

An aerial photograph of a large, multi-story university building with Gothic-style architecture, including a prominent tower with a cross. The scene is captured at dusk or dawn, with a deep blue color cast over the entire image. The building's facade is light-colored, and the windows are dark. The foreground shows a paved plaza with a few small figures of people walking. The overall mood is serene and academic.

**University of Windsor**

**Detailed Strategic Framework Part 2:**

*Narratives, Mission, Vision, and Values*

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# How to use this document

- This document provides Part 2 of a framework of the core elements of the strategic plan based on input from the campus community. The purpose is to provide further opportunity for input and feedback on the crystalizing elements of the institutional strategic plan.
- This document focuses on institutional narratives, and the proposed vision, mission, and values statements for the Strategic Plan.
- This is a phased process: the purpose of this document is to elicit discussion as we work towards finalizing a shared vision for the future
- At the end of the document there are a number of avenues for potential engagement outlined. We encourage all members of the campus and broader community to participate.
- Not every element that is mentioned in the framework will be highlighted in the final Strategic Planning document. The Strategic Plan is the first step in a cascading strategy, so certain items may be more appropriate to surface in subsequent planning documents.

# Institutional Narratives

For Public Comment

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# Institutional Narratives

- Institutions have stories. Not only the official story of the institution and its successes and failures over time – but also the stories of the people and communities. These stories can operate as explanatory narratives impacting how we interpret what happened and imagine what might (Clark, 1972, Usher, 2018). They inform and circumscribe what communities think is possible and what is valuable, and also what is stopping them: they are about the future, as much as the past. Because these stories condition our ability and willingness to change, they are often central to processes of change.
- There is not one story of an institution: there are many communities within an institution and their stories are not always equally heard. We are trying to learn to listen better, and to build the bridges, spaces, and dispositions that will enable us to all hear each other and learn from each other.
- During the strategic planning process, we want to better understand:
  - Where have we been?
  - What makes us different from other universities?
  - Where should we be going?
  - What is our untapped potential?

# Institutional Narratives

- Many told stories about the University as a place of uplift – a place where individuals and teams work hard to create opportunity and possibility working in partnership with students, and about students whose lives were transformed by the learning and relationships built here and by tangible and material support for students. These are stories of inclusion, opportunity, and excellence – and also of how much more there is to be done, and how often these efforts are unsung.
- Many told stories about the importance of the University – in terms of education, innovation and research, and community engagement -- for this region, and the power of partnership and community engagement.
- Many emphasized that the university offers an important bridge between regional and global perspectives, concerns and opportunities that broadens and deepens opportunities and knowledge creation and translation for everyone.
- However, members of campus communities often feel hampered by bureaucratic and other institutional barriers that make it harder to have the breadth and depth of impact they aspire to. These barriers sap morale and limit opportunity.

# What we heard

- There was a clear recognition of the importance and potential of the University's location.
- We are an anchor institution for Windsor, the only University within 200km (in Ontario) sitting on the busiest border crossing in North America, and the only university in Canada that is ten minutes away from a major US city.
- The University of Windsor sits in West Windsor next to a neighbourhood of national historic importance.
- These neighbourhoods are also home to some of the region's highest poverty rates and lowest educational attainment rates.
- Our success and the region's success are interdependent.

# What we heard

- After two years of pandemic-related crisis, communities on campus are disconnected, burnt out and want the opportunity to reconnect.
- Many students are struggling with transitions and in some cases with gaps in their learning because of disrupted educational experiences. They have varied perspectives face-to-face vs. Online/Hyflex learning formats.
- The impact of the pandemic continues to unfold and we are all still making sense of what has happened, how we've changed, and what is needed next.
- There was a clear and resounding recognition that going back to pre-pandemic norms is not possible. Continued adaptation and evolution as an institution is needed and that will continue to require dialogue and analysis: there are divided views about how we need to evolve, and this suggests we need to think creatively and flexibly about the future.
- The University's response to COVID was often cited as evidence that the University can change more rapidly than it typically does.

# What we heard

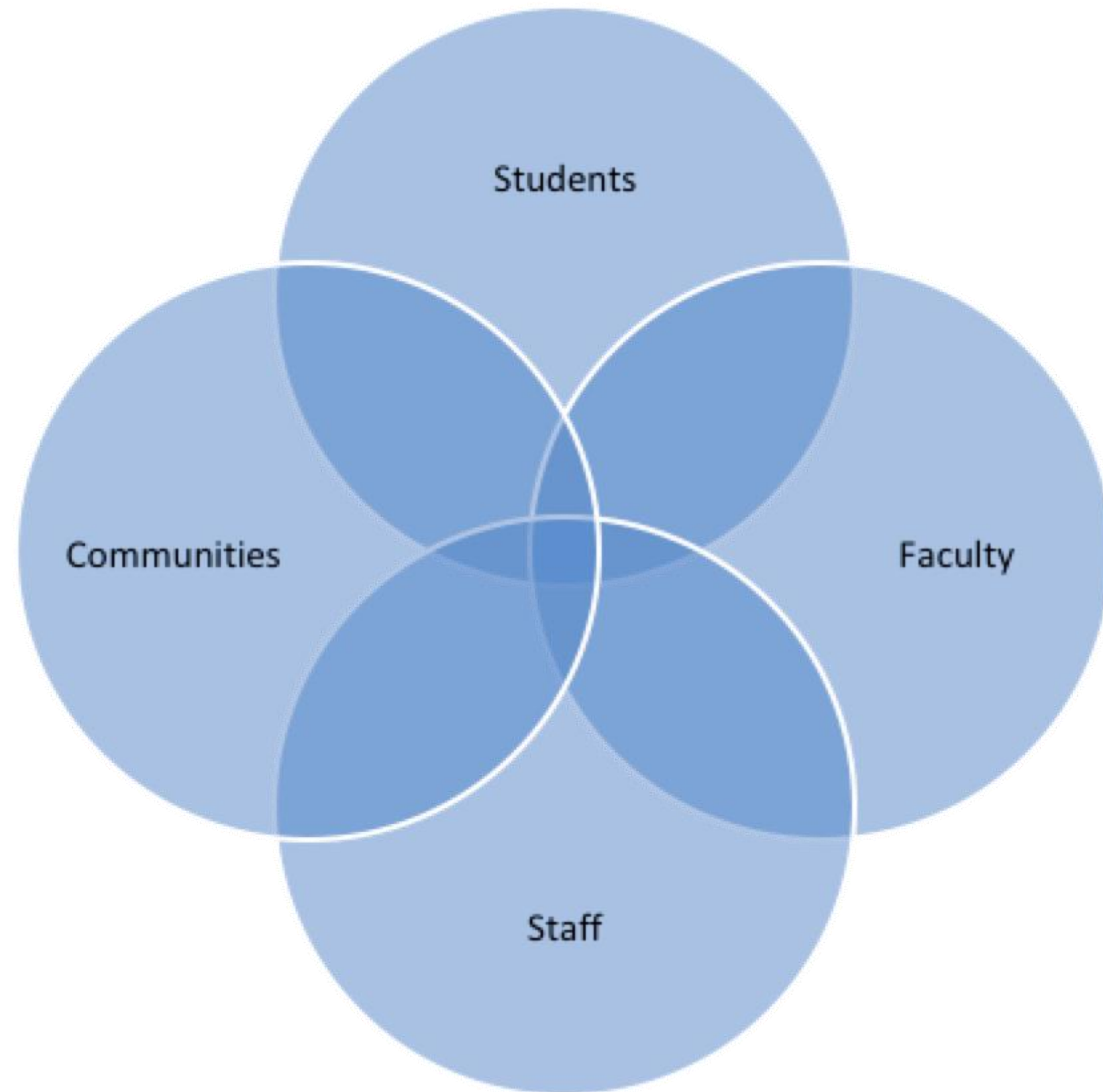
- People on campus worry about the future – of the university and the region, but also socially, economically, politically, and environmentally at a more global level.
- They recognize that the university's ability to truly achieve its core mission and to contribute to solving those problems rests on its people, and also on its ability to remain financially sustainable in this provincial context, and focused on its mission and values.
- There are divided views about what the challenges are and how they should be addressed, and a need for more information sharing, dialogue, and transparency as we move forward.



# What we heard

- Despite being an institution of higher learning, it was reported that communities are not that good at listening to and learning from each other. We need to build a fundamental culture of learning as an organization.
- We have not been welcoming, fair, or inclusive to all people on this very diverse campus – we need to be open to hearing and understanding people's needs, concerns, and goals, and engaging with those priorities in new ways. We need to listen, and keep listening, with a critical and inclusive lens as we proceed. We need to be cautious about telling "the" story of the institution.
- Students' voices and ideas need to be heard and respected. There are disconnects between what the student experience is and what people (staff/faculty) perceive as the student experience.
- Where change has begun to occur people feel cautiously optimistic, see initial steps as an opportunity and as a sign that change is possible at a broader level. But that is not a unanimous perspective: trust continues to be a challenge.
- The University needs to build leadership capacity and diversity, and to be a leader and an advocate both on and off campus
- People want to see actions and consequences for behaviour that is collectively seen as unacceptable. They also want to work and learn in a place where people help each other.
- **What became very clear is that our people and the communities they are a part of on campus are vitally important: despite all the challenges, people here have deep commitments to one another, to our communities, and to students.**

# A Strategic Foundation: The People



**A university is its people.**

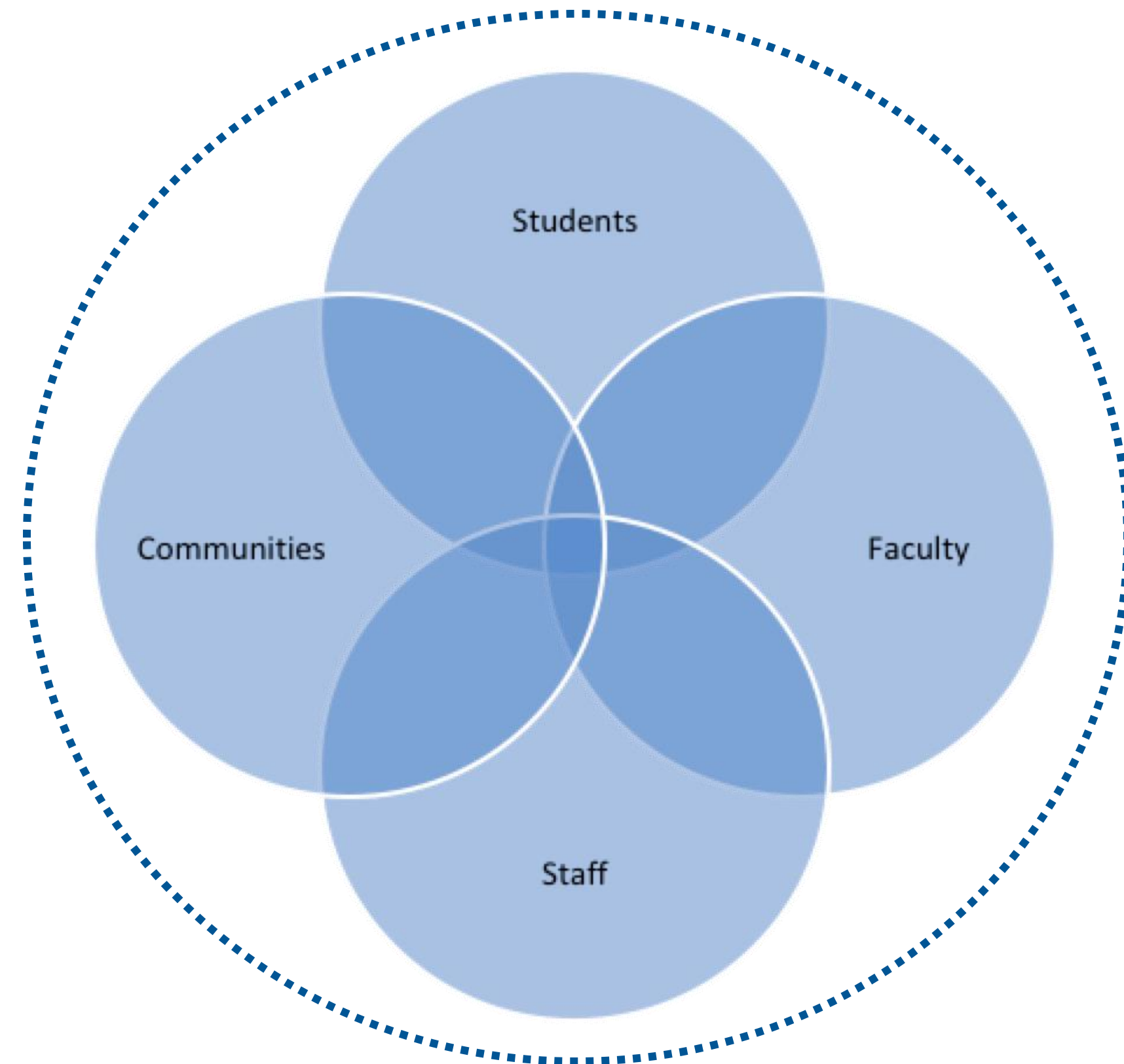
Holistic, nimble and inclusive support for people and their work is fundamental to a sustainable model of student-centered, learning-oriented practice, to knowledge creation and innovation, and to a university that serves its communities and where everyone can thrive.

**We're in this together.**

# A Strategic Foundation: The People

- Regardless of the topic of consultations on campus, people or people-adjacent issues were dominant.
- Students, staff, faculty and community members all focused on different perspectives and priorities related to how to best support people/communities on campus but the overlaps were clear, which we attempted to illustrate in the Venn diagram.
- People's perceptions of the institution are often shaped by individual experiences and close contacts. A personal friend who speaks poorly of their experience at the University of Windsor (regardless of role) has trickledown impacts on perceptions of the University. How we treat people also has reputational and strategic implications.
- The recent employee engagement survey showed that there is work to do on improving a number of key elements that directly impact employees' happiness, productivity, and outlook.
- As a result, the strategic foundation of this plan focuses on people and culture.

# A Strategic Foundation: The People and Culture



## People and culture:

- Emphasis on connectedness and reconnecting
- Internal communication and feedback loops
- Health and wellness
- Work-life balance
- Paying attention to the whole person
- Need for inclusive, equitable leadership and opportunity development
- Need to become a learning organization, foster a learning culture, mobilize knowledge
- Systematic improvement of services supporting people
- Trust, trust-building, and trustworthiness
- Transparent and clear governance, policies, and processes

# Reaching Our Potential: Mission, Vision and Values

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# Mission Vision and Values Development

- Survey feedback was collected on 2010 Mission, Vision and Values with open-ended questions on the applicability of these elements for the current context of the University.
- Steering committee reviewed of values statement from other universities
- Subcommittee of steering developing draft statements
- Steering Committee review of draft mission, vision and values.
- Drafts also reviewed by offices of VP, EDI and Senior Advisor to the President on Indigenous Relations and Outreach
- Values are the place we start: what drives our decisions and our behaviour.

# Mission Statement

## **2010 Mission Statement:**

*Enabling people to make a better world through education, scholarship, research, and engagement.*

The role of the mission statement is to frame the institution's role and actions.

## **Proposed 2022 Mission Statement:**

*To empower positive change through regionally and globally engaged inquiry, learning, scholarship, creation, and research.*

## **Campus feedback:**

- Majority of respondents previously unaware of the mission statement.
- Mission Statement is needed for a number of major grants and required reporting frameworks.
- People felt the mission statement satisfactory, but again could use some updating and refinement.

# Vision Statement

## **2010 Vision Statement:**

*The University of Windsor is a progressive student-centred University, where the challenges of communities and of a world in transition inform the education we provide, the research we do, and the creative endeavours we pursue.*

The role of the vision statement is to describe what the institutions wants to achieve going forward

## **Proposed 2022 Vision Statement:**

*As a globally connected anchor institution in the Windsor-Essex region, the University of Windsor strives to transform the circumstances of our students, people, and communities. We will engage with regional and global challenges through impactful research, relevant teaching, creative endeavours, and positive relationship building.*

## **Campus feedback:**

- Majority of respondents previously unaware of the vision statement.
- People felt the vision statement was satisfactory, but again could use some updating and refinement.



# 2010 Strategic Plan Values

- Commitment to civility and respect for others
- Commitment to Highest Standards of Human Rights & Freedoms
- Commitment to highest intellectual standards
- Commitment to being a responsible steward of people, culture, resources, and the environment
- Commitment to have the student experience be a central consideration in decision making
- Commitment to applying teaching, research, & creative activity to issues of importance to the world

## **Campus feedback:**

- General support for these values
- Need for updated language, change of emphasis
- Majority of respondents previously unaware of them
- Indications people feel we have not really lived up to these values

# 2022 Values

## **Academic Excellence: Connection and Diversity**

*We foster academic excellence and creativity in connection with diverse local and global knowledge communities. We recognize that there are many ways of knowing, many knowledge traditions, and many ways of creating and disseminating knowledge. This diversity brings complex perspectives and lenses to the University, and enhances the richness of our academic pursuits. We strive for high standards of academic excellence, encouraging creativity, innovation, and collaboration and valuing diverse ways of meeting those standards.*

# 2022 Values

## **Community Impact: Engagement and Partnerships**

*We are an anchor institution in our region, and we have the privilege and responsibility of living, learning, working and creating partnerships here. We lead and partner projects and initiatives that can benefit this region, and that bring global perspectives and emerging knowledge to the table as we address regional challenges together. Our impact is greatest when we all learn together, inspired by the diverse perspectives we can bring to solving complex problems.*

# 2022 Values

## **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: Enhancing Safety and Belonging**

*Our journey of creating a more equitable, diverse, inclusive, and accessible campus is ongoing. We have taken initial steps but the journey towards equity and justice is never-ending. We recognize that ensuring justice, embedding anti-oppression and openness in our institution will require care and commitment over time to make the difficult changes needed. Some of this work will require decolonizing our institution and changing practices that have penalized and stigmatized members of our communities for too long.*

# 2022 Values

## **Indigenization and Decolonization: Continuing the Journey**

*We have a responsibility to Indigenize and Decolonize the University, and to make it a welcoming place for all Indigenous peoples. There is much to learn from Indigenous teachings and traditions, and integrating Indigenous knowledges and values will improve our institution for everyone. We will work diligently to ensure that Indigenous staff, students and faculty feel supported and that the impact of intergenerational traumas are addressed. We will move forward with the implementation of the 12 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that relate to Post-Secondary Institutions, as well as advocating for and supporting the implementation of all 94 of the TRC's Calls to Action.*

# 2022 Values

## **People: Care, Compassion, and Respect**

*Our people are the foundation of all that we do. We are committed to becoming an institution that increasingly and consistently operates from a place of care, compassion, respect, humility, and empathy.*

# 2022 Values

## **Student Experience: Transformation and Inclusion**

*We are committed to enhancing the holistic student experience where learning and gathering spaces are reflective of the communities we serve. We strive to be a place where all students feel welcome, included, and engaged -and where students, staff, faculty, and communities work together to foster meaningful engagement for everyone.*

*This will require us to ensure the student voice is heard, and that we respond to those voices with compassion, care, and flexibility. Through globally informed world-class education, we will help transform our learners into the next generation of leaders, thinkers, and global citizens who will thrive in an uncertain world.*

# 2022 Values

## **Sustainability: Climate and Environment**

*Our responsibilities extend beyond our campus, and it is important that we act as responsible stewards of resources and the environment both within the institution and beyond. We are working to help create healthier, more economically resilient and vibrant communities where climate and environmental sustainability are fundamental to daily decision making. We are on a journey to greater sustainability: we can lead in our region by demonstrating best practices and creating spaces for communities to learn and apply knowledge with us, while we reciprocally learn from communities.*



# 2022 Values

## **Transformation: Adaptability, Creativity, and Innovation**

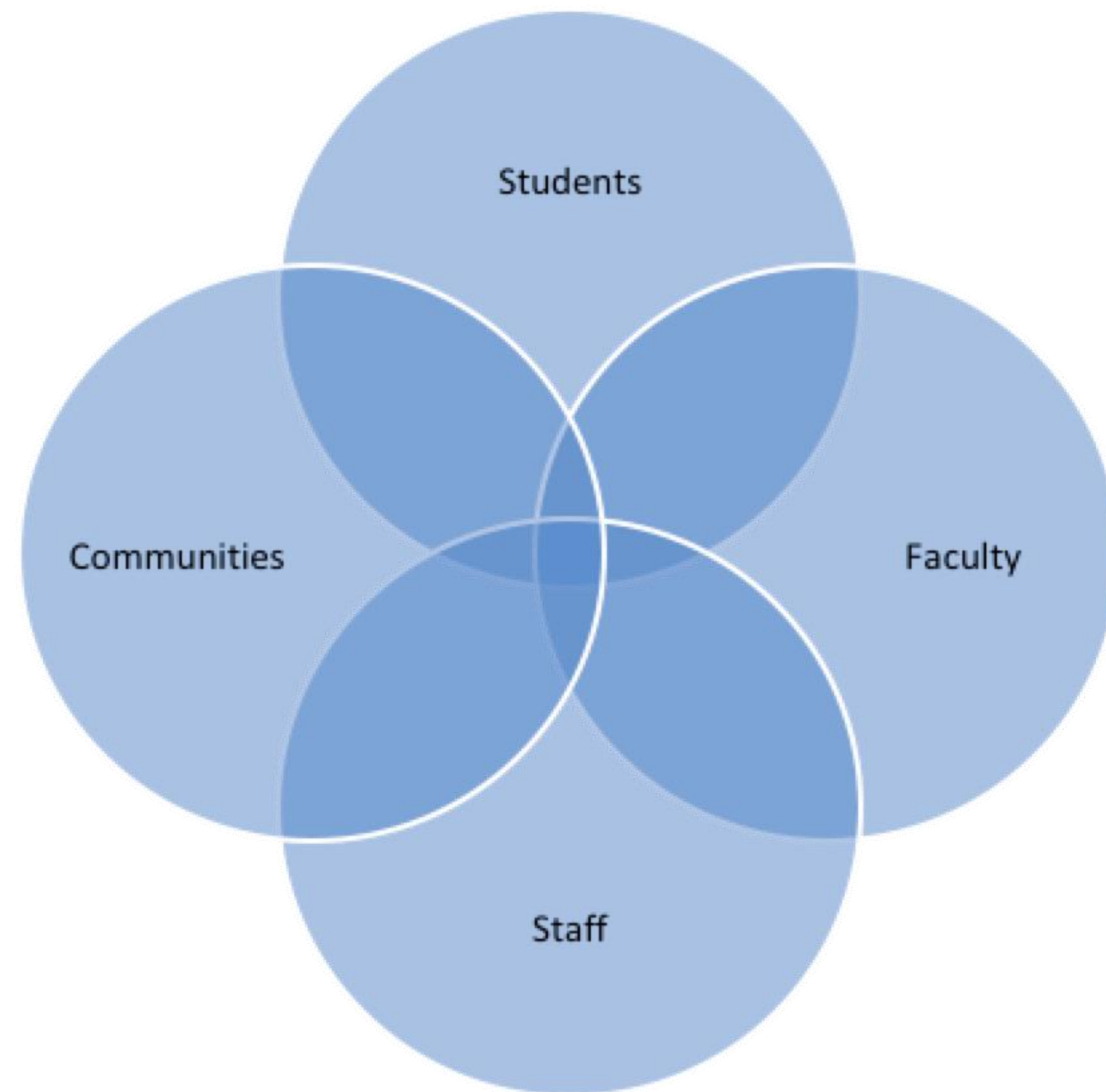
*We have shown that we can adapt and be agile when necessary. Our challenge now is to translate temporary adaptations into transformative evolution of the institution, recognizing that the needs of our stakeholders are constantly evolving and changing. Nimbleness, agility and flexibility are institutional muscles we need to grow and develop. As an institution we need to evolve beyond the way we've always done things, be willing to take calculated risks, and continuously learn from those actions.*

# 2022 Values

## **Trust: Accountability and Transparency**

*Trustworthiness is built through accountability and transparency. We are moving towards greater honesty and integrity by thoughtfully and consultatively establishing approaches to measuring our progress, actively monitoring our successes, and learning from our failures. We listen, learn, and share knowledge with our communities on and off campus. Where we miss the mark, we will acknowledge it learn from our missteps, and use what we learn to inform future approaches. As a public institution, we are also accountable for our stewardship of public funds and to our communities.*

# Putting People at the Heart of Decision Making



## People and culture:

- Emphasis on connectedness and reconnecting
- Internal communication and feedback loops
- Health and wellness
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- Paying attention to the whole person
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# Next Steps For Public Comment

University of Windsor

Stephen and  
Vicki Adams  
Welcome Centre

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# Next Steps

- Feedback will be solicited on the framework through multiple avenues of engagement
- Online survey
- Email submissions to [stratplanning@uwindsor.ca](mailto:stratplanning@uwindsor.ca)
- Virtual Townhall
- Group engagements – Deans, Assistant Deans, Department Heads etc.
- Once feedback is received, the final draft of the Strategic Plan will be ready for review and approval by Senate and Board of Governors in Winter 2023.