

Master Academic Plan

2023-2028

Behold I am making
all things new.

Revelation 21:5



AMBROSE
UNIVERSITY



Ambrose Mission

Ambrose prepares men and women for wise, joyful and redemptive engagement in the church, society and the created order through excellent Christian post-secondary education.

At Ambrose, students can study arts, sciences and theology alongside professional disciplines such as education, business and Christian ministry. These different disciplines are united by the quest for knowledge, wisdom, virtue, and service.

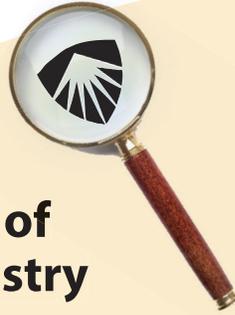
This Master Academic Plan is embedded in the Institutional Values approved by the Board of Governors in 2019. The focus areas of this plan give expression to Ambrose's Education Principles that were approved by the General Faculties Council in 2020 and revised in 2022. The five principles are Christian Faith, Pursuing Excellence, Holistic Formation, Service, and Community.

We are in unfamiliar times. Massive shifts in every aspect of life locally, nationally and globally alert us that God is on the move. We are compelled to be ready to participate in the changing environment, especially in our academic pursuits.

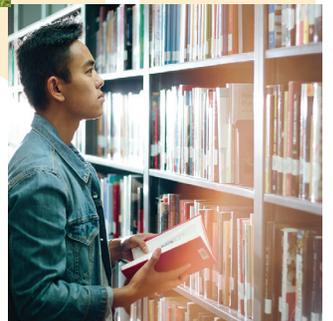
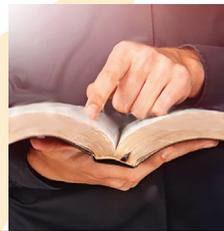
Our value proposition is that because we are a small Christian university in partnership with the church, we can provide nimble learning communities that prepare students to be Christ's image bearers in the dynamic worlds where they will work and serve.

By integrating faith and academic pursuits, we seek knowledge, wisdom and virtue for redemptive engagement in the world. We want to equip our students to pursue a vision of hope for their future vocation. This is facilitated when students can find their identity by accessing powerfully formative, personally meaningful, hope-filled education.

Ambrose includes the Seminary, the Faculty of Arts and Science, and the Schools of Education, Business and Ministry



This Master Academic Plan identifies four critical contexts that will impact Ambrose in the immediate future. From these environmental scans arise four areas of focus that will guide our academic work and resource decisions for the next five years. All academic departments, the library and Enrolment Services will shape their initiatives, goals and tactical strategies around this plan to foster cohesiveness and alignment in a mutually shared direction.



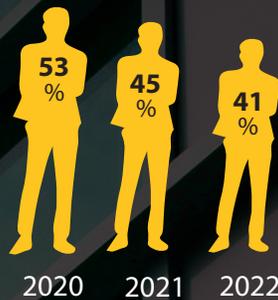
Changing Student Demographics

Undergraduate applicants are trending older

Average Age of Ambrose Undergraduate



Undergrads Under 20 Years of Age



Ambrose Seminary Average Age



Increasing diversity

International Students



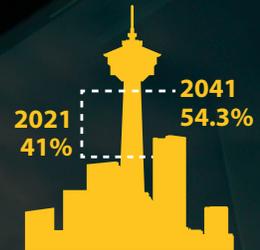
23% Undergrad
77% Seminary

Seminary Students



The Seminary accounts for 25% of the Ambrose student population

Calgary's Racialized Population



In 2041, Calgary's racialized population will be above the national average

Undergraduates are managing complicated lives



75% commute to Ambrose



70% manage jobs along with academics



1 in 10 have symptoms of neurodivergence



1 in 4 struggle with mental health

We will focus on providing an easy to reach, powerfully formative, Christian learning environment



Create flexible access points

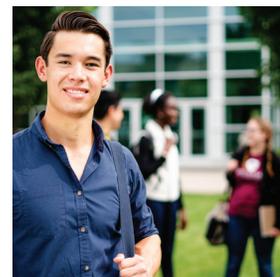
- Offer remote/asynchronous/online courses
 - Invest in instructional design to support online course development
- Find better ways to help students mix work and study

Focus on student academic success

- Expand academic supports for international and older students
- Sharpen UNI 101 and Seminary 101
- Revise academic policies to support changing student demographic
- Implement learning strategies that support student engagement, flourishing, and persistence in their studies
- Advance initiatives that support learning related to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
- Promote advancements in academic programs that move towards Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous people
- Enhance Library resources that support growing diversity in learning

Increase learning spaces and resources to accommodate growth

- Adapt and expand our recruitment and admissions strategies relevant to changing demographics by implementing the Strategic Enrolment Management Plan
- Learning spaces reflect diverse learning needs
- Add learning spaces
 - Business Program relocates to new building by 2024
 - Infrastructure for online delivery
- Apply for Targeted Enrolment Expansion Grants



Accelerating Pace of Global Change and Emerging Challenges

Top skills employers look for in hires

Employers will seek resilience and ongoing learning capacity. People skills are key to social and economic well-being.

ENTRY LEVEL	RANK	MID-CAREER
Interpersonal Skills	1	Interpersonal Skills
Technical Skills	2	Leadership Skills
Communication	3	Industry Experience/Knowledge
Problem Solving	4	Communication
Resilience	5	Resilience

Students prioritize human skills [KPMG Poll 2020]

“ I think my post-secondary school should help me develop soft skills such as creative problem solving, empathy and emotional intelligence.”



Work-integrated learning [WIL]

The Business Council of Canada suggests that WIL is the gold standard to develop, recruit, and transition new grads into the workplace. All Ambrose programs integrate WIL although placements need to be expanded in some areas.

Microcredentials

1 in 4 employers anticipate that microcredentials will become more important in employee recruitment over the next 5 years.

We will focus on programs that build foundations for innovative change



Design, enrich, and expand academic programs

- Reaffirm the central place of the liberal arts tradition of thinking about the nature and meaning of human experience.
- Build and expand programs that support our understanding of the human condition.
- Preserve and teach the capacity for civil discussion and debate about contentious issues.
- Preserve and teach the capacity for bold and creative thinking.
- Form future leaders in Christian thought.
- Prepare for professional practice.

Enhance initiatives supporting academic programs

- Ensure all certificates/microcredentials (credit and non-credit) are stackable with degrees.
- Build capacity to support Work Integrated Learning (WIL) – a high impact learning experience – for all students.
- Establish Program Advisory Committees to connect with stakeholders.
- Implement Library Strategic Plan to support information literacy, access to information.



Research in Uncertain Times

In uncertain times...

Interdisciplinary research will grow as a priority for federal funding agencies.

Covid-19 accelerated new models of research that were not previously recognized by peer-reviewed publishers.

Research funding agencies are increasing monitoring of integrity and security of researchers, processes and data.

Research Institutes/Centres are thriving

The Canadian Poverty Institute's mission is to advance the eradication of poverty in Canada through research, teaching and action that promotes systems change.



Flourishing Congregations Institute is dedicated to gathering, curating, and sharing Canadian data, theological reflection, and practical application on the Canadian Church for the Canadian Church.



The Jaffray Centre is a combination incubator/greenhouse where new ideas, collaborative initiatives, and fresh ways of looking at God's global mission are nurtured.



Scholarship activity is strong at Ambrose



Scholarly Works

We will focus on harnessing our strengths to build our research ecosystem



Advance research excellence

- Apply for NSERC
- Ensure Ambrose meets the evolving standards of Canadian Tri-Council funding agencies
- Support faculty in applying for funding
- Build policies and processes to support and monitor responsible research

Increase awareness of research initiatives

- Promote research initiatives through the Research Office
- Develop webpage to promote Ambrose researchers, provide information for researchers
- Develop effective mechanism for reporting research

Recognize and foster

- Recognize new ways of disseminating and using knowledge and ideas in Tenure and Promotion decisions
- Foster research initiatives of three Institutes



Our people are paramount to our ability to respond to turbulent times

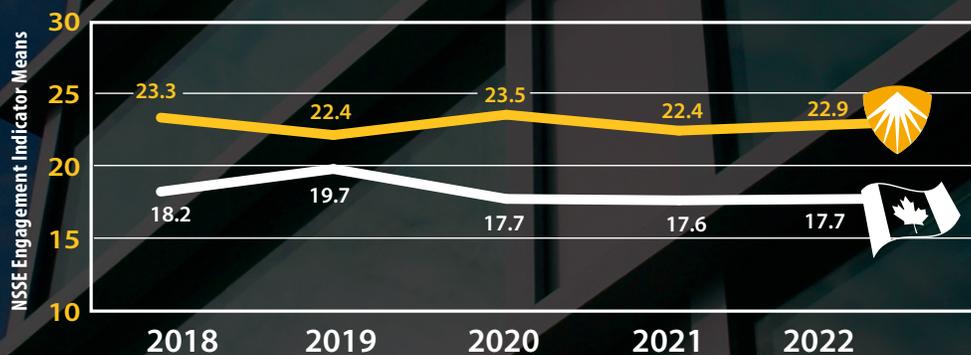
Selecting a post-secondary institution

By far the highest academic decision criteria for students when selecting a PSI is the quality of faculty (72%).

Recent NSSE survey data on student faculty interactions and effective Teaching Practices indicates Ambrose faculty perform well in areas that matter to prospective students.

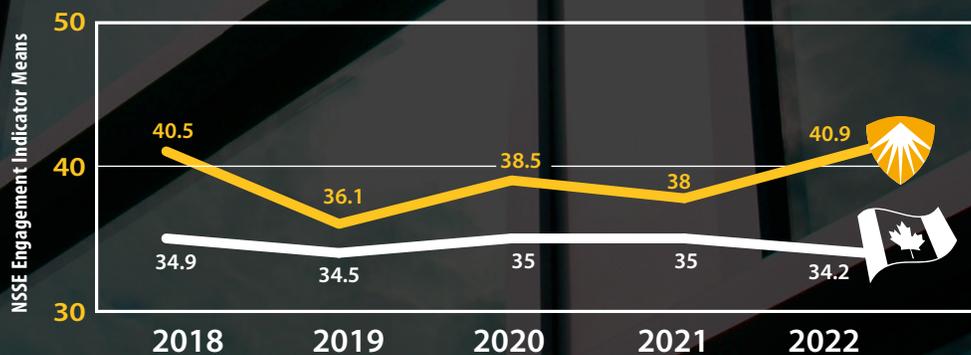
Student Faculty Interactions

[NSSE means 2018-2022]



Effective Teaching Practices

[NSSE means 2018-2022]



We will focus on investing in our people



Develop, attract, invest, foster and advance

- Develop leadership capacity to support succession plans in academic roles (retirements, sabbaticals, Chair roles)
- Attract and retain talent
- Invest in professional development
- Foster academic discourse among the faculty
- Discuss regularly: “What does it mean to be a faculty member and a student at a Christian university?”
- Advance the value of academic freedom among students, internal and external stakeholders



Resources

This plan from the Academic Division, sponsored by the Provost and Vice President Academic, is based on the input from faculty engagement at Entheos 2022 Fall Faculty Retreat, meetings of Academic Council, Academic Planning and Policy Committee and was endorsed by General Faculties Council on October 30, 2023.

1. Alberta Post-Secondary Application System. University/College Applicant Study 2022, 2021, 2019, 2018, 2017
2. Business and Higher Education Round Table. (March, 2022). *Empowering people for recovery and growth: 2022 skills survey report.*
3. Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC). (June, 2022). 2022 CUSC-CCREU Survey of First-Year Students: Ambrose University. Winnipeg: Author.
4. Higher Education Strategy Associates (October, 2022). *Environmental scan: University of Alberta strategic plan.* Toronto: HESA.
5. James, C.J. & Clayton, R. (2022). *Reimagining student experience in higher education.* Ontario: KPMG.
6. National survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). (2022). Multi-Year Report: Ambrose University. Bloomington, IN: Center for Postsecondary Research Indiana University School of Education.
7. Studiosity Canada and Angus Reid. *2022 Canadian Student Wellbeing Study.* <https://www.studiosity.com/2022studentwellbeing>
8. Usher, A. (2022). *The state of post-secondary education in Canada.* Toronto: Higher Education Strategy Associates.