INTRODUCTION

In 2017, SFU invited the community to reflect on the impact of its strategic vision. The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the feedback provided through the engagement process, as well as report on some of the initiatives underway that address issues that were raised. It is not intended to reflect of all the work underway in support of SFU’s vision, but rather to report back to the community on what we heard during the engagement process.

Background

In 2012, SFU launched its Strategic Vision to be:

“[T]he leading engaged university defined by its dynamic integration of innovative education, cutting-edge research, and far-reaching community engagement.”

The vision has three pillars:

At the five-year milestone, we wanted to do a “check-in” and ask the university community to reflect on what impact the vision has had and the progress we have made towards realizing its goals. We also wanted feedback on how, collectively, we can improve our performance, and what more we might do to realize our vision to be an engaged university.

Meetings and forums were held at all three campuses for faculty, staff and students, as well as with SFU alumni, friends and advisors, between March and June 2017. Opportunities were also provided to give feedback online and through email.

The consultation process was guided by three key questions:

1. How is the university community fulfilling its vision and achieving its goals for engaging students, engaging research and engaging communities?

2. How can the university community improve our existing programs, initiatives and activities to further our vision?

3. What new opportunities should the university community consider?

Participation by the numbers:

• 3 Campus Forums

• 3 Breakfasts with the President

• Meetings with: Vice-presidents/Deans, Senate/Board of Governors, Simon Fraser Student Society, SFU Graduate Student Society, Alumni Association Board of Directors, SFU Administrators, SFU Retirees Association, SFU Surrey Community Advisory Council, and SFU Faculty Association

• Board of Governors and Senate retreat

• Email, Blog posts, Social Media and Video series

• Mentions during speaking engagements, including at Alumni and Student events

• 21 comments received electronically
In addition, there were recurring themes about how the vision could be enhanced and improved upon. This table thematically summarizes suggestions and highlights some of the initiatives underway to address the feedback.

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<tr>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>SUMMARY OF COMMENTS</th>
<th>EXAMPLES OF INITIATIVES UNDERWAY</th>
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<tr>
<td>Enhance student engagement and the student experience</td>
<td>Some students, especially in their first year, reported a lack of engagement and feelings of isolation (“SFU feels like a ‘commuter campus.’”) Need to better support student health and well-being, Indigenous students, international students, and to improve accessibility.</td>
<td>SFU has committed nine million dollars to a four-year strategic initiative to improve the student experience. This pan-university initiative is being coordinated by the Vice-President Academic and Provost.</td>
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<td>Increase support for research, including community-engaged research</td>
<td>Increase support for research, including fundamental, interdisciplinary and community-engaged research, and to offer more opportunities for students to engage in research.</td>
<td>The new Strategic Research Plan, finalized in 2017, establishes strategies and priorities to advance all forms of research, and to increase student participation in the research enterprise. The new plan calls for developing mechanisms to strengthen supports for community-engaged research. A new initiative, which includes support for community-engaged research, is being developed.</td>
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<td>Continue to advance community engagement</td>
<td>A wide variety of ideas for enhancing and expanding community engagement were offered. Need to better connect to and engage with Indigenous communities and youth before they enter SFU.</td>
<td>The Community Engagement Strategic Plan is currently being updated. This plan will also look at strategies for strengthening alignments between academic research, and community engagement activities. The University has committed itself to implementing corresponding calls to action in the Aboriginal Reconciliation Council Report. Alumni Relations is working with its Board to strengthen the relationship with alumni and university activities.</td>
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<td>Improve connections between SFU’s three campuses</td>
<td>Concerns were raised about connectivity of the three campuses, physically or as communities, and ideas of how to improve these connections.</td>
<td>Work with TransLink to improve transit connections, better co-ordinate programs and activities. The Student Experience Initiative will also look at ways improve connectivity between the three campuses. IT services is improving technology to allow better virtual connection/collaboration between campuses.</td>
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<td>Improve communications and information about engagement initiatives and activities</td>
<td>Concerns re: better communicate our successes and provide internally and externally. Need to share information about engagement initiatives in all parts of the university; a central place for engagement activities information.</td>
<td>The Community Engagement Strategic Plan will improve information-sharing across the university and with external communities. Implementing strategies to improve internal communications, such as the new web-based events calendar.</td>
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<td>Increase/Improve facilities on all three campuses</td>
<td>Expand and enhance facilities on all campuses to meet growing academic and community programming needs. Improve the physical accessibility of our campuses.</td>
<td>Developing plans to expand and enhance facilities, including accessibility. SFU’s Surrey campus expansion and the new Sustainable Energy Engineering Building. Burnaby Campus Master Plan development process, will improve academic and social spaces, wayfinding. SFU Vancouver 5 Year Facilities’ Plan is upgrading facilities, including Harbour Centre.</td>
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<td>Define and measure community engagement success</td>
<td>Some see “engagement” as too nebulous a concept, and there were calls for the university to develop more precise definitions and metrics for measuring its success in relation to its engagement goals.</td>
<td>Outcome measures for SFU’s engagement goals were developed as part of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) and Ashoka Changemaker Campus accreditation processes. Continue to track our progress, and further refine as a continuing part of the NWCCU process and Ashoka designation. Tools and methods development for measuring community engagement as part of the Community Engagement Strategic Plan.</td>
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<td>Improve faculty/staff engagement</td>
<td>Some faculty and staff report a lack of awareness or connection with the engagement goals set out in the strategic vision. Some also called for more support for health and well-being for faculty and staff, including more resources to support staff in their jobs.</td>
<td>SFU’s strategic and operational plans include SFU Innovates, ARC, Ashoka Changemaker campus, Academic Plan, and the Residence Master Plan. A new strategic initiative will support the strengthening connections between the academy and community. Workshops and professional development to support academic leadership, tenure and promotion, and retirement planning. New and enhanced programs aimed at providing support to staff and managers including: Learning &amp; Development Framework; enhanced Wellness program; and enhancements to the Performance Development Program (PDP).</td>
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ENGAGING THE VISION:
What’s next?

HERE’S WHAT WE HEARD:

“What does it mean to ‘be engaged’ and what’s included - what’s legitimate and how do we speak for the community?”

“Community Engagement vision has helped differentiate the university among its peers in positive ways”

“Three campuses need to engage more with each other; we don’t come together often enough”

“Vision has helped foster a culture that encourages community engagement, and as a result, has attracted new staff and faculty with appropriate skills and an aptitude for and love of that work”

To find out more, including progress to realizing our goals, visit: sfu.ca/engage/whatsnext.html