



CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGE AND
UNIVERSITY STUDENT SERVICES

Strategic Long-Range Plan 2017-2021

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Approved: May 5, 2017

Our Vision

CACUSS and its members are integral to the transformation and success of the postsecondary sector in Canada.

Vivid Description

- CACUSS will provide members with access to leading edge, innovative knowledge and best practices in Canadian Student Affairs and Services and promote education and career development among our membership.
- CACUSS will engage with stakeholders on priorities related to students in higher education and will be the national/international voice of Canadian Student Affairs and Services.
- Governments, media, funders, post-secondary institutions, researchers and other associations will call on CACUSS and its members for our professional insight and expertise, seek partnerships with us for their projects, and enthusiastically support our efforts.
- Student Affairs and Services professionals will be known for illuminating and informing a broad set of issues, working with students, faculty, and community members as boundary spanning change agents.
- Canadian Student Affairs and Services professionals will engage with CACUSS as an integral part of their professional identity and success. When people think of Student Affairs and Services in Canada, they will think of CACUSS.

Our Core Purpose

To advance the student affairs and services profession in Canada.

Our Core Values

- Integrity: operating transparently, ensuring accountability, demonstrating respect for others, functioning sustainably.
- Knowledge: contributing to profession; broadening contribution to field and the body of knowledge that drives the work, utilizing evidence based decision-making.
- Learning: considering new ways of doing things, building capacity and competency, openness to diverse perspectives.
- Collaboration and Consultation: including member perspectives in decision-making, ensuring national voices in our strategies, partnering to achieve goals.
- Engagement and Participation: recognizing the value of grassroots, member-driven initiatives, building value in volunteer experiences, enhancing multiple ways of engaging with the profession.
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility: Striving for universal design, considering the broadest participation in the Association and the profession, expanding involvement and voices of underrepresented groups.

Our Commitments

Our commitments, like our values, should be embedded in all aspects of our activities, objectives and strategies. The Board of Directors agrees that attention and resources should be committed to the following:

Indigenization: The Board of Directors commits to ensuring that our association activities appropriately include, reflect, and represent Indigenous perspectives with participation and input from Indigenous members. CACUSS is committed to understanding how our practices both as an association and on our member campuses can contribute to reconciliation and decolonization.

Health and Well-being: The Board of Directors commits to supporting initiatives that build on the health & well-being of our campus communities, our members, our students, and our environment. This commitment reflects our intention that our activities, actions, and projects should consider how they build and support healthy living and working environments.

Equity and Inclusion: CACUSS recognizes the dignity and worth of every person and is committed to creating an environment that is safe, accessible, inclusive and respectful of members, participants, directors, and staff. We acknowledge that our collective talents, skills

and perspectives foster a culture of belonging, growth, learning, collaboration, innovation and mutual respect. With this and taking the spirit of our by-laws and the Canadian Student Affairs and Services Competency 6: “Equity, diversity and inclusion” and 4; “Indigenous Cultural Competence” we are committed to embracing diversity by fostering equity and inclusion through all facets of the organization, this includes striving to:

- Identify and address barriers and biases that may exist within our systems or programs that impact our members or staff; we will work to create policies, protocols, programs and services that seek to mitigate or eliminate systemic barriers and promote inclusion;
- Respect and value everyone for their contribution, celebrating peoples’ differences and providing equality of opportunity for all.

The creation of an equitable, diverse as well as inclusive community of student affairs professionals is the responsibility of every member of the organization.

Our Goals	
1. Professional Development	CACUSS will offer comprehensive, robust, innovative, leading-edge learning opportunities to its members.
2. Knowledge, Research and Insight	CACUSS will provide relevant, reliable and valued knowledge about Canadian Student Affairs and Services.
3. Inclusive Membership	CACUSS will offer a wide variety of avenues for meaningful member engagement in the association.
4. Impact of the Profession	CACUSS and its members will foster the development of Student Affairs and Services in Canada to ensure that the profession is universally valued and widely understood.
5. Advocacy and Influence	CACUSS’ individual and collective expertise will support member’s advocacy interests for change in policy, practice, and priorities for students in post-secondary education.

Goal 1 – Professional Development

GOAL

CACUSS will offer comprehensive, robust, innovative, leading-edge learning opportunities to its members.

OBJECTIVES

1. Expand and effectively leverage our available technology, tools and infrastructure to support the diversity of our members.
2. Increase member knowledge and mastery of the professional competencies at appropriate levels.
3. Increase professional development offerings that engage and attract non-members.
4. Increase new and existing revenue opportunities that can fund ongoing professional development offerings and other association programs and services.

STRATEGIES

1. Create a comprehensive 5-year professional development plan.
2. Identify and expand relevant community of practice and discipline-focused competencies that will guide the strategic development of learning opportunities.
3. Establish outcome and assessment mechanisms to monitor and evaluate learner mastery of the competencies.
4. Determine capacity and make choices about resources focused on English- and French-speaking professionals.

Goal 2 – Knowledge, Research & Insight

GOAL

CACUSS will provide relevant, reliable and valued knowledge about Canadian Student Affairs and Services.

OBJECTIVES

1. Increase recognition of our knowledge expertise.
2. Improve alignment of our knowledge expertise with external stakeholders' priorities and trends.
3. Increase funding and resources to support new and existing member-driven research.

STRATEGIES

1. Establish a comprehensive Canadian Research agenda/strategy in student affairs and services.
2. Create a comprehensive organizational infrastructure to support the creation of and access to research. Identify the money, time, people, and skills to support this work.
3. Create an inventory of our current knowledge sources and ensure they are available and accessible to members.

Goal 3 – Inclusive Membership

GOAL

CACUSS will offer a wide variety of avenues for meaningful member engagement in the association.

OBJECTIVES

1. Expand the capacity and further strengthen our communities of practice.
2. Increase understanding of the role of COPs as subject matter experts, and encourage member involvement in multiple communities.
3. Increase our capacity to deliver valuable service to the francophone community.
4. Expand the number of professionals (and segments of the profession) that are attracted to CACUSS membership and involvement
5. Increase our membership from institutions beyond universities (e.g. colleges, technical institutions, CEGEPs, etc).
6. Continue to improve our outreach efforts in all regions of Canada, ensuring representative participation by members from across the country in CACUSS activities.

STRATEGIES

1. Provide comprehensive orientation and leadership training to Directors, Committee Leaders, and Community of Practice Leaders.
2. Develop a measureable approach to increase participation in CACUSS communities.

Goal 4 – Impact of the Profession

GOAL

CACUSS and its members will foster the development of Student Affairs and Services in Canada to ensure that the profession is universally valued and widely understood.

OBJECTIVES

1. Increase our knowledge of the role and function of student affairs and services throughout Canada.
2. Increase opportunities to encourage participation in the profession from the widest diversity of Canadians.
3. Increase the frequency with which student affairs and services is viewed as illuminating a broad set of issues as boundary spanners and change agents, influencing and informing on key issues impacting our students and our campus communities.

STRATEGIES

1. Create a comprehensive new professionals institute that is the gold standard for entry level training and competency development in Canada.
2. Expand our influence and connection to graduate programs and faculty in Canada.
3. Develop and conduct a Canada-wide benchmarking tool to gather data and better understand the demographics and scope of the profession in Canada.

Goal 5 – Advocacy and Influence

GOAL

CACUSS' individual and collective expertise will support member's advocacy interests for change in policy, practice, and priorities for students in post-secondary education.

OBJECTIVES

1. Establish internal guidelines and processes to guide how we leverage the association's knowledge and expertise to support member institutions attempts to influence external stakeholders.
2. Expand and nurture relationships with external stakeholders to help inform and support member advocacy.
3. Connect our knowledge and research efforts to key issues identified by our members requiring advocacy.

STRATEGIES

1. Create an issues management process to determine how to respond to media and other requests.
2. Work with Senior leaders across the country to set priorities and establish standards on supporting member advocacy.
3. Inventory and leverage our member expertise to support member and external stakeholders requests.

APPENDIX

CACUSS wishes to thank Jean Frankel, [Ideas for Action Inc.](#) for her work in facilitating our strategic planning discussions and providing the template for our plan.

CACUSS (Canadian Association of College & University Student Services) has developed the preceding strategic long-range plan. It describes a desired vision and what will be essential to achieving that vision. It is grounded in **core ideology** and driven by an **envisioned future** that realizes the full potential of CACUSS's ability to support its stakeholders. CACUSS's commitments are articulated in **goals** that declare the outcomes the organization intends to achieve. **Objectives** represent key metrics affecting CACUSS's ability to achieve the goal and articulate the direction in which these issues must be moved. **Strategies** describe how CACUSS plans to commit its resources to make its vision a reality.

In the future, CACUSS will not be able to be all things to all people, but it must be different things to different people as the plan evolves to meet the needs of a constantly changing community. Therefore, underlying this plan is the adoption of an ongoing process of planning and thinking strategically, designed to ensure relevance of direction and action over time.

In developing this strategic plan, a framework for planning was utilized, based on a model that organizes conversations about the future into four distinct planning "horizons." Ideas for Action, LLC has found the use of this framework to be a powerful tool. It helps organizations in prioritizing and executing outcomes as well as in ensuring relevance of long-range direction over time.



Envisioned future. The “four planning horizons” framework consists of crafting a comprehensive strategic direction based on the balance between what doesn’t change--the timeless principles of the organization’s core purpose and core values(core ideology) -- and what the organization seeks to become within a 10- to 30-year horizon--what would be possible beyond the restraints of the current environment. The 10- to 30-year horizon is characterized by the articulation of an envisioned future--a vision and a vivid description-- what it will be like to achieve the goal.

Critical factors. The articulation of the envisioned future guides the organization as it considers the factors that will affect its ability to achieve its goals. Building foresight about the 5- to 10-year horizon--assumptions, opportunities, and critical uncertainties in the likely relevant future as well as emerging strategic mega-issues--suggests critical choices about the potential barriers the organization will face. This foresight also suggests the responses the organization will need to consider in navigating its way toward achievement of its 10- to 30-year goal, or vision.

Strategic plan and operational planning. The linkage continues into the 3- to 5-year horizon through the development of a formal long-range strategic plan, in which the organization articulates the outcomes it seeks to achieve for its stakeholders. How will the world be different as a result of what the organization does? Who will benefit and what will the likely results be? Further, the articulation of strategies will bring focus to the organization's annual operational allocation of discretionary resources. Action plans, checkpoints, and milestones will be developed through a process of operational planning, indicating progress toward each goal in every planning year.

A strategic long-range plan is not intended as a substitute for an annual operating plan. It does not detail all the initiatives, programs, and activities the organization will undertake in the course of serving its membership and the industry, nor can it foresee changes to the underlying assumptions on which key strategic choices were based. Instead, the strategic plan identifies what CACUSS is not doing today, but must be doing in the future to be successful. Consequently, the strategic plan implies change--doing new things or doing more or less of current activities to ensure successful outcomes.

Ongoing Reevaluation. Strategic planning for CACUSS should become the methodology for the organization's operations. If it is successful, this process will not have yielded a plan to be placed on the shelf, but will have served as a catalyst for the "process of planning strategically," at all times and at all levels throughout the organization. In order to achieve its vision, CACUSS must not look at strategic long-range planning as a one-time project that produces a milestone document of its best thinking at the moment. Instead, CACUSS must adopt strategic planning as an operational philosophy of ongoing reevaluation of the critical knowledge bases that form the framework of its world, including:

- Sensitivity to stakeholder and community needs, insight into the future environment
- Understanding of the capacity and strategic position of the organization
- Effective analysis of the ethical implications of policy, program and service choices.

CACUSS's strategic long-range plan represents a compass the organization will use to guide its work over the next five years. Each year of its life, the plan will be updated based on experience or new circumstances or as new opportunities or challenges emerge. In 2020, CACUSS should author a new strategic long-range plan based upon the new environment expected to exist in a rapidly evolving world.

ENVISIONED FUTURE

Envisioned future conveys a concrete, but yet unrealized, vision for the organization. It consists of a **big audacious goal** – a clear and compelling catalyst that serves as a focal point for effort – and a **vivid description** – vibrant and engaging descriptions of what it will be like to achieve the vision.

CORE IDEOLOGY

Core ideology describes an organization's consistent identity that transcends all changes related to its relevant environment. Core ideology consists of two notions: **core purpose** – the organization's reason for being – and **core values** – essential and enduring principles that guide and organization.

Core Values definition

These values live inside individuals but are shared by the Association. We try to emulate these values in the work we do both on our campuses and in our roles as Association leaders.

OUTCOME-ORIENTED GOALS

Goals are outcome-oriented statements that represent what will constitute CACUSS's future success. The achievement of each goal will move the organization towards the realization of its vision. The goals are not in any order of priority. Every goal will need to be accomplished if the organization is to fully achieve its vision.

ENVISIONED FUTURE

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ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE RELEVANT FUTURE

Assumption statements will help an organization purposefully update its strategic plan on an

annual basis. As the outcome-oriented goals that will form the basis of the long-range strategic plan will be based on the vision of the future that appears in this section, an annual review of these assumptions will be an appropriate method of determining and ensuring the ongoing relevance of CACUSS's strategy and goals.

ASSUMPTIONS about Demographics

1. The average age of our profession will decrease and there will be increasing numbers of new professionals.
2. There will be more professionals intentionally choosing student affairs as profession and there will be an increase in the diversity of professional pathways to the field.
3. The membership of CACUSS and professionals working in student affairs are not representative of the diversity of Canada, including underrepresentation of certain ethnic/cultural groups, Indigenous communities, men, and persons who experience a barrier due to a disability.
4. Student demographics will change resulting in fewer "traditional-aged" students and enrollments will decline in most regions of Canada.
5. There will be increasing numbers of Indigenous students participating in post-secondary education.

ASSUMPTIONS about Social, Cultural and Consumer Values

1. There will be increased attention to supporting Indigenous students, responding to the Calls to Action from the Truth & Reconciliation Commission, and the impact of indigenizing our campuses and our work.
2. There will be greater attention paid to issues of both ecological and financial sustainability of programming.
3. There will continue to be a value tension between students pursuing education for career, future earning and job seeking reasons vs. learning for the sake of pursuing one's passion or for the value of life-long-learning. Institutions will experience increased pressure from employers, students and parents.
4. Institutions will be challenged to take a more systemic approach to complex issues such as student mental health, sexual violence and safety, and freedom of expression.

5. As complexity of the educational environment increases, and access becomes more universal, learners will seek flexibility in educational options.
6. There will be a continued and growing impact and influence of internationalization on university and college campuses.

ASSUMPTIONS about Legislative and Regulatory

1. Changes in provincial and federal legislation will significantly impact and, in some cases, dictate our operations. (e.g.: sexual violence, immigration, financial and federal and provincial accessibility legislation).
2. Continuing pressure of accountability will require more attention to assessment & outcomes.
3. There will be continued evolution and redefinition of legal issues that will impact roles and responsibilities of student affairs and services professionals.
4. Changes to international, inter-provincial, and inter-institutional agreements (e.g. transfer/mobility/exchange) will impact operations of institutions.

ASSUMPTIONS about the Economic Climate

1. Global economic factors and insecurity will cause greater scrutiny of resource use and impose limitations on spending.
2. Cuts and instability to provincial transfers will affect the way institutions distribute resources.
3. Emerging global economic “powers” (e.g.: China, India) will increase internationalization and globalization and will impact institutional strategies and agendas.
4. As institutions require more diversity in sources of funding (non-government, private/corporate sponsorship, base/operating/ancillary fees, provincial/federal government) these influences will impact institutional and programmatic decision-making.
5. Tuition costs and student loan debt will continue to change the demographic of students -- impacting where they study and how they participate in their education .
6. Increase in private providers of services will impact our operations at public institutions

and potential participation in CACUSS.

ASSUMPTIONS about Technology

1. Continual changes in technology will radically change curriculum design and pedagogy.
2. Changes to technology will decrease the number of students that physically come to campus and create new opportunities for student affairs practice.
3. Changes in communication technology will change the nature of interactions and relationships that characterize the student experience.
4. The increase of technology will challenge our assumptions about student's psycho-social development.
5. The increase of technology will illuminate its own inherent barriers to access (i.e. ability, socio-economic, age, culture etc.)
6. Technology will change expectations of how student affairs and services professionals interact with one another and how they access professional development and other knowledge.

ASSUMPTION about the Nature of the Profession

1. The lack of data on our students and our profession's demographics will make it difficult to make informed decisions.
2. There will be increased demand for interdisciplinarity that will result in a re-definition of our work.
3. Our work will be organized in increasingly complex ways which may make it difficult to communicate the value or impact of what we do.
4. There will be increased pressure from external stakeholders within the institution to redefine our profession.