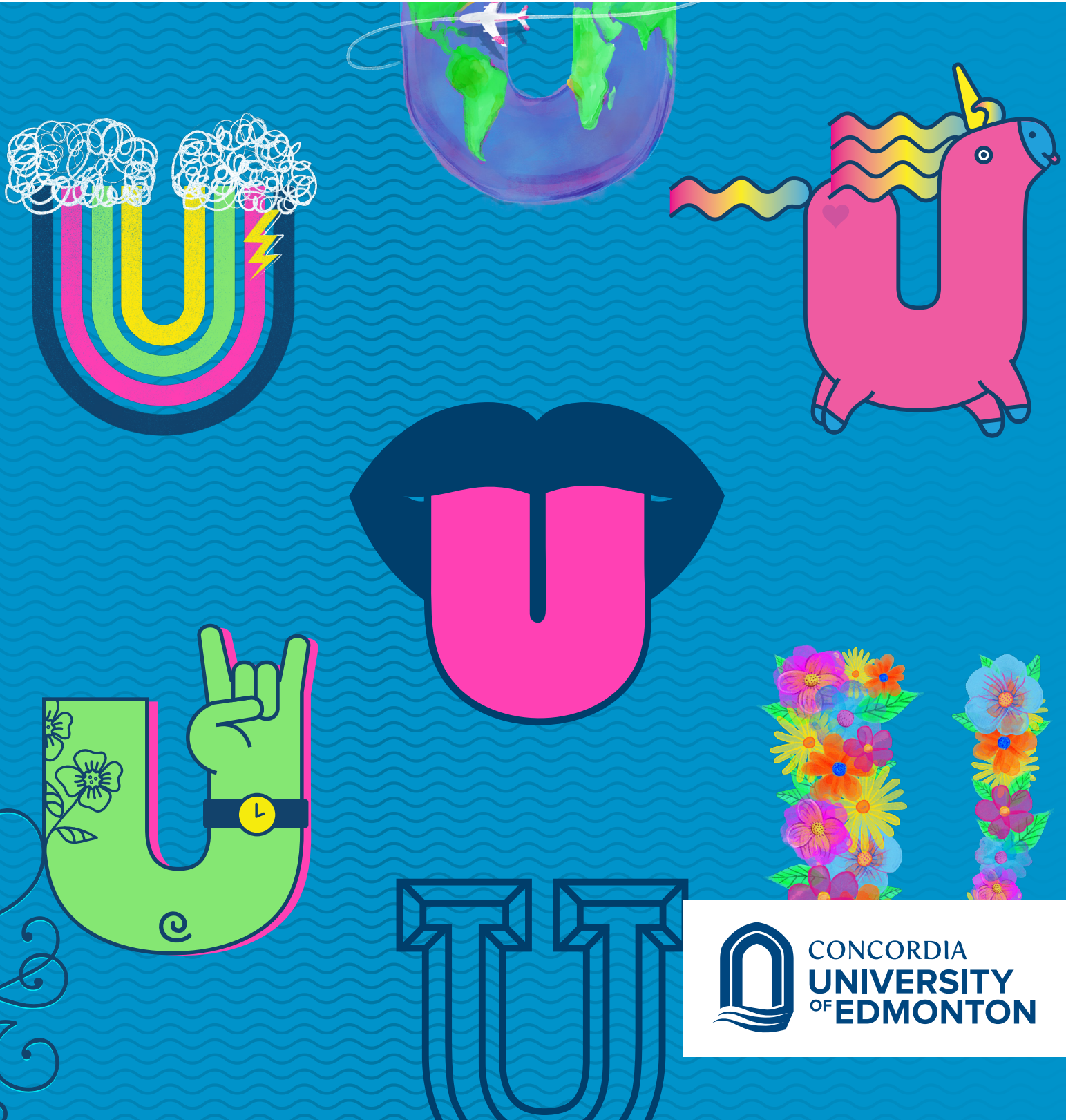


# STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY

OCTOBER 2020  
Dr. Tim Loreman



CONCORDIA  
UNIVERSITY  
OF EDMONTON

# Table of Contents

Introduction . . . . .	5
Board of Governors . . . . .	7
Financial Picture . . . . .	8
Growth . . . . .	11
Research & Innovation . . . . .	18
External Partnerships and Internationalization . . . . .	20
Student Life . . . . .	24
Area of Focus and Opportunity . . . . .	33
Conclusions and Final Thoughts . . . . .	37
Addendum . . . . .	39

# Acknowledgements

Concordia University of Edmonton (CUE) acknowledges we are located on Treaty 6 territory, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of Indigenous peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.

We would also like to acknowledge the contributions of those who have made this year's State of the University possible: Our Vice-Presidents, Registrar, Office of Institutional Research, and dedicated staff in the President's Office. Thank you.



# A UNIVERSITY THAT IS ALL ABOUT YOU.

**GET YOUR PERSONALIZED EDUCATION AT CUE**  
**CONCORDIA.AB.CA**

## Introduction

The 2019-20 year will be remembered for the challenges and uncertainty created by the COVID-19 pandemic. This time last year, we had no indication that the world was going to drastically change, and that multiple sectors, including ours, would be forced to quickly pivot to continue operations.

While it is necessary to discuss the ongoing pandemic and reflect on its complexity, it is equally important to recognize the dedication, compassion, and resiliency demonstrated by the CUE community. When we suddenly moved to online learning in mid-March, our community adapted almost immediately. We adopted a shared understanding that we were all doing our best, persevered when things felt heavy, and rose to the occasion.

*From reimagining courses and learning new technologies, to transitioning events and services and adjusting plans, our community has found ways to stay connected and keep moving forward.*

As president of the university, you trusted me, and our leadership team, to make difficult decisions, and do what was necessary to protect the health and safety of our community. When we announced that our fall semester would be primarily virtual and implemented strict health protocols for on-campus attendance, you, once again, understood and adapted. From reimagining courses and learning

new technologies, to transitioning events and services and adjusting plans, our community has found ways to stay connected and keep moving forward.

Outside of issues impacting health and safety, our main concern has been ensuring our students continue to have an exceptional experience at CUE. Above all else, we want our students to receive a high-quality education and be rewarded for their academic efforts, while contributing to both our campus and extended community. We are proud of the steps we have taken as an institution to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the present challenges, CUE has continued to build momentum, capitalize on opportunity, and be a success story.

Unlike years past, we are unable to gather for a formal State of the University address; however, there is much to share and celebrate as we look forward to 2020-21. This document details important facts and figures, as well as stories of growth, innovation, partnership, and student life from across campus. I hope you find it useful, thought-provoking, and inspiring as we continue to realize our potential and affirm our position as Canada's pre-eminent small university.

Thank you for being an important part of our journey to date—we look forward to seeing what comes next.

Sincerely,

Tim Loreman  
President and Vice-Chancellor  
Concordia University of Edmonton



# Board of Governors

Success isn't possible without strong, focused leadership and we are fortunate to be led by a Board of Governors (Board) that cares about, and contributes to, every area at CUE.

Our Board, led by Chair Mr. Russ Morrow, switched to virtual meetings in March 2020 due to the COVID-10 pandemic. We are grateful for the Board's unwavering commitment to CUE and are proud of the progress made over the past 12 months. We would especially like to recognize the contributions of three Board members and long-term supporters of CUE—Mr. Al Huehn, Mrs. Karen Leibovici, and Mr. Ron Glen—who have completed their terms.

In December 2019, at the instigation of the Board, we held a full-day symposium entitled CUE 2040. The symposium featured renowned speakers Alex Usher and Stephen Prendiville, who challenged us to look at the trends in higher education and consider how they will impact us in the long-term as an institution.

Another milestone was the approval of a new Campus Master Plan designed to assist with facilities planning at CUE for the next 100 years. This plan envisions campus growth both in the next few years up to a period well beyond our probable lifespans. Most immediately, CUE is planning to build a new academic building, new residences, and, potentially, an indoor soccer and recreation facility.

Continuing the theme of growth, our Board was called upon to guide us through increased enrolment of approximately 23% compared to the previous year, and approved a budget that ensured the provision of adequate resources to enable success without burdening the future with debt.



# Financial Picture

CUE had an excellent year from a financial perspective—one of the best in our history. Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, we are continuing to find ways to generate revenue to support our students, connect with industry, and make a difference locally and globally.

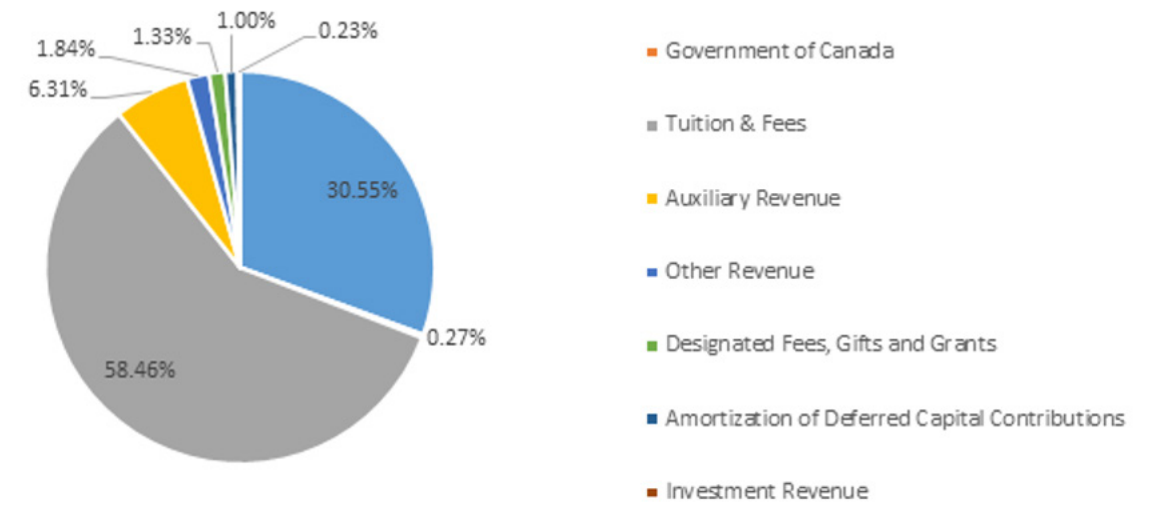
We finished the year ending March 31, 2020, with an additional \$7.7 million to put towards future capital projects—an increase of \$3.0 million over the prior year’s net funds for growth of \$4.7 million. This increase was driven by high student enrolment while strictly managing costs. To ensure our ongoing financial health and fund growth, we must run an annual surplus. These funds will be used for our capital needs, notably a new academic building to make room for the increasing number of students choosing to study at CUE. As an Independent Academic Institution (IAI), we do not receive funds for capital projects from the Government of Alberta, and our Board has provided a directive that surplus operating funds, as well as grants and external financing, be applied to the identified capital projects.

During 2019-20, revenue grew by 21% or \$7.5 million. Revenue from tuition and fees increased by

\$6.6 million or 35% compared to prior year. This can be attributed to student enrolment, which increased by 24.6%. Our operational funding from the government decreased by 1.1%; however, the amount of government funding as percentage of total revenue decreased to 30.55% compared to 37.4% in prior year. Auxiliary revenue increased by 22.5% compared to prior year due to increase revenue from facility rentals and parking.

Our total expenses for the year ending March 31, 2020, was \$35.7 million—an increase of 14.5% or \$4.5 million from the year prior. Our support program expenses increased by \$2.4 million or 19%. This can be attributed to increased facility maintenance and general administration, as we renovated the Hole Academic Building and hired more staff to meet the needs of our growing student population. Additionally, expenses related to our academic programs increased

Sources of Revenue F2020



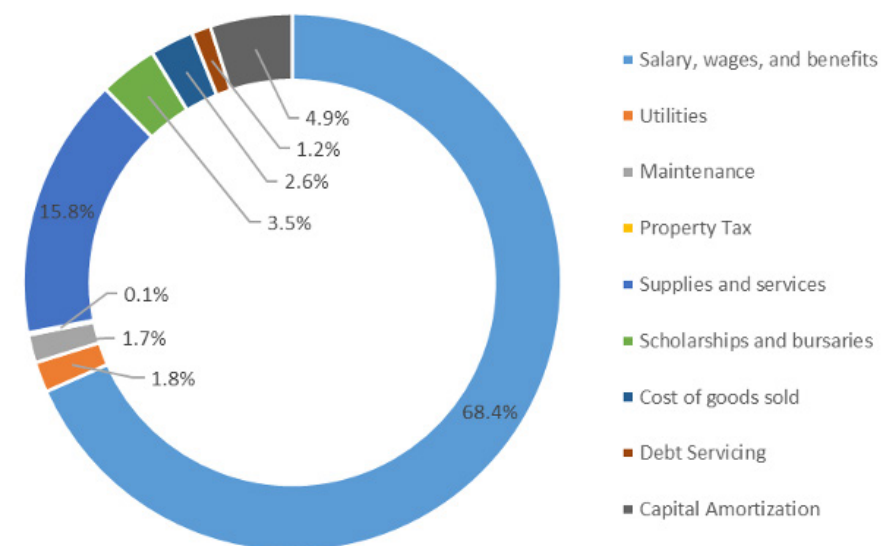
by \$950 thousand or 7% as a result of increased salary costs and enrolment.

Looking at the breakdown of operational expenses, salary and benefits accounted for 68.4%, an increase of 12.3% from the year prior. We hired 16 new positions over the past fiscal

year—a testament to our growth as an institution.

Our capital expenditures totaled \$1.5 million, a decrease of \$2.3 million from the year prior. The majority of capital expenditures related to upgrading our existing facilities.

F2020 Distribution of Expenses by Object





# Growth

Growth is essential for our future. If we want to solidify our position as Canada's pre-eminent small university, we need to be constantly challenging ourselves to do, and be, more. In 2019-20, we launched new programs and initiatives, welcomed high numbers of students to campus, and made plans for a sustainable future.

## ACADEMICS

Despite the challenges facing our students, faculty, and instructors, we have seen exponential growth on the academic side. With significant numbers of new students joining the CUE community, we have been able to create additional sections and hire more sessional instructors while working to manage increased pressure on scheduling and classroom availability. We have also been fortunate to hire new faculty members and Academic Service Officers, bringing new expertise and energy to CUE.

### *Faculty of Arts*

The Faculty of Arts welcomed a new Dean on July 1—Dr. Tim Heath. Dr. Heath has had a career in both academic and administrative roles at various other post-secondary institutions across the province, and we are grateful for his leadership and perspective. We also welcomed three new faculty members: Dr. Laura Sydora (English), and Drs. Holli-Anne Passmore and Ian Davidson (Psychology).

*Despite the challenges...we  
have seen exponential growth  
on the academic side.*

Another key success for the Faculty of Arts is CUE's first doctoral program, the Doctor of Psychology, which is in the final stages of approval. Dr. Bill Hanson, who joins our team as the Director of Training, Clinical Psychology, is leading our efforts.

### *Faculty of Education*

Continuing the theme of growth across our academic programs, the Faculty of Education welcomed a new faculty member, Dr. Teresa Fowler, as well as a new Field Experiences Coordinator, Novlet Plunkett.



Dr. Fowler’s research area is in anti-racism, which directly corresponds with many current initiatives at CUE and in our community.

Our Master of Educational Leadership is now in its third year with its largest cohort ever. Education also offers a Graduate Certificate in Educational Leadership—a response to new credential requirements for school principals. At the undergraduate level, CUE continues to be known for our After-Degree in Education, and we are currently working closely with our student teachers as they navigate the new context of K-12 amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

**Faculty of Management**

The Faculty of Management made significant adjustments to the Master of Information Systems Security Management (MISSM) and Master of Information Systems Assurance Management (MISAM) programs, ensuring they remain sustainable and offer students the most robust and up-to-date education. These programs now have a 33-credit load, making them more competitive in the domestic market.

To support our programs, we added new faculty members: Dr. Eslam AbdAllah (MISSM) and Dr.



Elizabeth Coker-Farell (Human Resources). We will be hiring another assistant professor in January.

**Faculty of Science**

Our Faculty of Science now offers a Master of Science in Information Technology—the first of its kind in Canada. This program builds on our Bachelor of Science in Information Technology, which is also a new program and is outperforming enrolment expectations.

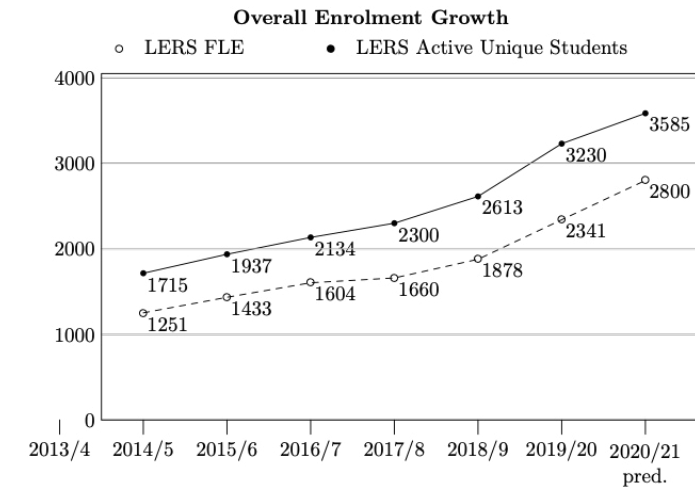
We welcomed a number of new faculty members: Dr. Svenja Huntemann (Math), Dr. Makan Golizeh (Analytical Chemistry), and Dr. Matthew Churchward (Biology), and two laboratory instructors, Kyle Springer and Tracye Davies.

**Library**

Like many of our services, the library is open to students both on-campus and virtually. With the majority of classes online, the library has been consulting with students and faculty to ensure service is accessible and meets the needs of our community.



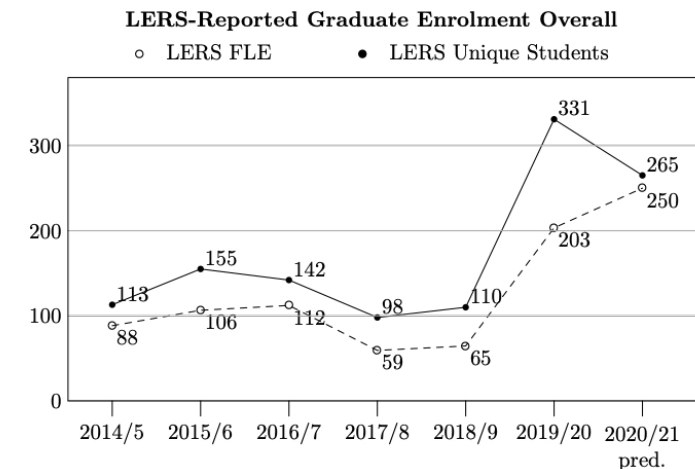
**ENROLMENT**



CUE’s enrolment continues to grow, and we are well above the target set within our Academic Plan. We are excited to be consistently welcoming high numbers of students, and look forward to finding more ways to recruit while investing in resources to retain students year-over-year.

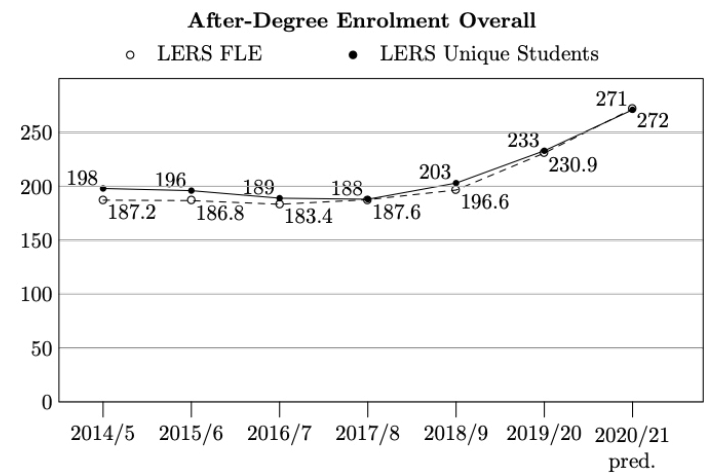
The chart above details our enrolment growth in LERS—our provincially approved programs. These numbers do not include enrolment in certificate or diploma programs. Our overall student head count is not increasing at quite the same rate due to a drop in Open Studies registrations; however, these students typically register in only a few courses.

Looking at the enrolment details of our various programs, there is a lot to celebrate:

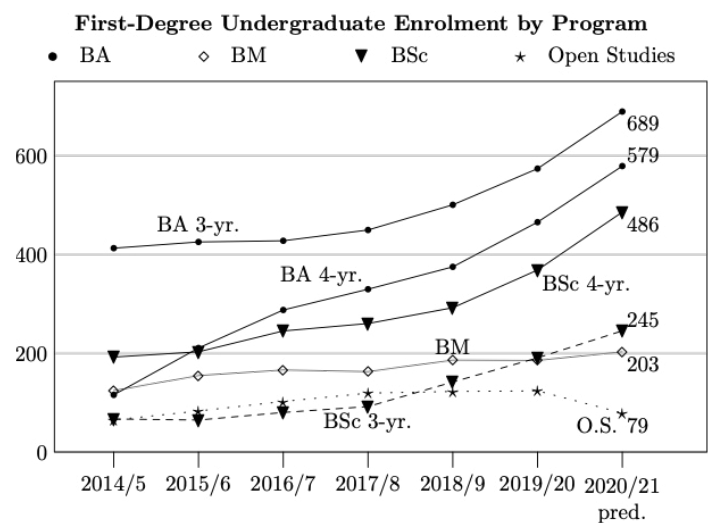


**High Number of Students in Graduate Programs:** For Fall 2019 and Winter 2020, we admitted a very large number of graduate students to the MISSM and MISAM programs; however, these numbers will decrease significantly due to the suspension of admissions for these specific programs.

**Increased Demand for After-Degree Programs:** Our After-Degree programs (Bachelor of Education and Bachelor of Environmental Health) have seen steady enrolment. We added a new cohort to the Bachelor of Education to keep up with demand, and the Bachelor of Environmental Health has seen a significant increase in students, as well.



**Major Increases in Undergraduate Enrolment:** Our undergraduate programs have seen incredible growth in recent years. While the percentage increase in enrolment for 2020-21 is smaller than years past, we are, again, seeing a double-digit increase.





## CAMPUS MASTER PLAN

In October 2019, the CUE community was invited to a town hall meeting to discuss the future of our campus. During the meeting, Najfeldt Architects Inc. presented our Campus Master Plan—a visionary plan for development over the next 100 years.

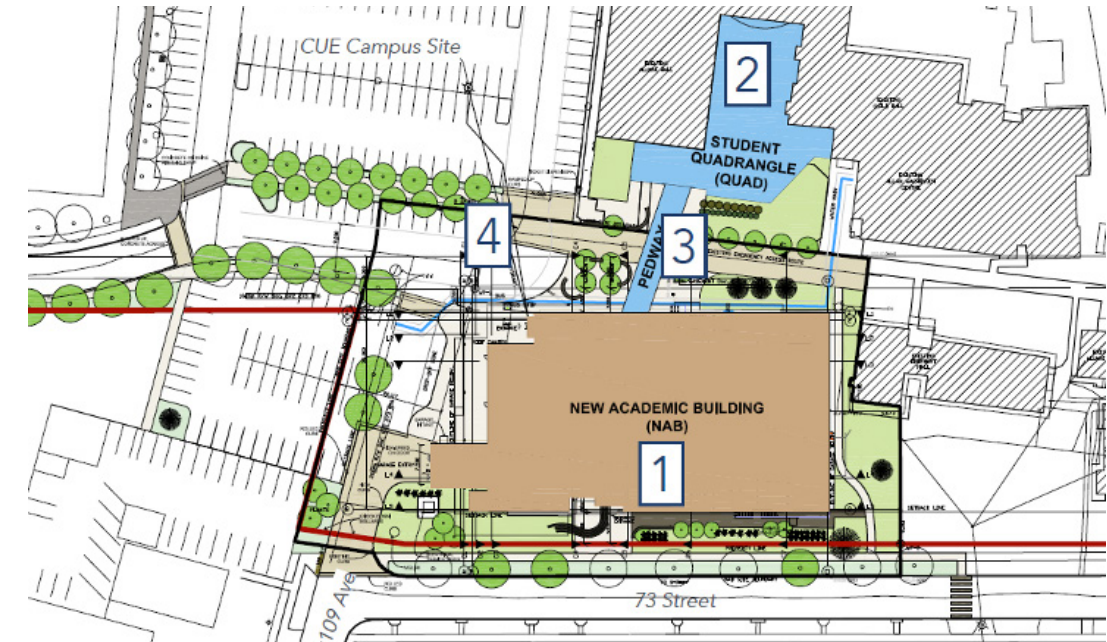
The Master Plan has three categories:

- Immediate (2019-30);
- Intermediate (2030-75); and
- Long-Term (2075-2120).

We have experienced tremendous growth, which is incredibly exciting. However, our growth has put strain on our existing building infrastructure. Using the Master Plan as our guide, we chose to explore developing a new academic building to relieve pressure and meet our capacity needs of 4000 students.

To bring our idea to life, we engaged both Najfeldt Architects Inc. and Manasc Isaac Architects Ltd. to prepare a functional program and conceptual design. Manasc Isaac held a number of engagement sessions with stakeholders over the winter months to develop a matrix of functional requirements for each type of required space. In the sessions, stakeholders voiced desires for learning environments, offices, and community and outdoor spaces. Based on the identified needs and desires, a schematic design for a new building was developed for our campus.

The identified location for the new development is along the west edge of campus, on the site of an existing parking lot. The name of this project is New Academic Building (NAB) and Student Quadrangle (QUAD).



The NAB and QUAD project consists of four major elements:

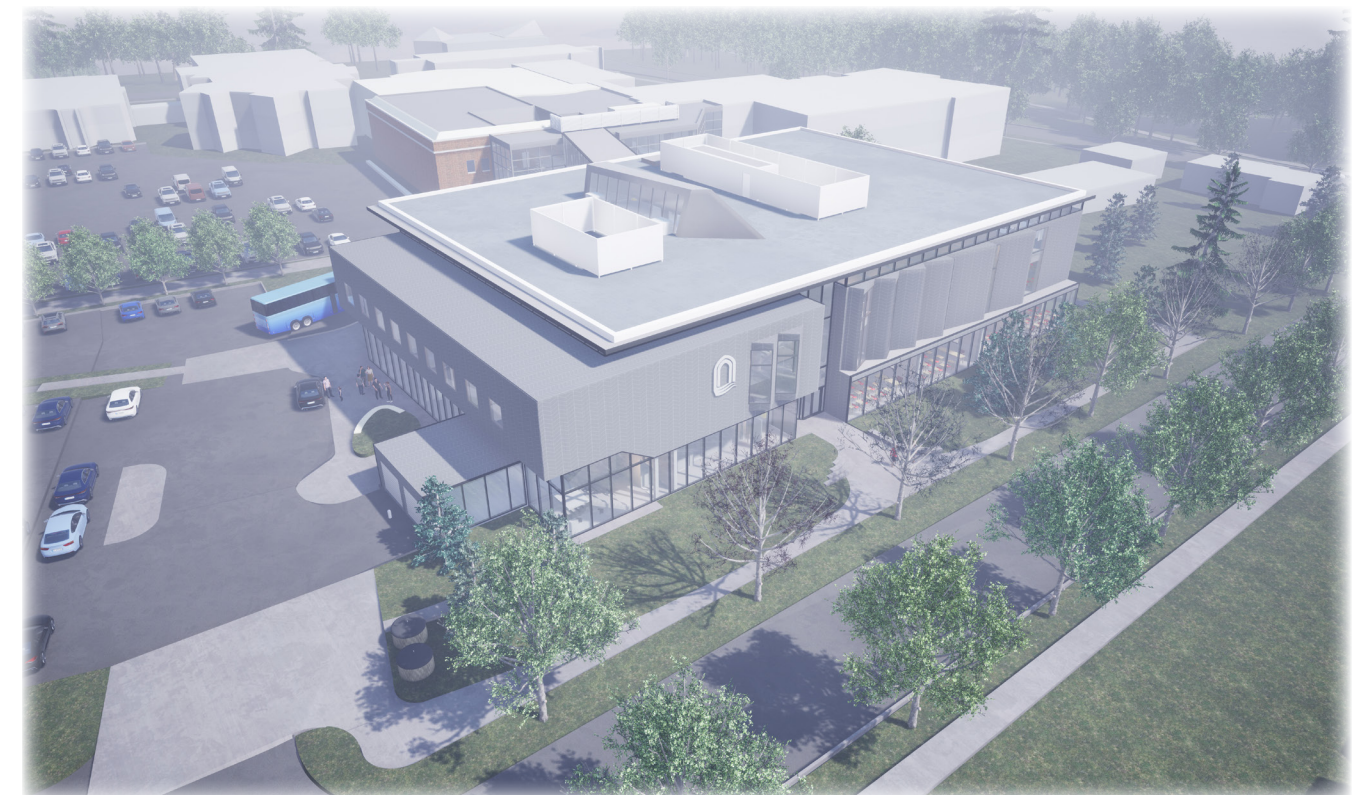
1. NAB and a two-level underground parkade along 73rd street on the existing parking lot owned by CUE;
2. QUAD, infill building attached to the existing Tegler Centre and Alumni Hall;
3. A bridge connection between NAB and QUAD; and
4. Site development around the two new buildings and along the north-south promenade connecting the campus core to Ada Boulevard.



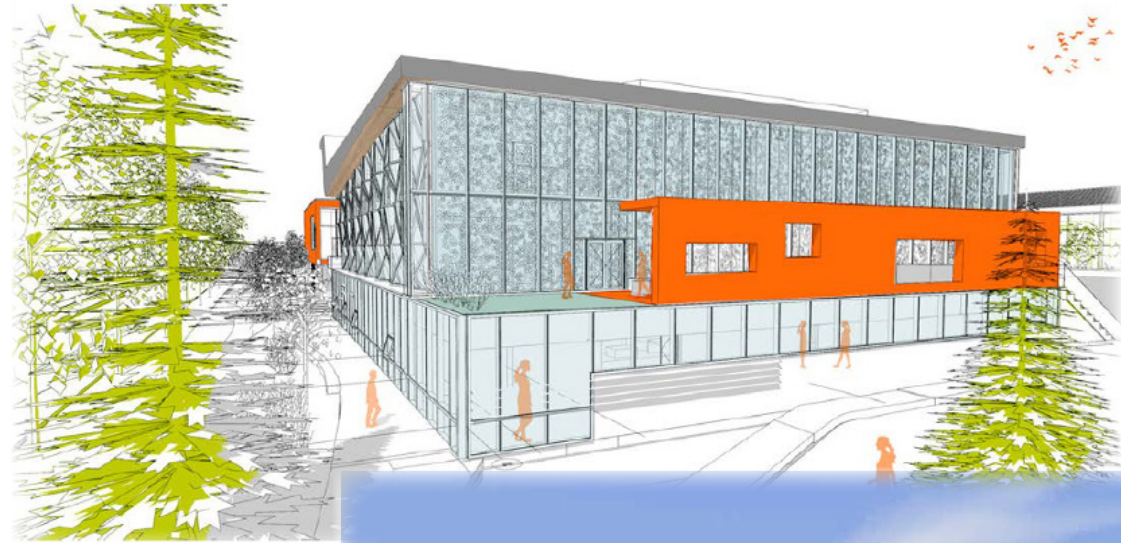
LEGEND:	
Blue	IMMEDIATE 2020 - 2030
Yellow	INTERMEDIATE 2030 - 2075
Pink	LONG TERM 2075 - 2120
Red dashed line	PROPERTY LINE

IMMEDIATE GROWTH LOW RISE OPTION - BUILDING SITES  
2020 - 2030 WINDOW  
CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY OF EDMONTON

AUGUST 2019







The proposed NAB is approximately 5,770 m<sup>2</sup> (about 62,100 sf) in a split-level configuration. Its underground parking structure will accommodate 140 cars and has been designed to expand to the south in the future.

The NAB will include: 15 classrooms; 3 labs and prep rooms; 2 lecture theatres; 22 washrooms and barrier-free washrooms; 55 offices, workstations, and exam isolation rooms; and 27 workshop spaces, breakout rooms, and bookable spaces.

The QUAD, including the bridge, is approximately 1,010 m<sup>2</sup> (about 10,888 sf) in area and covers the area currently situated outside Alumni Hall as a patio. A second-floor expansion to the Green Room is included in this facility. Glazed on the west, this new space will provide for student gatherings and renovations to the labs below.

Renovations to Alumni Hall are part of the QUAD scope and measure approximately 197 m<sup>2</sup> (about 2,122 sf) in area. A new bridge connecting the two buildings will connect the lowest level of the QUAD—where the labs are currently situated—to the third floor of the NAB. This connection will enhance accessibility throughout the campus and facilitate the movement of supplies between the existing and new lab areas.

Our next steps are to finalize the design and permit application (Fall 2020) and tender for construction (Winter 2021), before construction begins in 2021. We anticipate the new buildings will open in the Fall of 2023.

## OFFICE OF EXTENSION AND CULTURE

Our Office of Extension and Culture (OEC) continues to grow, and we are now offering over 200 non-credit courses to our students and community. Through partnerships with industry and outreach to stakeholders, the OEC is focused on providing timely, relevant courses to build in-demand skills.

One focus area for the OEC is ensuring affordability, and we were proud to establish a number of new scholarships for both current and prospective students. We would encourage students and community members who are looking to build skills and try something new to reach out for more information.

## MARKETING

Marketing is key for recruitment and our institutional growth, and we have been fortunate to work with creative partners that challenge and push us to develop integrated campaigns that drive results.

Recently, the Advertising Club of Edmonton (ACE) held their annual awards event and our agency partner, ZGM, submitted our Unique to You campaign in several categories. We were excited to learn that our campaign was awarded five awards and three distinctions, including awards for Advertising Campaign, Advertising Video Series, and Fearless Client.





incorporate the inaugural student poster competition, launched a student research café, and developed a faculty research symposium. Regrettably, some of these activities had to either be postponed or cancelled due to COVID-19, but will be back in the coming months as virtual or in-person events.

Externally, multi-year awards have become the new norm for our faculty. Over the past year, we successfully obtained over \$219,000 in new external research funding and are on track to surpass \$100,000 in annual Tri-Agency income for the first time in our history. This is a significant milestone that will soon make us eligible to host a Tier-2 Canada Research Chair as we continue to diversify our research portfolio.

*We are in a phase of expansion and diversification of our research programs and funding as well as consolidation of our successful initiatives.*

COVID-19 has changed the way we interact and operate, presenting a number of significant challenges; however, it has also brought research opportunities. In April, we put out a special call for research projects on COVID-19. It was a huge success, with faculty applying for and receiving over \$25,000 in funding.

The 2019-20 academic year was our most successful on record for both external and internal research funding. Internally, we adjudicated 27 grants to faculty and 7 to students, totaling over \$82,000. We also increased the maximum funding for undergraduate student grants by 50%.



**INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND RESEARCH CENTRE**

CUE is committed to reconciliation that involves recognizing how colonizing structures and relationships impact Indigenous students. The Indigenous Knowledge and Research Centre (IKRC) is dedicated to providing Indigenous students, and non-Indigenous students, with social and scientific research opportunities. It also allows students to engage in research collaborations with key industry and community partners.

In 2019-20, we grew our Indigenous student population by 27.7% and welcomed Elder Francis Whiskeyjack as our Cultural Knowledge Keeper. We also increased our programming, hosting 121 activities with 1919 participants. Since April, in response to COVID-19, the IKRC has hosted 45 virtual programs with 208 student participants.

# Research & Innovation

CUE offers students from across the province and around the world an academic experience that extends beyond the classroom. We deliver student-focused programs that translate into hands-on experiences.

For 100 years, Edmonton has been our workshop, providing opportunities to make a local impact while forming meaningful partnerships and maintaining a global outlook. We are dedicated to research, working to push boundaries and exploring what is possible through innovation. We are nimble and responsive, and we are continuing to evolve.

**OFFICE OF RESEARCH SERVICES**

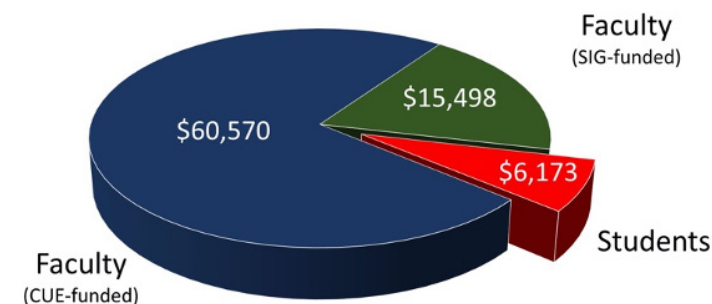
Led by Assistant Vice-President Research, Dr. Ramses Ilarraza, the Office of Research Services is further developing its framework for our research enterprise. The Office of Research Services has strengthened its interdepartmental ties and expanded its engagement with the community, continuing to provide strong support services and administer our Internal Research Grants program. Additionally, we have hired a new Scholarly Communications Librarian, Victoria Eke, to further assist both staff and students in their research activities.

Over the past year, we supported researchers by proudly awarding the full allocation of 108 hours in Reduction in Teaching for Research Purposes and five sabbatical leaves, and awarded the Gerald S. Krispin Research Award to Dr. Travis Dumsday (Philosophy). We understand the importance of having our researchers engaged and actively contributing to our city, province, country, and world, and we look forward to sharing their insights with our community in the future.

We are in a phase of expansion and diversification of our research programs and funding, as well as consolidation of our successful initiatives. To guide our efforts, we recently approved our 2019-24 Strategic Research Plan.

A key priority is research dissemination. Our faculty reported 91 publications over the past 12 months, ranging from original research articles to books. We expanded our annual research forum to

**Internal Research Grant awards 2019-2020 (\$82k+)**





# External Partnerships & Internationalization

We are working to build and strengthen our external partnerships to expand CUE's reach locally, provincially, nationally, and internationally.

To be Canada's pre-eminent small university, we need to be thought leaders, conveners, and multipliers, who are ready to facilitate, and contribute to, timely conversations with industry, government, and other stakeholders.

## **BMO-CENTRE FOR INNOVATION AND APPLIED RESEARCH**

Launched in 2016, the BMO-Centre for Innovation and Applied Research (BMO-CIAR) has contributed towards advancement of innovation and applied research at CUE. With the launch of two new centres—the Centre for Applied Artificial Intelligence (launched in January 2019) and the McNeil Centre for Applied Renewable Energy (launched in December 2019)—CUE is positioned to expand our position as a hub for discovery and disruption.

Through the BMO-CIAR, we are focused on:

- Engaging with industry by facilitating collaborative research and development;
- Assisting local industry in advancing their companies by providing business development support;
- Assisting in technology transfer and commercialization activities; and
- Providing entrepreneurial education resources to the CUE community.

The BMO-CIAR team is also engaged in local and provincial innovation initiatives including the Edmonton Regional Innovation Network, Entrepreneurial Educators of Alberta, Edmonton Global, and the Artificial Intelligence Pathways Program supported by Western Economic Diversification.



## **INTERNATIONAL**

Internationalization remains a key priority for our university. We are continuing to see growing numbers of international students. Last semester, we welcomed 698 students—the highest number in our history. We recognize the importance of having a diverse community, and are committed to finding creative ways to recruit international students while building strong partnerships around the world. This is reflected in our strategic plan for internationalization, which focuses on People, Places, Ideas, Resources, and Global Awareness.

### *International Partnerships*

To date, we have 91 international partnerships—with the majority being in Europe, Asia, and South America—and we are continuing to engage in discussions with many others. In 2019-20, we announced several new partnerships in Spain, Germany, and Russia, and we continue to be a proud member of Erasmus+, a program that supports education, training, youth, and sport across Europe. We currently have six Erasmus+ partners and are working on finalizing additional agreements to provide students, faculty, and staff with opportunities to collaborate on projects, explore, and learn in Europe.

### *International Mobility*

We have seen increased interest in mobility from our students, with many expressing excitement about summer programs and internships. In 2019-20, we had eight study abroad applications, four OWL Internships Germany applications, and ten applications for a summer program in Brazil. Unfortunately, all mobility programs were cancelled due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

### *Centre for Chinese Studies*

Our Centre for Chinese Studies (CCS) and Centre for Chinese Teacher Development (CCTD) are now three years old. Under the CCS, we have had faculty members visit China, and hosted visiting scholars and teachers. Our summer programs have seen stable growth and the CCTD has reached out to over 1,000 Chinese teachers virtually through its online summer seminars.

In 2019-20, we had three students in the 1+2+1 Dual Degree Program with full scholarships from the Chinese Government. They achieved academic success while gaining meaningful cultural and social experiences at Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU).



## FINE ARTS AND SCHOOL OF MUSIC

The past six months have presented challenges for performing arts across the world and CUE is no exception. We are continuing to navigate how to best teach and share performances amid COVID-19, and, while we do not have all the answers, couldn't be prouder of our dedicated team, featured artists, and community partners.

In 2019-20, we presented a number of programs, including Blithe Spirit and Macbeth. We also saw the first Concordia Symphony Orchestra Concerto Competition for emerging artists under the guidance of Dr. Danielle Lisboa. We would like to recognize a number of talents, including Glenda Stirling, Josiah Hiemstra, and Michael Peng.

This fall, we will be sharing an online theatre piece called Too Much Zoom Makes Us All Go Blind created and performed by students under the leadership of guest artist Dave Horak. We are also continuing to conduct our choirs online under Joy Berg's leadership and through collaborations with partners across Edmonton and British Columbia. Our handbell ensembles will also be ringing in person under COVID-19 safety protocols.

Recently, the School of Music joined our OEC, including five community ensembles representing nearly two hundred members of Edmonton's vibrant amateur music community. We are excited to see what's in store for the future.

## ALUMNI RELATIONS

One of the most important areas for external outreach and partnership development is with our alumni. Our team is focused on correcting historical gaps in alumni relations; gathering information on, and reaching out to, alumni; and building strong relationships.

We are excited to have an enthusiastic alumni executive team, an institutional alumni liaison, and excellent clerical support to foster school spirit and pride among our alumni. Our goal is to create an active network of engaged alumni who can serve as both ambassadors and champions for CUE.





# Student Life

At CUE, our students are at the centre of everything we do. We take pride in providing a personalized experience that prioritizes the needs of our students and fosters a community that is inclusive, supportive, and, most importantly, kind. We recognize the role we have in creating the leaders of tomorrow, and have remained committed to the same ultimate goal since 1921: To be more than students and professors, to create a community of active citizens, of good and honourable people.

## STUDENT LIFE AND LEARNING

Our Student Life and Learning (SLL) team is dedicated to supporting the academic and personal development of our students. SLL offers comprehensive, robust, and innovative supports and services aligned with the academic plan and consistent with our designation as Canada's pre-eminent small university.

### *CUE Commitment*

The CUE Commitment is a program unlike any other in Alberta, providing additional support to our students to help them achieve academic and career success. Students who take part are given opportunities to enrich their time at CUE, completing a number of requirements to position them for success after

graduation. Any student who completes all of the requirements and does not secure career-related employment within six months of graduation or move on to a professional program or graduate studies is eligible to return for an extra year of undergraduate classes for free.

This year, we successfully transitioned the CUE Commitment in response to the ongoing pandemic, offering students flexible solutions to meet their requirements while prioritizing health and safety. We are continuing to adapt and the CUE Commitment is now a course-based model, giving students the ability to fulfill the requirements during a selected time period.



### *Peer Support and Counselling Services*

Recognizing the need to foster and strengthen a supportive community, the Peer Support program provides students with a confidential and safe space to talk about issues with a trained peer who can then refer them to campus and community services,

In 2019-20, the team was comprised of six volunteers who offered one-on-one support. In total, the volunteers dedicated over 200 hours to their peers, providing support for a wide range of issues, including mental health challenges, relationship issues, and challenges adapting to university life. The team also provided support during the transition to online learning and we are grateful for their dedication.

Our counselling team has also been providing professional support, employing empirically-based approaches to address a wide range of concerns impacting the well-being and academic performance of students.

In 2019-20, counselling services experienced a 50% increase in demand for appointments, accompanied by a 75% increase in new clients accessing counselling. Due to demand, we will be welcoming a new counsellor in 2021—a testament to the dedication of our team to the well-being of our students.

### *Wellness*

We are committed to promoting health and wellness to the CUE community. In November 2019, we created a new position to implement our Mental Health Strategy and the recommendations of the Okanagan Charter, to which we are a signatory. From organizing and facilitating workshops, to planning virtual meditation sessions and recreational activities, our Campus Wellness Coordinator has been instrumental in increasing training and programming opportunities to improve our resiliency and collective wellness. Moving forward, the Campus Wellness Coordinator will lead the development of an institutional wellness strategy, which will embed wellness into all aspects of our campus culture.



### Career Services

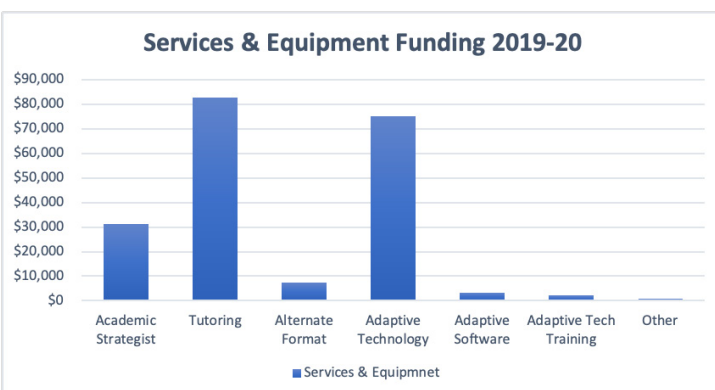
Preparing students for the workforce is one of our biggest priorities, and our Career Services team works to advise and support students throughout their time at CUE.

In 2019-20, we welcomed a new Career Services Advisor to meet the demands of our growing student population. Over the past year, Career Services advised approximately 110 students and alumni in one-on-one appointments and 120 students in daily drop-in appointments, and offered 13 workshops focusing on job application skills.

In addition to directly supporting career development, Career Services facilitated connections with employers through on-campus events, such as our annual career fair and employer information booths, and maintaining the Career Connections job board. A key focus moving forward will be continuing to build relationships with industry partners to increase opportunities for students to connect with employers through virtual career education and networking events.

### Learning Accommodation Services

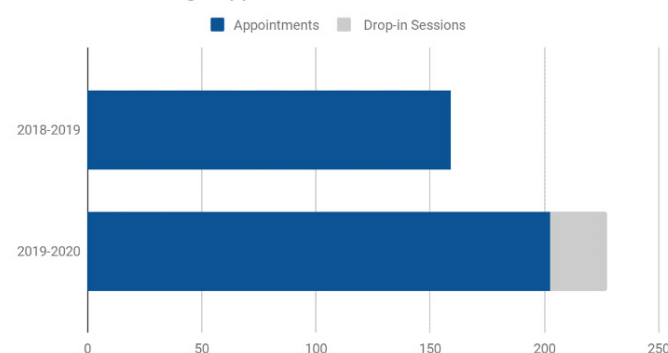
Between August 2019 and August 2020, Learning Accommodation Services (LAS) saw a 24% increase in the number of accommodated students, and a 98% increase in the number of students approved to write exams in an isolation room. LAS also helped students apply for funding for grants and over \$202,600 was awarded for services and equipment—an increase of 31.5%. As an institution, we also invested more than \$113,900 into LAS.



### Tutoring Services, Writing Centre, and Learning Services

Despite appointments dropping off considerably when classes moved online, both Tutoring Services and the Writing Centre grew over the past year. Tutors delivered 405 sessions in various subjects and held weekly drop-in sessions over the winter term for selected courses. Combining appointments and drop-in sessions, students accessed 42% more hours of tutoring support than they did in 2018-19.

Hours of Tutoring Support

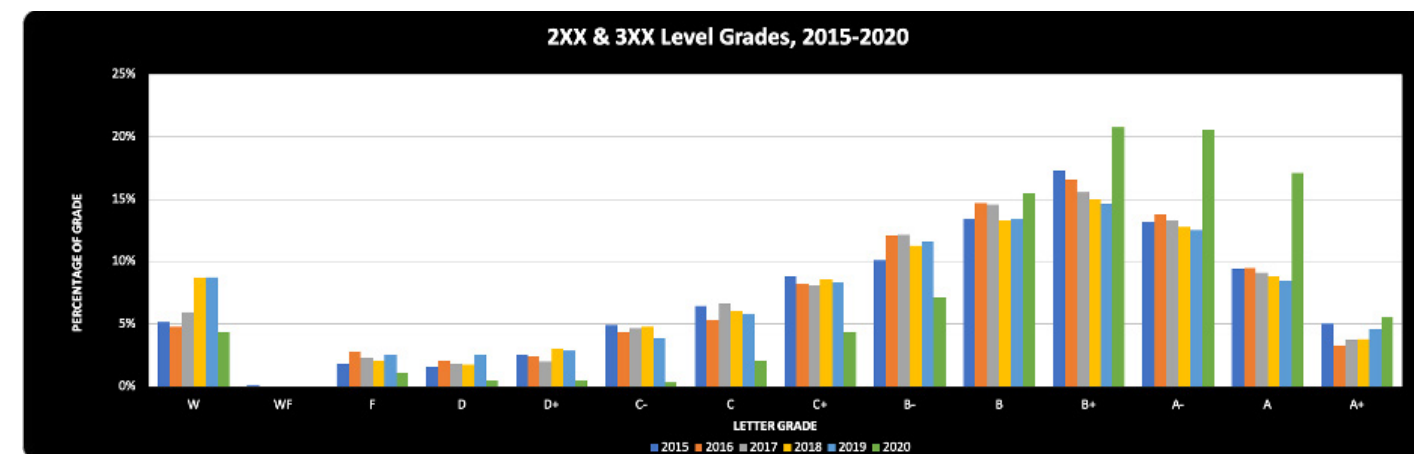


In addition to holding several workshops on campus, our Writing Centre advisor had 316 sessions with students over the past year—an increase of 28% over 2018-19. With COVID-19 moving our fall semester online, we will be continuing to expand these services, ensuring students can easily access support.

Through Learning Services, instructors submitted 97 Early Alerts for students who were struggling academically or personally—an increase of 88% from the year before. By completing the Bounce Back program, 19 students who would have otherwise been required to withdraw from CUE were eligible for readmission to their program this year. We know that students benefit from timely, proactive support, and Learning Services will be expanding its capacity to ensure we can continue to meet the needs of our students.

### STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Despite the extreme disruption to operations caused by COVID-19, student complaints did not increase over other years during the winter semester, signaling



Concordia University of Edmonton 2XX and 3XX Level Course Grades, 2015-2020 (Yacyshyn & Guelzow, in preparation).

both understanding from students and empathy from our faculty and instructors.

Similarly, a study by Dr. Alison Yacyshyn and Dr. Andreas Guelzow found that course withdrawals actually decreased slightly in 2019-20, as our dedicated faculty and instructors attended to the needs of individual students throughout the transition to online learning. The same is true when looking at student grades: In 2019, first- to third-year courses showed significant increases when compared to winter term grades from 2015-18. Fourth-year course grades remained consistent with 2015-18.

Unlike other institutions, we chose to maintain letter grade assessments instead of moving to pass/fail when we transitioned to online learning. This decision, while difficult, was made with the understanding that our faculty and instructors were being extremely attentive and did not disadvantage overall grade performance.

Success can also be measured by reviewing data and comparative information from the Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC), which looks at student experience.

CUSC runs surveys on a three-year rotation, alternating between first-year students, middle-year students, and graduating students. CUE has participated in these surveys annually for eleven years. The results of the 2020 survey of middle-year students were released this summer, allowing us to see how we compare to the average for the 29 participating post-secondary institutions. We were also able to compare these results to the last survey of middle-year students, which was conducted in 2017.

Looking at the results, we are proud to share that CUE students report high levels of satisfaction, are positive about their university outcomes, are likely to be promoters of their university, and tend to report higher ratings of professors than students at other universities.

Overall, 92% of middle-year students agreed that they are satisfied with the quality of teaching they received at CUE, which is higher than the national average (86%) and slightly lower than what students reported in 2017. CUE students were also 1.5 times more likely to strongly agree with the statement than students at other institutions.

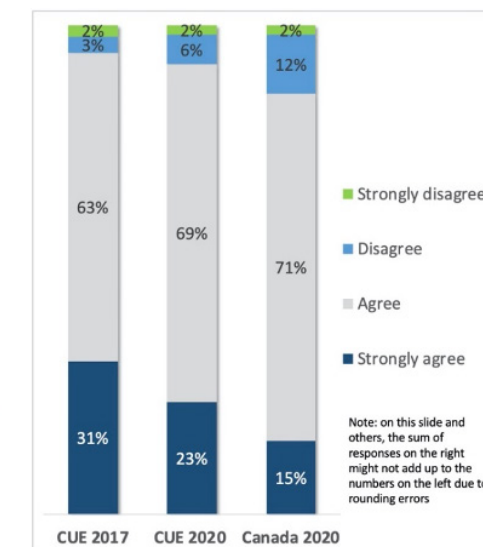
Generally, I am satisfied with the quality of teaching I have received

92% CUE 2020

86% 2020 | 94% CUE 2017



concordia.ab.ca



Note: on this slide and others, the sum of responses on the right might not add up to the numbers on the left due to rounding errors

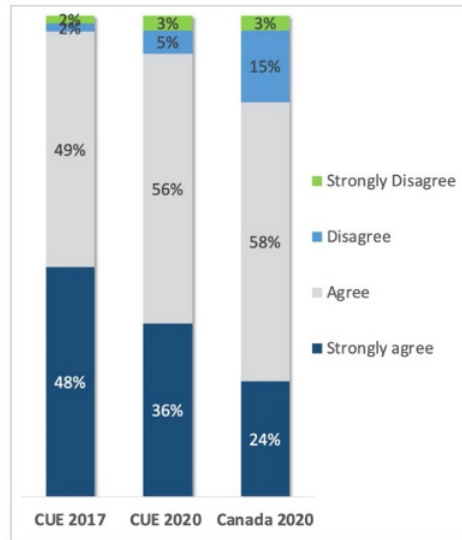


As part of the survey, students were asked to rate various interactions with their professors. Of the 15 interactions in the survey, students at CUE tended to rate their experiences higher than students at other institutions. It should be noted that 9 out of 10 students agreed or strongly agreed when presented with the statement: “Most of my professors treat students as individuals, not just numbers”.

**Most of my professors...  
Treat students as individuals, not just numbers**

**92%  
CUE 2020**

82% 2020 | 97% CUE 2017



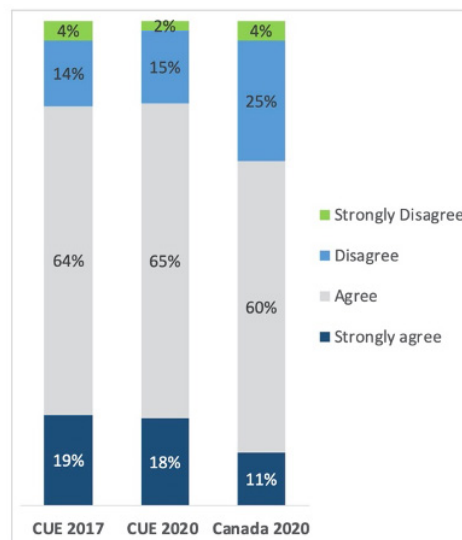
When presented with the statement: “Most of my professors provide prompt feedback on my academic work”, 83% of CUE students agreed or strongly agreed, in comparison to 71% of students at other institutions.

**Most of my professors...**

**Provide prompt feedback on my academic work**

**83%  
CUE 2020**

71% 2020 | 82% CUE 2017



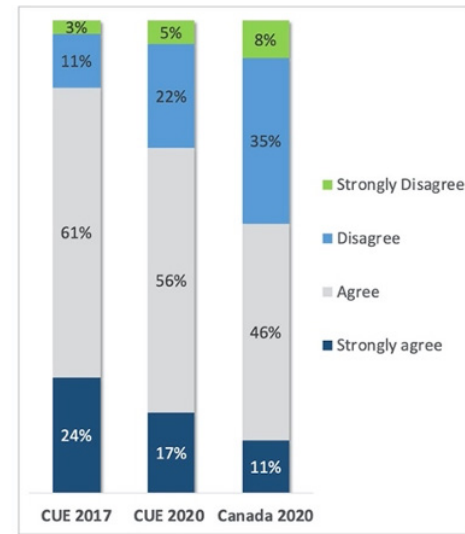
Another key result found that 73% of CUE students agreed or strongly agreed that their professors taken a personal interest in their academic progress, in comparison to the national average of 57%.

**Most of my professors...**

**Take a personal interest in my academic progress**

**73%  
CUE 2020**

57% 2020 | 86% CUE 2017

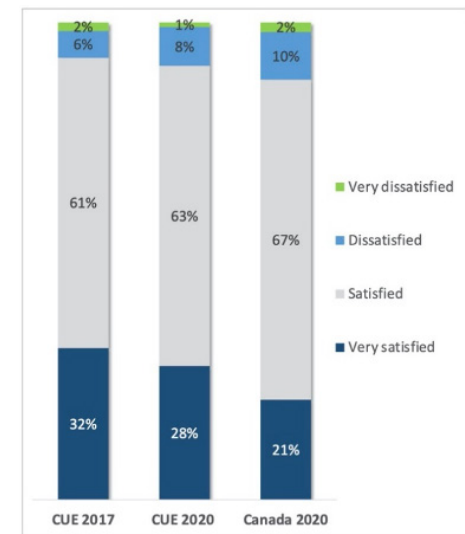


When asked about their decision to attend CUE, 91% of middle-year students reported they were satisfied or very satisfied, compared to 88% of students elsewhere.

**Satisfaction with decision to attend this university**

**91%  
CUE 2020**

88% 2020 | 93% CUE 2017



We take pride in being a community that cares, and were pleased that 82% of middle-year students reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the concern shown for students as individuals. This compares to 66% of students nationally. While our

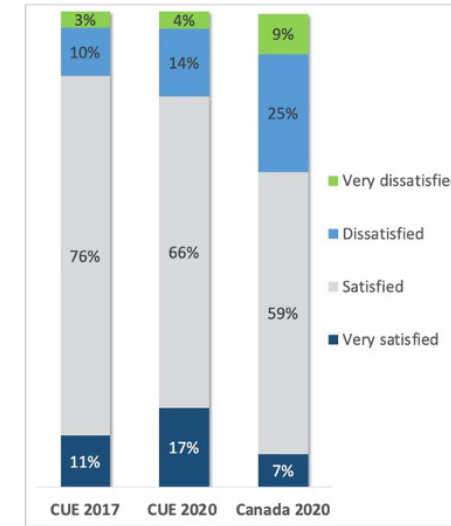


numbers are slightly lower than the 2017 survey, we were happy to see a six-point increase in the number of students who reported being very satisfied.

**Satisfaction with concern shown by the university for student as an individual**

**82%  
CUE 2020**

66% 2020 | 86% CUE 2017



When asked about meeting expectations, 88% of students reported CUE has met or exceeded their expectations, which is higher than the national average and on par with what our students reported in 2017.

**University experience meeting expectations**

**Exceeded  
28%  
CUE 2020**

19% 2020 | 25% CUE 2017



**Met  
58%  
CUE 2020**

64% 2020 | 64% CUE 2017

**Fell Short  
14%  
CUE 2020**

17% 2020 | 11% CUE 2017

Finally, when asked to rate how likely they would be to recommend their university on a scale from 0 to 10, CUE students received a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of +16 compared to a score of -1 for institutions across the country. The NPS was introduced by CUSC in 2018 to measure customers’ core perceptions of

their brand. It has shown to be a significant predictor of engagement and commitment, and respondents are categorized into three groups:

- Promoters (loyal enthusiasts who will refer others and help foster growth);
- Passives (satisfied but unenthusiastic); and
- Detractors (unhappy and can damage brand through negative word of mouth).

**How likely is it that you would recommend this university to a friend or family?**

	All Universities 2020	CUE 2020
Promoter	27%	34%
Passive	45%	44%
Detractor	28%	23%
<b>Net promoter score (NPS)</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>+16</b>



Our results indicated that CUE students have a stronger institutional identity than students nationally, and a higher likelihood of saying positive things about CUE and promoting it to others.

We take tremendous pride in the student experience we provide at CUE and are happy with the results of the CUSC survey; however, we recognize there are areas where some of our numbers are lower than they were in years past. We believe this may be due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as the survey was distributed not long after the conclusion of a difficult semester for our students. Regardless, we are committed to continuing to improve and look forward to implementing new ideas and programs that put the needs of our students, and their experience at CUE, first.



## ATHLETICS AND RECREATION

Athletics and Recreation celebrated another banner year, with the Thunder taking home four CCAA medals and sending athletes to compete in five national championships. Highlights included:

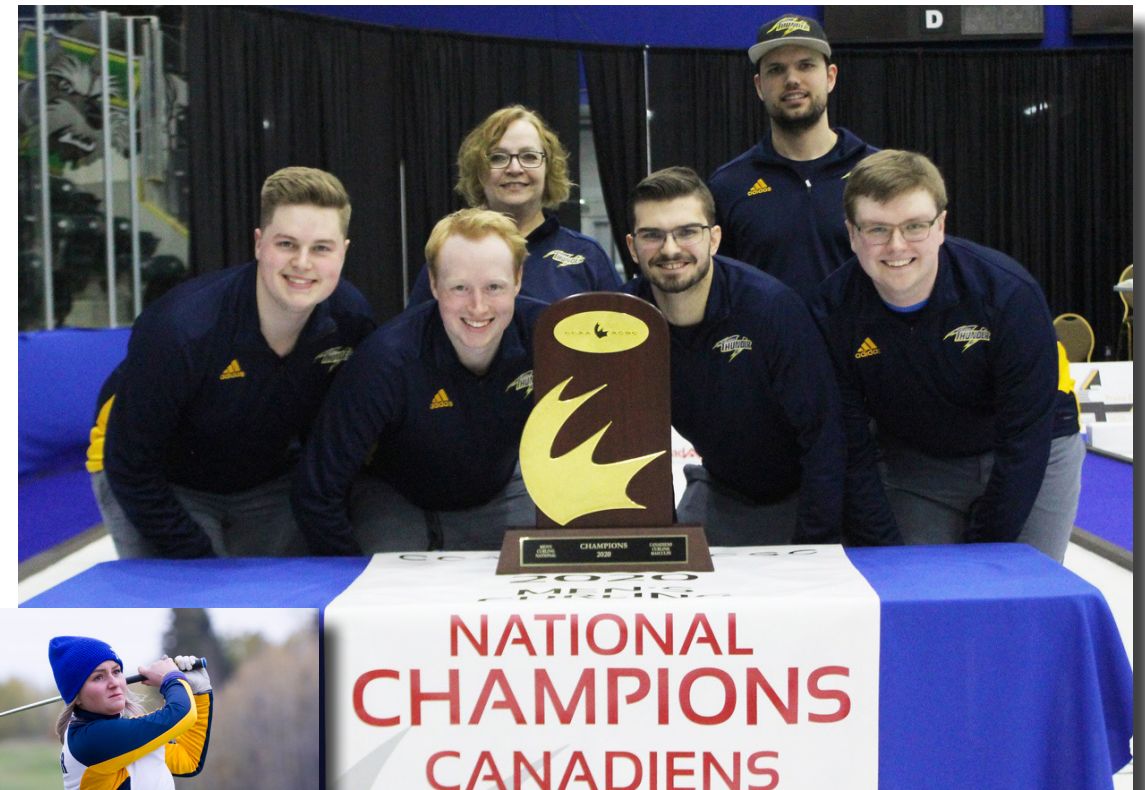
- Our women’s golf team entered the CCAA championships in Montreal ranked as the top team in Canada. Cassidy and Kennedy Turcotte led the Thunder after finishing ACAC Championships as gold and silver medalists, respectively. At nationals, both athletes finished in the top 15 individually.
- Leonard Chesoo improved on his 2018 CCAA silver medal with a national title in 2019. The running phenom went through the ACAC season undefeated and was later recognized as the ACAC Male Athlete of the Year.



- In Takeisha Wang’s final year as a badminton student athlete, the two-time CCAA national champion was awarded CCAA Player of the Year and a silver medal in women’s singles. Our rookie duo of Jasleen Kaur and Johnna Rymes made their first CCAA national championship appearance, and earned a silver medal after coming up short in a hard-fought gold medal match.
- Our Thunder curling teams finished off the year right before COVID-19, with the men’s team repeating as national champions and the women’s team falling just short of a bronze medal.

- CUE hosted the 2019 CCAA Women’s Soccer National Championships in Edmonton—only the second time CUE has hosted a national championship. Due to poor weather conditions, the championships had to be shortened slightly, but our team represented us extremely well.

On the Recreation side, we offered fitness classes and intramurals to students, faculty, and staff throughout the year, including virtual classes amid the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to find ways to support the health and fitness of our community, and look forward to finding new ways to promote recreation opportunities.







# Area of Focus and Opportunity

Reflecting on the 2019-20 year, there is a lot to celebrate. As President and Vice-Chancellor, I will remember this year for the challenges it presented but also for the resiliency that was demonstrated by members of the CUE community.

As we move forward, we are continuing to do our best to navigate the challenges created by COVID-19. The pandemic poses tremendous risk, not only to CUE but to organizations across sectors and people around the world.

The first and most important risk is to the health of our community. We want our community, and loved ones, to be safe and healthy. We feel a tremendous responsibility to make smart decisions driven by science and aligned with public health recommendations. Unfortunately, many post-secondary institutions chose to ignore the realities of education during a pandemic, choosing to operate face-to-face with minimal health protocols in place, opening residences, continuing with athletics, and ignoring the prospect of close social interactions between students. As a result, many are facing skyrocketing cases of COVID-19—not only on campuses but in communities filled with vulnerable populations. These institutions are now, once again, transitioning to online education as if nothing was learned from the experience of March 2020.

Let me be clear: Our priorities are the health and safety of our community, and the personal and academic success of our students. We will continue to mitigate against the risk of COVID-19 consistent with advice from Alberta Health Services, avoiding the challenges we are seeing both south of the border and in communities across Canada.

Another risk of COVID-19 relates to the mental health of our students and employees. Social isolation is taking a toll, and in response we have expanded our student mental health services to account for an increase in numbers and mental health challenges. Our current services seem to be meeting the current demand but we will be monitoring closely to ensure no one is left behind.

A third risk brought about by COVID-19 is enrolment. If we are forced to continue with online education for an indeterminate amount of time, how will student demographics come into play? Will students still be interested in a university education that is not face-to-



STOP

Have you screened for symptoms using the online Self-Assessment Tool?

Scan me!

Stop the Spread

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY  
EDMONTON

Before entering campus

Do you have any of the following symptoms:

Fever	Cough	Shortness of breath
Difficulty breathing	Sore throat	Runny nose

If yes, please self-isolate, call 811 and follow the advice of Alberta Health Services.

On campus

Please sanitize your hands and sign/swipe in.	Please wear your mask in all indoor public areas.
Please maintain 2 metres physical distance from others.	

face? There are many questions and no clear answers. While we are eager to return to in-person classes, we, once again, need to prioritize the health and safety of both our campus and extended community. I am not sure what the next few months will bring but please know that we are doing our best to make informed decisions.

Another risk not directly correlated with COVID-19 but that could be exacerbated by the pandemic is growth at other universities in Alberta, and what it could mean for a small university like CUE. Some institutions have experienced significant budget cuts, which could lead to increased competitiveness to fill the gaps that have been created. Instead of falling into a situation where Albertan institutions are fighting with one another, we see an opportunity for increased collaboration and participation to promote sectoral growth across the province. This work is ongoing and we look forward to sharing an update in the near future.

We can learn from what transpired over the course of 2019-20, and have an opportunity to make changes, both temporarily and permanently, to better serve our students. However, these are not decisions that can be made in a silo and we are looking forward to engaging in conversations as a community to decide our direction post-pandemic.

In no particular order, I have gathered some thoughts on the past year, what it has taught us, and where we may be able to go from here:

**Teaching and Learning:**

- What they say about pedagogy for online classes has proven to be true: Classes cannot be simply Google meetings.
- Instructors benefit from consultation with a Senior Educational Developer and this can also be true when thinking about our return to in-person instruction.
- Some courses are not well suited to online delivery, but many are.
- Science labs can be run effectively online via simulation but perhaps are not the first choice for CUE.
- The majority of students prefer mainly face-to-face classes.
- Scandalously priced resources from publishers can be replaced with electronic resources, including Open Educational Resources, which are free.

- Not all students and employees have adequate home internet and/or study space. The preservation of such spaces and service on-campus is important.
- We have to assess students differently online, moving away from traditional exams.
- Exam accommodations, in courses where exams still take place, can and have been handled well virtually.
- It is challenging to build a community online, but it is not impossible.

**Administration and Decision-making:**

- Collaborative decisions made in small groups have worked well.
- Our governance model has met the challenge of functioning effectively in a crisis.
- Our policies, with some flexibility, have proven to be invaluable guides. It is important to operate within the boundaries of policy as much as possible during a crisis to avoid unintended consequences.
- We do not all need offices and workspaces on campus, or at least not all of the time. Many of us can be productive and effective working from home.
- Those working at home might require additional or alternative forms of supervision and monitoring.
- In each of our administrative units, employees are making small changes to workspaces and processes that they feel will serve them well post-pandemic.
- Meetings can be effective when conducted virtually. Indeed, there is very little need to meet in-person most of the time.
- Regular communication from leadership is important for the university community.
- The future may involve less business travel to conferences and meetings.
- Moving to online delivery is not cheaper.
- In times of adversity, everyone at CUE pulls together.



# Conclusions and Final Thoughts

Most of the 2019-20 academic year passed by in the same pattern of other recent years. We were unaware of what was ahead and, instead, were focused on exciting developments, successes, and accomplishments.

From impressive growth and enrolment, to innovative projects and research breakthroughs, we were continuing to develop the strong community and educational experience on which we have built our reputation. All of what we had come to expect changed abruptly in March as we faced a pandemic the likes of which has not been seen for 100 years. We had to quickly pivot, entering uncharted territory, and doing our best to preserve all that is excellent at CUE.

CUE's response to COVID-19 continues to evolve. While we are excited about the opportunity to get back to in-person classes as soon as possible, we are not going to do so recklessly. There are also opportunities that this experience has presented us with that may result in long-term positive changes to the ways in which we study and work. Some of those are yet to be revealed, but we must continue

to approach our response and future planning with openness to new ideas, even as we are cautious about the immediate health implications of our decisions.

Throughout this pandemic CUE has shown that we are small but mighty. Our policies and practices have proven resilient during challenging times, but it is the strength of our community in the face of adversity that has pulled us through to this point. Whatever this pandemic has in store for us, it will continue to be met with common-sense decisions from a robust institution that knows who it is and understands the core mission of preparing students to be independent thinkers, ethical leaders, and citizens for the common good.



## Addendum

While the State of the University is mostly about looking back over the year that was, it would be remiss not to mention the exciting anniversary we have ahead of us.

In 2021, CUE celebrates one hundred years as a community of scholars gathering in Edmonton and growing into the world. All students, faculty, and staff—past and present—are invited to join in CUE's 100th anniversary celebrations. A centennial book, installation of historic exhibitions throughout campus, and other celebrations are being planned and we will be sharing more information in the near future on how you can participate in the excitement.

