Western University
Student Experience Strategic Plan
2017-2023

Version: September 5, 2017
Indigenous Land Acknowledgement

Western University is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lunaapeewak and Attawandaron peoples, who have longstanding relationships to the land and region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London. The local First Nation communities of this area include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the region, there are eleven First Nation communities and a growing Indigenous urban population.

Western Student Experience values the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America).
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The student experience at Western University is second to none in Canada, and Western has long been known for offering 'the best student experience'. Western reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the student experience through the establishment of a Student Experience division in 2014. Student Experience is made up of a large group of dedicated professional staff, student staff, and student volunteers, numbering over 500 in total. These staff work in units including: Sports and Recreation Services; Indigenous Services; Psychological Services, Learning Skills, Writing Support, Services for Students with Disabilities (Student Development Centre); Career Counselling, Experiential Learning, Employer Relations, Transition, Leadership & Enrichment (The Student Success Centre); Wellness Education Centre; and Entrepreneurship (Propel), to support the diverse needs of our students inside and outside of the classroom. It is the work of these dynamic, talented, and committed individuals that has, and will continue to be at the forefront of fostering an exceptional student experience at Western.

As a new and evolving division, this Strategic Plan presents our first guiding roadmap for our work over the next three years, and works to align our priorities with Western University’s Strategic Plan: Achieving Excellence on the World Stage. The plan was created through an extensive consultation process from September 2014 – December 2016, and has been informed by the changing needs of our student body. This process included three staff retreats, three retreats with Student Experience Leaders, outcome-development and consultation meetings with each team across the division, student focus groups, and an external review. We also leveraged a number of large benchmarking surveys to inform this work, including the National Survey of Student Engagement (2014) and the National College Health Assessment (2016). Further, this divisional strategic plan has been developed in parallel with a number of other strategic plans that will inform the work of our division moving forward, including Western’s Indigenous Strategic Plan (approved by Board of Governors in November 2016), Western’s Student Orientation Strategic Plan (approved by Orientation Governance Board in December 2016), and Western’s Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategic Plan (anticipated completion by August 2017). This plan summarizes the voices, contributions, and ideas of our community through these consultation processes.

The Student Experience Strategic Plan is intended to identify key outcomes and areas of focus to guide our work moving forward. The plan includes the following key elements:
- Vision, Purpose, and Values statements, which will guide how we do our work;
- Student learning and development outcomes, which articulate the various ways in which students and our campus community are different as a result of the work we do;
- Eight Broad Strategic Directions, including specific goals and strategies, that highlight key priorities across Student Experience through this planning period.

This plan will be a dynamic and living document. We will be working with graduate and undergraduate students, and staff across Student Experience to implement the contents of this plan from 2017-2023, and will continue to adapt to meet the needs of our students as effectively as possible. It is with pride of the exceptional work we do, and excitement for how we will evolve in the coming years that I present our first Student Experience Strategic Plan.

Sincerely,

Jana Luker
Associate Vice President Student Experience
Vision, Purpose, Values

Vision
Western Student Experience inspires all learners to ignite extraordinary personal, local and global change.

Purpose
Support the whole learner’s growth through programs, services and experiences that foster well-being, build connections and develop skills.

Values
Showing genuine compassion
Fostering an inclusive environment
Being respectful of others
Working collaboratively
Striving toward excellence

Student Experience Portfolio Outcomes
As a result of programs and services offered in the Student Experience Portfolio, Western students:

- Develop leadership skills through experiences, mentoring, and formal training.
- Acquire and apply a range of social, emotional, academic and workplace-relevant transferrable skills.
- Engage in experiential learning opportunities through co-curricular activities, work integrated learning, entrepreneurship, global experiences and community engaged learning that prepare them for future professional, academic and work endeavors.
- Access a more inclusive campus community that promotes cultural awareness and competencies among students, Indigenizes the institution, and removes barriers to student learning.
- Achieve well-being through active participation in a range of programs and services that promote healthy behaviours and support students in responding to challenges they experience.
- Are community engaged by actively building connections with members of Western, local and global communities.
### Broad Strategic Directions, Goals & Strategies

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<th>Broad Strategic Direction</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
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<td><strong>Enhance student access to programs and services across Student Experience and Western University</strong></td>
<td>Apply a universal design for learning (UDL) approach for programs and services within Student Experience; advocate for application of UDL approaches across the institution.</td>
<td>Invite UDL experts to provide training to key staff and stakeholders, including services for students with disabilities and teaching support centre. Identify systemic barriers to promoting UDL approaches, and advocate for dedicated resources to support faculty and staff interested in applying UDL in their work with students.</td>
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<td><strong>Enhance knowledge of impacts of mental health on accessibility of programs and services across the institution.</strong></td>
<td>Leverage resources from the Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health and apply strategies from the Mental Health Strategic Plan to improve accessibility and accommodation for those experiencing mental health challenges.</td>
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<td><strong>Increase and enhance provision of online services and supports, to increase accessibility for distance learners and the general student population.</strong></td>
<td>Collaborate with the Vice-Provost Academic Programs Office to enhance Western 1010 and increase content available through the portal (academic orientation, career development and learning skills). Allocate sustainable resources to provide portfolio-wide, permanent e-learning supports and expertise to sustain and expand e-learning and online initiatives.</td>
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| **Enhance anti-oppressive and inclusive practices across Student Experience through an intersectional lens, to more effectively support the needs of our diverse student body** | **Increase staff knowledge and skills to work with diverse communities through an anti-oppressive lens.** | **All SE staff will receive anti-oppression training, an initiative that will be sustained through a train the trainer approach.**

Ensure all staff engage in pilot sexual violence disclosure training, currently under development by the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children. |
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<td><strong>Recognize the unique needs of specific student populations and provide tailored programming where appropriate (e.g., Racialized students, LGBTQ2A+ students, Graduate Students, International Students, Mature Students).</strong></td>
<td><strong>Incorporate diverse student perspectives through active engagement with student groups (e.g. clubs representing racialized students, Society of Graduate Students, etc.).</strong></td>
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| **Enhance students’ knowledge and appreciation for diversity within the Western community, and as members of global communities.** | **Anti-oppression training for student leaders, and broader student community.**

Launch an anti-racism task force in collaboration with student organizations and campus stakeholders. | |
| **Enhance representation within our staff complement of the diverse identities and lived experiences within our Western and local communities.** | **Review staff recruitment and hiring systems and practices; provide training and anti-oppressive guidelines to selection committees.** | |
| **Increase the presence, inclusion, and visibility of Indigenous people, cultures and symbols through all SE activities.** | **Indigenous cultural competency training; Indigenous Strategic Plan Implementation; review of Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action related to Student Experience.** | |
| Improve environmental, financial, and social sustainability of Student Experience practices and operations to maximize the impact of our resources | Utilize three pillar sustainability model to enhance sustainability of program and services across Student Experience in the following areas:
- Environmental
- Financial
- Social. | Provide ongoing learning and development opportunities regarding sustainability to staff (e.g. lunch and learns, green office program participation, expert guest speakers at staff meetings).

Enhance environmental sustainability by shifting common norms and practices across all services (e.g. move toward water bottle and paper free; reusable or compostable meal service; ensure availability of composting).

Review sustainability of precariously funded core programs and services (e.g. grant and donor funded initiatives) establish sustainability plans and timelines.

Work to continually diversify funding sources through operational, student fee, grant and donor funding opportunities.

Incorporate student learning and development outcomes, impact measures, and evidence based practices in financial decision making processes.

Incorporate sustainability measures into general program and service review practices, budget processes, and KPI reporting (see assessment section).

Develop a donor relations plan in collaboration with donor relations and leaders to identify and prioritize appealing projects that are amenable to donor funding.

Allocate central, portfolio-wide human resources to support development of donor funding proposals and outreach with donor relations.

Expand application of recommendations from sustainability pilot project in the Student Success Centre to the larger portfolio.

When renewing and designing spaces, optimize them to encourage sustainable practices (e.g. Adequately outfitted staff kitchens to reduce reliance on disposables).
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<th>Enhance, streamline and coordinate communications of Student Experience programs and services to increase knowledge of our services among students, campus and community partners.</th>
<th>Increase student awareness of SE programs and services, including why and how to access them.</th>
<th>Develop a comprehensive Student Experience-wide communications plan, including communications best practices, tools, and resources to enhance consistency and clarity of Student Experience communications.</th>
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<td>Conduct student focus groups to identify areas of strength and gaps regarding current communications to the student community.</td>
<td>Review unit names (SDC / SSC) and identify whether more descriptive terms could be used in external communications of programs and services.</td>
<td>Utilize staff participation in large campus events and lecture series to promote services to students (e.g. service booths and promotional slides at major student events hosted across SE).</td>
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<td>Promote awareness of Student Experience services and the impacts of our work to faculty, staff, campus and community partners.</td>
<td>Establish effective communication tools to communicate SE services to all faculty and staff within the Western community (e.g. Annual report).</td>
<td>Provide information to key stakeholders through presentations at faculty councils, consultations with dean’s offices, presentations to other student facing services.</td>
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<td>Develop effective, outcomes-driven communications tools</td>
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<td>Enhance culture and staff engagement across Student Experience</td>
<td>Increase inclusion of staff in processes and decision making.</td>
<td>(online reporting website and dashboards) to effectively communicate the impact of our work to key stakeholders. Review results from 2017 We Speak Survey and develop an action plan to foster strengths and improve in areas of weakness. Establish cross-unit functional groups based on alignment with SE outcomes and strategic priorities outlined in this plan; these groups will implement initiatives stemming out of the SE strategic plan.</td>
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<td>Foster collaboration between teams across student experience.</td>
<td>Engage in ongoing outcome mapping and program review exercises with leadership team to identify ongoing opportunities for collaboration and cross-unit programming.</td>
<td>Offer ongoing opportunities for staff across the portfolio to gather for work-related and social engagements.</td>
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<td>Enhance transparency of leadership and decision making; support a culture that promotes providing constructive feedback and engaging in reflective practice.</td>
<td>Increase transparency of budget process and financial decision making at all levels of the portfolio through documentation of budget process, offering town halls, and engaging the leadership team throughout the process.</td>
<td>Senior leadership team engages in Leadership 360 once every two years. Promote ongoing opportunities for staff to provide feedback and input.</td>
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<td>Streamline the ecosystem of programs and services that support student mental health to enhance student access and wellness.</td>
<td>Promote engagement in and alignment with broader student affairs profession.</td>
<td>Increase knowledge among campus community (faculty, staff and students) regarding mental health and wellness, and where to refer students in need.</td>
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<td>into the direction of Student Experience through SE Strategic Plan Implementation Committees. Increase representation in broader Student Affairs professional communities (CACUSS, NASPA, ACPA). Create systems and supports to encourage staff to present and publish about innovative programs / services, and research and assessment of the impact of our work on students. Integrate PD plans and annual performance dialogue processes with the CACUSS Student Affairs and Services Competency Model.</td>
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<td>Enhance the accessibility and navigability of mental health services and supports.</td>
<td>Create streamlined intake / front desk processes across mental health services to ensure students can have their needs met at the first possible touch point. Leverage and expand existing first response systems (e.g. SERT) to establish dedicated 24/7 mental health first responders on campus. Enhance case-management and between-department communications related to mental health, student code of conduct, and sexual violence through establishment of a cross-institution case-management and/or early alert system.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase accessibility of online information and resources regarding mental health.</td>
<td>Review mental health websites and resources, including metadata on reach, impact and use, to enhance online information and resources for students. Create a mobile-friendly online version of the mental health and wellness guide.</td>
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<td>Support and implement recommendations identified in Western’s Student Health and Wellness Strategic Plan and Health and Wellness External Review.</td>
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<td><strong>Sustain and strengthen collaboration with academic programs and services across the University</strong></td>
<td><strong>Enhance awareness among faculty at all levels of programs and services offered through Student Experience.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Create annual engagement opportunities with each faculty through focus groups with faculty leaders/presentations at faculty councils regarding opportunities to work with Student Experience.</strong></td>
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<td>Develop an experiential learning strategic plan, in collaboration with faculties, to identify coordinated strategies to ensure that all Western students have access to an experiential learning opportunity by the time they graduate.</td>
<td>Streamline coordination of Work Integrated Learning opportunities across the institution to increase opportunities for students: - Reduce confusion and consistently use terminology (e.g. internships, experiential learning, etc.) - Establish a campus-wide contact management system to enhance communications with employers and campus partners.</td>
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<td>Streamline coordination of services that are offered across multiple units and at the faculty level (e.g. Career Services, Entrepreneurship, Writing Support and Learning Skills).</td>
<td>Create service-use agreements with faculties. Establish representative membership at associate dean table.</td>
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<td>Emphasize and seek out opportunities to embed programs and services within curriculum (for credit).</td>
<td>Promote opportunities to incorporate Student Experience programs and services within course curricula across faculties (e.g. Upstander Sexual Violence Education programming in Engineering first year courses, Leadership Education Programming in Faculty of Arts, Career Services programming in graduate programs).</td>
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<td><strong>Enhance outcomes-based reporting, assessment and measurement to foster quality assurance and maximize the impact of our activities on student outcomes.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Enhance ongoing engagement in evidence-based practice through outcome driven assessment of programs and services.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Align team and unit-level goal setting activities with SE outcomes.</strong></td>
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<td>Align SE Outcomes with Ontario Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations, Graduate Degree Level Expectations, and Western University Degree Level Outcomes.</td>
<td>Launch assessment committee.</td>
<td>Develop and launch assessment toolkit.</td>
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<td>Offer ongoing PD opportunities regarding assessment and measurement for SE staff.</td>
<td>Develop a multi-year assessment plan identifying a program/service review process.</td>
<td>Support monitoring and outcomes measurement of the Student Experience strategic plan.</td>
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<td>Develop outcomes-alignment and visualization tools in KPI reporting system (dashboards for all teams and users).</td>
<td>Support engagement in large-scale data collection and mobilization through climate surveys to identify student needs (e.g. National College Health Assessment, Sexual Violence Climate Surveys).</td>
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<td>Share the impact and outcomes of our work through identified Key Performance Indicators. These will be: -Aligned with SE Outcomes -Connected to institutional targets set out in Western’s Strategic Mandate Agreement -Consistently tracked and reported.</td>
<td>Align program and service offerings with measured student needs.</td>
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<td>Support engagement in large-scale data collection and mobilization through climate surveys to identify student needs (e.g. National College Health Assessment, Sexual Violence Climate Surveys).</td>
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Appendix I: Unit and Team Outcomes

The following section of the Student Experience strategic plan articulates outcomes for teams and units across student experience (these teams and units are identified in the organizational chart below).
The Student Success Centre

Unit Wide Outcomes

As a result of the work of The Student Success Centre:

- Students develop, can identify and articulate a range of transferrable skills.
- Community and industry partners are able to access Western talent to contribute in meaningful ways to their organizations.
- Students have increased access to a range of outside-the-classroom opportunities.
- Students increase their ability to engage in career exploration, planning, and decision-making.
- Students enhance skills and experiences that equip them to be global leaders.

Experiential Learning Team Outcomes

- Students develop transferable skills that will prepare them for successful entry into the workforce post-graduation.
- Students enhance their sense of civic engagement and social responsibility by participating in community work, locally and internationally.
- Community and industry partners are able to access Western talent to contribute in meaningful ways to their organizations.
- Students can access a diverse range of outside of the classroom opportunities.

Transition, Leadership, and Enrichment Team Outcomes

- Students develop an increased sense of belonging at Western University.
- New students increase their knowledge of campus supports and resources.
- Students enhance leadership skills.
- High-achieving students develop connections with like-minded peers, faculty and staff.
- Students can access a diverse range of outside of the classroom opportunities.

Career Counselling Team Outcomes

- Students increase their ability to engage in career exploration, planning, and decision-making.
- Students enhance their ability to identify and articulate transferrable skills developed through academic studies and outside of the classroom experiences.
- Students develop a diverse range of transferrable skills.

Employer Relations Team Outcomes

- Students have increased access to a diverse range of employment opportunities (e.g. International job opportunities, internship opportunities, post graduate full time job opportunities).
- Employers have increased awareness of the value of hiring Western talent.
- Employers know processes and tools involved in hiring Western talent.
Propel Unit Outcomes

As a result of the work of Propel:
- Students, youth, faculty and staff are exposed to entrepreneurship.
- Students develop transferrable skills through hands-on experience.
- Western University is a hub for increased job creation through student and youth start-ups.
- Student entrepreneurs have access to more professional resources and services on campus.
- Student and youth start-ups have an increased survival rate.
- Western’s institutional climate supports and fosters entrepreneurship.

Indigenous Services Unit Outcomes

As a result of the work of the Indigenous Services:
- Western’s campus community is more aware of and able to work with Indigenous Peoples and Cultures.
- Indigenous Students are connected to the campus community.
- Indigenous Students see themselves reflected in the campus community.
- Indigenous Students have increased connection with their personal and cultural identity.
- Western University has close ties with surrounding indigenous communities.
- Indigenous students are supported through culturally responsive services.
- Indigenous Students develop leadership skills.

Wellness Education Centre

As a result of the work of the Wellness Centre, Western students:
- Have greater understanding of the connection between wellness and academic achievement.
- Develop skills and employ strategies to enhance their wellness.
- Know about supports on campus that foster Wellness and how to access them.
- Understand factors that contribute to their wellness.
- Have streamlined access to mental and physical health services on campus.
Sports and Recreation Services Unit Outcomes

As a result of programs and services offered by Sports and Recreation Services, Western Students:

- Develop leadership skills by working effectively in teams, learning to support their peers, effectively managing conflicts, and building self-awareness by exploring their own strengths and talents
- Achieve physical and mental wellness through engagement in healthy physical activity, nutrition, and sleep behaviours
- Build and apply resiliency skills, including a positive outlook, ability to overcome challenges, coping skills, and learning about effective outlets to stress
- Build self-management and goal setting skills, including the ability to set and achieve academic, personal and fitness / performance related goals while managing competing demands
- Establish supportive community connections to peers, faculty, and staff including civic mindedness and desire to contribute to their respective communities in the future
Student Development Centre

Unit Wide Outcomes

- Students have the skills, resources, and tools they need to succeed personally and academically.
- Western’s campus community supports student mental health.
- Western is an accessible campus community that supports diverse student needs.
- Students develop knowledge, leadership, and professional skills through volunteer and professional training.
- Western University is more Indigenized as an institution.

Psychological Services Team Outcomes

- Students are supported through services, tools and resources to improve mental health.
- Faculty, staff and students are more aware of student mental health issues.
- Student leaders are empowered with the knowledge and skills they need to assist peers.
- Practicum students, Interns and Residents build professional skills and complete Academic and Accreditation Requirements.
- Students including Interns and Residents build personal and emotional skills.

Learning Skills Team Outcomes

- Students build self-awareness regarding their strengths, which contribute to their learning.
- Students are equipped with skills that support academic success.
- Students build confidence in their ability to achieve academically.
- Students are equipped with tools and resources they can use to facilitate their learning.
- Students enhance leadership and helping skills, enabling them to effectively support their peers.

Writing Support Centre Team Outcomes

- Students enhance writing and communication skills.
- Students build confidence in their writing and communication skills.
- Students are equipped with tools, resources and knowledge to effectively communicate through writing.
- Students increase critical analysis abilities to effectively communicate scholarly ideas.
- Students understand writing expectations at the university level, and are equipped with skills they need to navigate academic transitions.
Services for Students with Disabilities Team Outcomes

- Students with disabilities face fewer barriers while navigating a challenging learning environment.
- Students have an understanding of the nature of their disabilities and their implications in academic and non-academic settings.
- Students with disabilities develop skills to help them succeed in University.
- The broader University community is more aware of accessibility issues and students’ needs.
- Students have a fair opportunity to engage in their studies with dignity and autonomy.
- Increased accessibility of Western’s courses, programs, services, and processes.
- Increased compliance with accessibility laws and regulations (Ontario Human Rights Code, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and the University’s Senate policy entitled Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities).

Volunteers in Progress (VIP) Outcomes

Through participation in co-curricular activities offered by the VIP Program:

- Students develop transferable skills that will support their successful entry into the workforce.
- Students enhance their sense of civic engagement and social responsibility.
- Student Development Centre and Western International services have increased capacity to support Western Students.
- International students are supported through their transition and adjustment to Western.
- Domestic and international students are equipped with the skills they need to become global leaders.