staff with diverse backgrounds.

***Foster a culture of philanthropy***

3. Foster a culture of philanthropy through all of the university's constituent communities, and seek increased engagement with donors to support and realize the university's priorities.
4. Create transitional pathways leading current students to become engaged alumni who can remain involved in the university after graduation.

***External engagement***

5. Develop more extensive relationships with industry, employers and community organizations within and beyond Toronto in order to enhance opportunities for interaction, collaboration and mentoring.
6. Cultivate relationships with Aboriginal communities and students to create an educational environment that embraces and supports Aboriginal perspectives and experiences, and builds community for Aboriginal learners.
7. Develop a university-wide strategic community engagement and communications plan that values equity, diversity and inclusion, leverages current engagement activity and builds a more visible Ryerson presence in particular communities.

***Pursue opportunities for increased student, faculty and staff civic engagement***

8. Reach out to the local community through activities and experiential learning to the mutual advantage of the community and university. Involvement by students, faculty and staff in public life through community, civic and volunteer activities will be encouraged.

***Expanding global reach***

9. Develop international reach by strategically pursuing collaborative partnerships with organizations that share the university's goals and enhance opportunities for research, experiential learning and faculty exchanges.

10. Take leadership through city-building efforts, academic and research programs, and commitment to civic and community engagement so students, faculty and staff make a positive impact on Toronto and other cities.

**TRACKING PROGRESS:** The final section of the framework provides a statement on tracking the progress of the plan. Specific metrics and progress indicators are under development and will likely be released in a companion document to the academic plan.

## **MEASURING SUCCESS**

The success of any plan depends not only on leadership and creativity, but also includes a continuous focus on measuring progress. Relevant metrics and progress indicators are under development and will be used to help the university community gauge its ongoing success in achieving the plan's goals. It is important to ensure that these provide the flexibility needed to interpret the plan over five years. These indicators will be available at the university-wide level and at the level of individual departments, allowing for the tracking of progress on objectives at the local level.