CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY OF EDMONTON

RESEARCH & INNOVATION

STRATEGIC PLAN

2024-2029

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Concordia University of Edmonton (CUE) is located on the North Saskatchewan River Valley—a travelling route, trading center, ceremonial gathering place, and meeting ground for Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island. We are honoured to be situated in the traditional territory of the Treaty 6 Nations including the Cree, Dene, Nakota Sioux, Blackfoot, and Saulteaux peoples as well as the homeland of the Métis nation of Alberta (Region IV). CUE continues to learn from and respects the diverse histories, languages, and cultures of Indigenous peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.

A MESSAGE FROM

Provost and Vice-President, Academic,

Dr. Barb van Ingen, and

Associate Vice-President, Research and Innovation,

Dr. Carla Craveiro Salvado

We are thrilled to launch Concordia University of Edmonton's Research and Innovation Strategic Plan—the first of its kind for our institution—resulting from the culmination of months of collaborative effort and dedication. This comprehensive document outlines our collective vision and roadmap for advancing research, scholarship, and artistic endeavours, fostering innovation, and making a lasting impact in our local, national, and international communities.

At the heart of this strategic plan is our unwavering commitment to the connection between teaching and research as we prepare students to be independent thinkers, ethical leaders, and citizens for the common good. Through interdisciplinary research, collaboration, and strategic partnerships, we aspire to be a catalyst for positive change and transformative innovation. We will continue to cultivate a vibrant research ecosystem that empowers our faculty and students to pursue ambitious, high-impact research across a diverse range of disciplines. Building on CUE's rich tradition of innovation in teaching and our growing research ecosystem, we will strengthen support for entrepreneurship and technology transfer, ensuring that breakthrough discoveries translate into tangible solutions that benefit society.

We recognize that many of today's most complex challenges require interdisciplinary solutions. Our strategic plan emphasizes the importance of collaboration across disciplines and departments, fostering synergies that drive innovation and amplify the impact of our research endeavors. CUE is deeply committed to serving the needs of our community and advancing the public good. Our strategic plan prioritizes community engagement, seeking to leverage our expertise and resources to address local, national, and global challenges and enhance the well-being of society.

This strategic plan represents a shared vision for the future of research and innovation at CUE. It is the result of extensive input and feedback from stakeholders across our campus community, reflecting our collective aspirations and values. As we embark on this exciting journey, we invite each of you to actively engage with our strategic plan and contribute your unique perspectives and talents to its implementation. Together, we will shape the future of research and innovation at CUE and make a meaningful difference in the world. We look forward to working together as we bring our strategic plan to life and embark on a new era of discovery and innovation.

INTRODUCTION

Concordia University of Edmonton (CUE)'s Research and Innovation Strategic Plan 2024-2029 is the first of its kind for our academic community. The plan is underpinned by our institutional guiding principles: people, place, and purpose. The strategy reflects the future of our research and innovation ecosystem.

CUE rallies around the central promise of being a true students' university. Our educators inspire trust and confidence in our students. They also strive to inspire student belonging in research and innovation endeavours. At CUE, these are never lonely pursuits. Through closeness and connection, we collaborate across disciplines with our industry and community partners, our audiences, and each other. The spirit of mentorship and collaboration extends from the classroom to the lab, to the stage, to the library... to anywhere a great idea demands our attention and exploration.

Our researchers, scholars, and artists tackle pressing challenges, critique theories, develop valuable innovations, and explore intriguing curiosities. This plan blends and mixes across disciplines, where we anticipate rewarding results for CUE's entire community and research ecosystem.

Our first-ever Research and Innovation Strategic Plan shapes our ability to inspire excellence and discovery among new generations of CUE researchers, scholars, and artists. The plan is a result of our collective contributions, designed to fuel knowledge creation by exploring new ideas, critiquing existing ones, making a difference, and finding belonging.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

CUE's first Research and Innovation Strategic Plan was developed with guiding principles that navigate our research and innovation efforts, inform the decisions we make, and underpin our roadmap for the next five years to inspire a true students' university.

- CUE is a community of lifelong learners and mentors that upholds academic freedom.
- The interconnectedness of our research and teaching sparks impact throughout CUE.
- Our research, scholarship and artistry are underpinned by the principles of equity and diversity and the practice of inclusion.
- We embrace research that respects Indigenous ways of knowing and being.
- We nurture a spirit of innovation and discovery among all CUE researchers, scholars, and artists.
- We safeguard research integrity and mitigate security risks in our research and innovation efforts.

PRIORITY AREAS

The 2024-2029 Research and Innovation Strategic Plan is based on goals that foster and energize our most fundamental asset: people. Centred around three ambitious priority areas, this strategy intends to elevate research, scholarship, and artistic pursuits. Together, we will foster CUE's research ecosystem. We will inspire student belonging, involvement, and growth in our research and innovation efforts, and we will bolster our research culture and celebrate our impact.

Our plan includes research and innovation stories that embody CUE at its best. These tangible examples highlight a place and people that care deeply about impact, about the thrill of discovery and problem-solving, and about our purpose.

PRIORITY AREA 1

Foster CUE's Research Ecosystem

PRIORITY AREA 2

Inspire Student Belonging, Involvement, and Growth

PRIORITY AREA 3

Bolster our Research Culture and Celebrate our Impact

PRIORITY AREA 1:

FOSTER CUE'S RESEARCH ECOSYSTEM

The pursuit of knowledge creation at CUE begins with the recruitment and retention of high-calibre faculty members. It also involves integrating undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, visiting scholars, and research support staff into our research programs. By incorporating research into our teaching and training, we are preparing the leaders and innovators of tomorrow in a more purposeful manner. We are cultivating an ecosystem positioned to explore new ideas or challenge existing ones through a broad range of lenses.

To foster CUE's research ecosystem, the outlined objectives allow us to focus on how to ensure cohesiveness to our research, scholarship, and artistic efforts. Attracting and supporting skilled talent requires infrastructure and frameworks that enable knowledge creation while fueling learning amongst our future researchers and ambassadors.

OBJECTIVE 1.1:

Attract promising researchers, scholars, and artists that underpin and grow CUE's education and research strengths.

TACTICAL ACTIONS:

1.1.1 Identify areas of research leadership and excellence, as well as emerging research strengths at CUE.

1.1.2 Strive towards obtaining eligibility for the Canada Research Chair program.

1.1.3 Explore the potential of an artist-in-residence program at CUE.

OBJECTIVE 1.2:

Support CUE's researchers, scholars, and artists to advance their areas of expertise.

TACTICAL ACTIONS:

1.2.1 Realign research centres, institutes, and clusters with CUE's education and research strengths.

1.2.2 Focus the internal funding programs to position researchers, scholars, and artists to successfully obtain external grant funding, primarily tri-agency grant dollars.

1.2.3 Develop a roster of training and support resources targeting all phases of the grant lifecycle for researchers. This will also include technology transfer, entrepreneurship, and other innovation-related support.

1.2.4 Expand capacity for highly qualified personnel, such as post-doctoral fellows and visiting scholars, to integrate into research ecosystem at CUE.

1.2.5 Foster a robust network of groups, associations, and other external stakeholders that support knowledge creation across all sectors.

OBJECTIVE 1.3:

Expand the infrastructure, tools and resources needed to nurture research and innovation at CUE.

TACTICAL ACTIONS:

1.3.1 Expand capacity for research in the life- and health-sciences.

1.3.2 Develop a strategy for Indigenous research at CUE that includes engagement with Indigenous research methodologies.

1.3.3 Pursue strategies, platforms, and facilities that support research and innovation activities.

OBJECTIVE 1.4:

Establish an integrated framework that underpins safety, integrity, and responsible data management in research and innovation endeavours.

TACTICAL ACTIONS:

1.4.1 Create a culture of research security through the development of CUE's safeguard research program.

1.4.2 Implement CUE's research data management strategy.

1.4.3 Foster a safe environment for all research or research-related activities conducted online, in a laboratory, or in a field setting.

DR. JENNA CONGDON

From researching desert ant navigation in Arizona to training AI to monitor orangutan behaviour at the Toronto Zoo, Dr. Jenna Congdon, Assistant Professor in the department of psychology, has become an expert in making connections with community partners and institutions that can provide ready access to data-rich subjects.

Right after joining CUE, Dr. Congdon partnered with the Edmonton Valley Zoo, just a few kilometres west of campus and an enthusiastic collaborator with whom she is building the Congdon Cognition, Learning, and Animal Welfare (CCLAW) laboratory.

“I love these external relationships. I’m interested in a collaboration where I go to a space and help provide enrichment while I obtain data,” says Dr. Congdon.

“I love these external relationships. I’m interested in a collaboration where I go to a space and help provide enrichment while I obtain data.”

DR. JENNA CONGDON

“Since I started in 2022, CUE has supported me every step of the way. And now I work with a small intimate zoo that welcomes me into their space. The relationship and the space is so much better than I could have dreamt.”

As the recipient of an internal CUE Seed grant, Dr. Congdon purchased laboratory equipment including tailor-made touch screens first used with two emu at the zoo, and later expanded to seven seals.

The goal is to teach the emu (through food rewards like grapes, baby tomatoes, corn, and peas) to distinguish between various images on-screen, and subsequently identify the correct image by touch with their beaks.

“Some might have been skeptical whether a quote: ‘dinosaur bird’ could do this; they could! People are blown away that these animals are capable of it,” she says. “This experiment will give us so much insight into how these animals process information in the world.”

Dr. Congdon, an early-career researcher who was funded by NSERC and Mitacs while a postdoctoral fellow, is expanding her cognition studies with the zoo’s population of harbour and fur seals, otters, and red pandas.

Although she is passionate about her research, “the thing I loved first was teaching. I fell in love with research along the way,” she said. “I feel very fortunate to be in a place where I am supported to fully explore both.”

DR. SERGEY ISHUTOV AND DR. NASIM HAJARI

It's a grand pivot from investigating the world's broadest and most technical challenges—carbon capture, blockchain, hydrogen production, cloud computing—to tackling a very local and personal enterprise: fretting about how much energy one's house is wasting.

Two CUE researchers with disparate backgrounds but a shared passion for useful, human-scale solutions have joined forces to develop an app that would produce a literal snapshot of a home's energy use.

"It feels good to do something that will ultimately be useful. From my perspective, it is easy to see how crucial energy use is to the future of the planet."

DR. NASIM HAJARI

Dr. Sergey Ishutov, Assistant Professor of Earth and Environmental Sciences and Dr. Nasim Hajari, Assistant Professor of Information Technology, call their project "the energy calculator." While it's still in development, it has the potential to change how we all reckon with our energy use.

The calculator started as a website, built by one of Dr. Ishutov's students, where users would manually enter in makes and models of household appliances, lights, and heat sources. The site calculated users' consumption.

At a CUE research symposium, Dr. Hajari saw an early iteration of the site, and the two quickly realized that Dr. Hajari's IT expertise and research on computer vision could be employed in a more robust app version of the calculator.

The new concept: home dwellers upload pictures of their energy-using devices, the app uses computer vision to identify and analyze the devices, and machine learning powers recommendations on how to upgrade, change, and maximize the devices' efficiency. The duo's efforts were amplified by student involvement, industry partners, and Mitacs funding.

The commercial potential for an energy-obsessed population is obvious, though both are just as fulfilled by the momentum of their partnership and enthusiasm of student researchers.

"We should focus on the resources we have at CUE: great undergraduate students who crave hands-on experience. Their capabilities are such an advantage on a small project like ours," says Dr. Ishutov.

"Wherever the app goes, we're training them on applicable research that's helpful in the community."

Dr. Hajari, who has also led students on other Mitacs-funded projects that use computer vision to identify different kinds of waste in waste management facilities, says the energy calculator highlights the breadth of research happening at CUE.

"You don't need a research group of 40 people and a project that attracts $100 million in funding. There's so much room for diversity of projects, particularly at CUE," Dr. Hajari says.

"It feels good to do something that will ultimately be useful. From my perspective, it is easy to see how crucial energy use is to the future of the planet."

PRIORITY AREA 2:

INSPIRE STUDENT BELONGING, INVOLVEMENT, AND GROWTH

As a true students' university, we inspire student belonging, involvement, and growth in our research, scholastic, and artistic endeavours. This priority area focuses on how we integrate students in CUE's areas of research leadership and excellence, as well as emerging research strengths. Led by their mentors—CUE's researchers, scholars and artists—students can find their purpose.

Success in this priority area means more student engagement, more participation, more opportunities. It also means growth in their technical and critical thinking skills, and in the pure joy they find along their journey of inquiry, critique, and discovery.

OBJECTIVE 2.1:

Enhance student and other trainee engagement in faculty-led, novel, and immersive opportunities across CUE's research ecosystem.

TACTICAL ACTIONS:

2.1.1 Enhance the integration of students in faculty-led research programs.

2.1.2 Explore more funding prospects for students to pursue research opportunities.

2.1.3 Build a directory of research-related resources for students, as well as enhance access and awareness.

OBJECTIVE 2.2:

Increase student participation and leadership in knowledge mobilization initiatives.

TACTICAL ACTIONS:

2.2.1 Promote student engagement and participation in CUE research-related activities and events.

2.2.2 Work towards establishing CUE's first Open Access Journal that publishes peer-reviewed novel works generated by CUE trainees.

2.2.3 Encourage student engagement and participation in external research dissemination events.

GLENDA STIRLING AND JOSIAH HIEMSTRA

As theatre professionals, Glenda Stirling and Josiah Hiemstra are trained to be alive to the kinesthetic, to the real-world, to the real-time magic that emerges when people meet in the flesh on stage.

It is still wondrous to both how quickly they've surrendered to the virtual world and its promise of transforming how theatre is designed.

Glenda, a CUE Assistant Professor and the Drama Program Coordinator, and Josiah, CUE Drama Technical Director and Sessional Instructor, discovered an Icelandic virtual reality (VR) app designed for architecture projects in late 2023.

They immediately saw how the technology, combined with VR headsets, could be adapted to help set designers, actors, and directors collaborate on set design, props, and staging.

"I am shocked and delighted by what we've discovered," says Glenda. "These advances can truly augment what we do, rather than compete with it."

CUE is among the first institutions to test and utilize VR this way, a notion which excites the innovative spirit in both colleagues.

"I'm so excited about where this can go and the potential that I can make a change that impacts beyond CUE and into the world," Josiah says. "It's so rare to be part of something so new, and now I'm introducing students and other colleagues to it and seeing them go 'Whoa!'"

The advance was a result of funding from Alberta Innovates to CUE's entire Fine Arts team. Another key discovery centred around how 360-degree cameras could transform archival recordings of CUE's theatre and music performances. The success of the project was due, in part, to the partnerships established with external experts in theatre and VR.

"I am shocked and delighted by what we've discovered," says Glenda. "These advances can truly augment what we do, rather than compete with it."

GLENDA STIRLING

To Glenda, the projects solve a constant challenge in fine arts academia—defining what constitutes creative research and how to archive and disseminate it.

"Research is about discovery: about application and processes that move a discipline forward. That's exactly what this is," Glenda says.

"It looks different because the output is a live performance rather than a research paper. But we have far more in common with, say, a biology experiment than people might assume.

"In theatre, you design an experiment—the rehearsal process is one long experiment. Then you test, you fail, you make small adjustments, and try again. Then you disseminate the work, and there's reflection on it."

CUE drama students are thrilled with the VR application and eager to explore alongside Glenda and Josiah.

"Any researcher, any artist, is led by their curiosity," Glenda says. "You see a challenge or a question mark or a bridge with a gap in it and you start exploring."

DR. JONATHAN STRAND AND DR. ESLAM ABDALLAH

It was a CUE faculty retreat that originally brought together the minds of Philosophy Professor Dr. Jonathan Strand, and Assistant Professor of Information Systems Security & Assurance Management Dr. Eslam AbdAllah. The unexpected meeting altered the trajectory of an idea Dr. Strand had carried for two decades.

Dr. Strand revealed his challenge: for years, he yearned for a better way to teach his students about logic. How could he more elegantly and efficiently show his students how to create an argument, assess another's argument, and what constitutes good reasoning?

"I have an idea for a game that prompts students to build component parts of an argument and evaluate other students' reasoning as they construct their own arguments."

DR. JONATHAN STRAND

He said: "I have an idea for a game that prompts students to build component parts of an argument and evaluate other students' reasoning as they construct their own arguments. It would have tremendous pedagogical utility. It would be fun!"

Immediately, Dr. AbdAllah saw how the idea could be converted to an app and grasped how AI and machine-learning could fuel the game's utility and sophistication.

Perhaps a student could code it under Dr. Abdallah's supervision, the newly-allied pair mused. With an NSERC USRA award for an undergraduate student, the idea took off.

"This cross-disciplinary approach—it's not forced, it's required," Dr. Strand says now, after CUE IT student Hamza Ahmed coded the first rough version of *The Logic Game* in the summer of 2023.

Assistant Professor of Psychology, Dr. Seyma Yildirim-Erbasli, joined the team to evaluate the game's educational effectiveness.

"I know logic and the standards of good reasoning. Dr. AbdAllah knows coding. Dr. Yildirim-Erbasli knows assessment. We *need* each other for this to be successful," says Dr. Strand.

Dr. AbdAllah, who worked and studied at large universities in Cairo and Central Canada before joining CUE, said the collision of energy and ideas at the retreat energized him.

"I believe this happened because of the nature of CUE," he said. "In bigger universities, whether in Canada and at home, where might I even meet a professor of philosophy, or a professor in psychology, let alone join forces with them?"

Hamza was awarded another USRA grant in the summer of 2024 to further develop the game. From there: perhaps commercialization, perhaps a free release into the public domain.

"If you want to learn how to reason well and debate in an effective way, this game will teach you," Dr. Strand says. "Human history is marked by a lot of very bad reasoning. We should be better, and this is one way to help."

DR. EMMANUEL MAPFUMO

Dr. Emmanuel Mapfumo, Associate Professor of Environmental Science at CUE, is a natural research leader and collaborator. He has led and collaborated with researchers across CUE and the broader research community, and partnered with industry, government, and community partners. He has published and made contributions to the research on impacts of anthropogenic land disturbances and agricultural systems on soil health, utilization of waste materials as soil amendments, innovative approaches to managing wastes, and impacts of climate change on agricultural crop production.

His journey as a researcher has also led to collaborations with First Nations community partners, leading to impactful research that both supports the community and advances our understanding of the impact waste has on the environment. It was Dr. Mapfumo's passion and expertise that drew Rachel Graham, now a CUE graduate, into the realm of environmental science.

Through Rachel's time at CUE, where she completed her Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science, opportunities arose to partner with various First Nations communities across Alberta. Led by Dr. Mapfumo, this included an environmental site investigation for potential community health impacts of a local waste transfer facility at the Bearspaw First Nation - Eden Valley Reserve 216 community.

"For me to be able to give back to my community, to be able to give back to different First Nations, it's amazing."

RACHEL GRAHAM

"I would never in a million years thought this would be my path. Going through the the grant proposal process, the research, you could get lost. But because of CUE and Dr. Mapfumo, I haven't stopped learning, and I haven't stopped helping," says Rachel.

Their research includes conducting assessments of the types of contaminants of concern associated with the different types of wastes at the waste transfer facility, and their potential impacts to community health. This is being conducted in partnership with the First Nation community to understand the land that they live on and the impact some of the disposed material may have on the land. As a First Nations student, Rachel finds the ability to support Indigenous communities deeply rewarding.

"It fills you with pride. For me to be able to give back to my community, to be able to give back to different First Nations, it's amazing," she says. "Through working with Dr. Mapfumo, I realized how specifically I could help."

Under Dr. Mapfumo's supervision, Rachel became the first Indigenous CUE student to be awarded the NSERC Indigenous Ambassador Grant and the NSERC Undergraduate Research Award. Through this grant, Rachel was able to conduct surface water quality testing activities with the youth from the First Nation community in Fort Chipewyan. Dr. Mapfumo's years of mentorship have helped shape Rachel into a passionate scientist now pursuing a Master of Science.

"Without Dr. Mapfumo, I would not be here. I would not be as successful as I am," says Rachel. "He ignited something in me that made me want to learn more."

"She has become more of a colleague as opposed to a student. She has invested so much time and has grown so much as a researcher," Dr. Mapfumo added.

Despite her time as a CUE student having passed, the pair continue to maintain their professional relationship with plans to explore the ecological risks of draining oilsands tailing ponds.

PRIORITY AREA 3:

BOLSTER OUR RESEARCH CULTURE AND CELEBRATE OUR IMPACT

While continuing to ensure our excellence in teaching, we have entwined research into our ecosystem, into our educational strategies, and into our academic pursuits. This priority area focuses on how we bolster our research culture, along with celebrating our collective impact, while recognizing individual achievements.

Through this plan, we continue to bolster our diverse and close-knit community that values all researchers, scholars, and artists. Our stakeholders—funders, industry, government, the broader community—look to CUE to lead the way in our areas of excellence. We continue to foster CUE's pride and reputation and tell our story through our lens as a proud community of teaching and research mentors.

OBJECTIVE 3.1:

Build reputation of research at CUE.

TACTICAL ACTIONS:

3.1.1 Upon a revamp, maintain CUE webpages related to research and innovation updated on a regular basis to best reflect our research landscape.

3.1.2 Celebrate internal and external funding awards.

3.1.3 Spotlight publications, book launches, performances, exhibits, and other related dissemination activities that showcase novel knowledge creation.

3.1.4 Build a bibliometric and impact assessment strategy.

OBJECTIVE 3.2:

Promote the dissemination of research, scholastic, and artistic pursuits.

TACTICAL ACTIONS:

3.2.1 Expand the engagement, participation, and leadership of faculty members in CUE research-related activities and events.

3.2.2 Encourage the participation of faculty members in external research dissemination activities and events.

3.2.3 Develop and implement a strategy to regularly promote to internal and external stakeholders the research and innovation endeavours happening at CUE.

DR. TERESA FOWLER AND DR. MUNA SALEH

They are mutually admiring colleagues and professors in the Faculty of Education, but the research subjects of Drs. Teresa Fowler and Muna Saleh diverge in obvious ways: gender, ethnicity, race, religion, and power.

Dr. Fowler researches white masculinity and its impact on hockey culture in Canada. Dr. Saleh researches the experiences of Canadian Muslim children, youth, and families with curriculum inside and outside of school systems.

As superficially different as their subjects may be, both women see commonalities in their research approaches, the sorts of stories and insights they unearth, and the truths they seek.

"We're not telling stories of opposition, but stories that are too often untold. The richness of the insights are made visible as we listen to their stories and seek to understand."

DR. MUNA SALEH

"I think we're both trying to explore counter-narratives," says Dr. Saleh, whose Killam Trusts funded doctoral dissertation was published as a book titled *Stories We Live and Grow By: (Re)Telling Our Experiences as Muslim Mothers and Daughters*.

Dr. Saleh draws on her knowledge as a Palestinian Muslim woman with intergenerational histories of violent displacement in her research, alongside Muslim mothers with refugee experiences and her SSHRC-funded narrative inquiry into the experiences of Palestinian Muslim youth and families with curriculum in Alberta.

"We're not telling stories of opposition, but stories that are too often untold. The richness of the insights are made visible as we listen to their stories and seek to understand," says Dr. Saleh.

Dr. Fowler's work dives into another side, and she feels her and Dr. Saleh's work is paradoxical.

"Dr. Saleh delves into the lives of women and girls who are told they're not good enough, and I'm talking about male hockey players who have been raised on the other end of the power spectrum who are constantly working to secure their place amid the pressure of precarity and the commodification of sport," says Dr. Fowler.

"But the connectedness of these stories is so interesting. As Dr. Saleh says, these are untold stories—and she tells beautiful stories about invisible and erased lives, whereas I'm talking about the unhealthy masculine culture that is still privileged in social structures, which causes much of that societal harm."

Both women are widely published and sought out by media and podcasters for their insights on crucial, contemporary issues. Dr. Fowler testified in the House of Commons and consulted broadly with Hockey Canada in the wake of sexual assault scandals that rocked the nation recently.

"I see myself as a public intellectual. It's not just about papers; it's being in the community doing the work," Dr. Fowler says. "Podcasts, media interviews: these are relevant research outputs that move the conversation forward."

DR. CONRAD VAN DYK

With four million video views on YouTube and a website with surging traffic, Dr. Conrad van Dyk's *The Nature of Writing* has already found an extraordinary audience.

Where will Dr. van Dyk, a CUE english professor, take what has proved to be a resonant innovation and ultra-practical academic writing guide next?

"I'm pretty ambitious when it comes to helping others and creating interesting things. I'm not so ambitious as an entrepreneur, though. It's not in my nature. But I'm excited to see where it goes," says Dr. van Dyk.

His 100-plus writing exercises and quizzes live on a meticulously organized, flora- and fauna-themed website. Content is free for CUE students and available for a reasonable fee to other learners.

"By the time they walk across the convocation stage, if they've used the material available in *The Nature of Writing*, students can go out into the world knowing they've mastered a skill here at CUE and they understand and use the beauty of language."

DR. CONRAD VAN DYK

Dr. van Dyk has voiced every video on the accompanying YouTube channel—some 232 at the time of this narrative. The centrepiece work—discussing *"What's Wrong With The Five-Paragraph Essay And How To Write Organically"*—features beautiful animation from CUE grad Matthew Mol.

Dr. van Dyk explored and developed the idea in 2017, upon receiving an internal CUE Seed grant and a desire to make a difference in students' lives. His work led to the innovation that is now a website of resources.

"Students hunger for practical advice, and it's in our nature at CUE to help, to give them tools to succeed at every level," he says.

"By the time they walk across the convocation stage, if they've used the material available in *The Nature of Writing*, students can go out into the world knowing they've mastered a skill here at CUE and they understand and use the beauty of language."

He believes such a project could only happen at a university like CUE because of the institution's flexibility, its willingness to recognize all forms of research, and its drive to help all types of creators.

"A bigger institution would insist to see a publisher's name behind a project like this. They'd ask: Is it scholarly enough? Here at CUE, it is recognized wholly as part of my contribution. Our system made room for the project."

In turn, Dr. van Dyk has a commercialization agreement with CUE, and both will benefit from the site's future success. "Though there is a lot of content on the site now, there is still so much left to explore. I'm as eager as anyone to see how it all unfolds."

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