

BELONGING, SUCCESS, AND FUTURE

**CUE'S STRATEGIC ENROLMENT
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

2026-2031



Concordia University of Edmonton is located on Indigenous lands and territories now called Treaty No. 6 territory and the homeland of the Métis Nation (District 9). The North Saskatchewan River has been a significant place for the niisitapi (Blackfoot), dënesǖlíné (Dene), nakoda isga (Nakoda Sioux), nehiyawak (Cree), nahkawininiwak (Saulteaux), and otipemisiwak (Métis) since time immemorial. We honour and respect the agreements made by our ancestors to live in good relations for as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the river flows.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PROVOST

It is with great pride that I introduce Concordia University of Edmonton's (CUE) first Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) Plan. This milestone reflects our community's shared commitment to shaping a future of sustainable growth, academic excellence, and experience that is distinctly CUE.

Now more than a century strong, CUE's story is one of resilience, growth, and community. This plan builds on that foundation, clarifying how we will attract and support students while advancing Board priorities and strengthening the CUE brand for the future.

At its heart, this plan is about people: our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and partners. It focuses on enhancing the supports, pathways, and experiences that help students thrive at every stage of their journey, from enrolment through graduation, academically, personally, and professionally. It affirms our commitment to building a student experience grounded in care for the whole person, connection to community, and preparation for success in a rapidly changing world.

The plan is guided by four strategic goals:

- Attract and retain students who are well-matched to CUE's programs and mission;
- Create clear and welcoming pathways into and through our academic offerings;
- Enhance the student experience to ensure engagement, belonging, and success;
- Align our internal processes and systems to be effective, transparent, and sustainable.

Developed through a collaborative, consultative, and research-informed process, this plan reflects the insight and dedication of faculty, staff, and campus partners across CUE. My heartfelt thanks go to the SEM Planning Committee and all who contributed their expertise to this important work.

The SEM Plan is both ambitious and practical. It acknowledges today's higher education challenges while embracing opportunities for innovation, adaptability, and partnership. Above all, it reflects CUE's unwavering commitment to its vision of strengthening our position as the university of choice in Alberta and beyond.

This plan marks not an endpoint, but a beginning, a living framework that will evolve as we learn and grow together. Its success depends on all of us, and I invite every member of the CUE community to see themselves in this plan and in our next chapter of growth.

With gratitude and excitement for what lies ahead,



Dr. Barb van Ingen

Provost & Vice-President Academic, Concordia University of Edmonton

INTRODUCTION

This Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) Plan begins from a place of optimism and realism, acknowledging both the challenges and opportunities facing CUE and the broader post-secondary sector today.

The higher education landscape is evolving rapidly. Institutions across Canada are adapting to shifting demographics, economic uncertainty, and technological disruption. Students' expectations are changing too: they seek flexible pathways, meaningful engagement, and tangible outcomes that prepare them for success in a world being reshaped by innovation, labour market demands, and affordability pressures. Within this context, enrolment and student success are more than operational priorities—they are central to institutional vitality and purpose.

At CUE, recent trends reflect both resilience and renewal. Following a decade of sustained growth between 2013–2014 and 2020–2021, enrolment has softened modestly in recent years but now shows early signs of stabilization. In 2024–2025, 2,836 students enrolled in Ministry-approved programs, representing 2,145.7 full-load equivalents (FLEs), a slight dip from the previous year.

Domestic students comprise approximately 84% of total enrolment, international students 16%, and Indigenous learners 7.3%. These figures underscore both the progress CUE has made in broadening its recruitment base—across Alberta, Canada, and international markets—and the need to strengthen recruitment and retention, with current first-to-second-year undergraduate retention at 72%.

Despite enrolment headwinds, CUE remains a strong destination for learners, supported by consistent program completions and student success. In 2024–2025, 606 students graduated, the university's third-highest total in a decade, reflecting the ongoing value of a CUE education.

This inaugural SEM Plan is table stakes: it establishes the data, governance, and operational baseline CUE needs to act deliberately. It is also catalytic: targeted actions in recruitment, pathways, retention, and student supports will unlock program strength, deeper community and employer partnerships, and clearer routes to student success.

Grounded in the Board Operational Priorities and 2023–2028 Academic Plan, the SEM Plan pursues optimum enrolment—a sustainable scale that protects academic quality while expanding access and impact. Success will be measured, and visible: stronger first-to-second-year retention, higher completion rates, improved equity for Indigenous and other underrepresented learners, thoughtful international diversification, and greater financial resilience.

This is a call to coordinated, disciplined action. With focused implementation, data-driven decisions, and campus-wide collaboration, CUE will not only stabilize enrolment but strengthen its place as a bold, future-ready destination for learners and for Alberta.

OPTIMUM ENROLMENT

Looking to the future, CUE aspires to grow to an overall enrolment of **3,000 full-load equivalents (FLEs)** across undergraduate, graduate, certificate, and continuing education programs. Reaching this milestone will not only position CUE for a sustainable future, but will also ensure that institutional resources are efficiently maximized across programs and services. Achieving this target will require coordinated, sustained efforts guided by the strategies and priorities outlined in this SEM Plan.

To ensure steady and sustainable growth, CUE will aim for realistic annual increases of approximately 2% in each year of this SEM Plan, supported by clear program-level enrolment goals and active monitoring of progress toward them. Improving **conversion rates and reducing summer melt** will be a near-term priority, alongside focused efforts to strengthen **retention and progression** for all students, including master's and international cohorts. As enrolment grows, CUE will also continue to expand its commitment to Indigenous learners, ensuring that **Indigenous enrolments remain at approximately 7%** of the total student enrolments in parallel with overall domestic growth.

Continuing education will be another key driver of enrolment growth, with new program options designed to meet the needs of adult learners, working professionals, and employers seeking flexible, future-focused learning opportunities. This expansion will complement undergraduate and graduate offerings, providing learners with multiple entry points into CUE and reinforcing the university's role as a hub for lifelong learning.

This growth strategy aligns with the broader context of the Edmonton region, where population increases driven by in-migration, immigration, and domestic growth are expected to generate additional demand for post-secondary opportunities. By aligning enrolment strategies with regional demographic trends, strengthening pathways across all program areas, and focusing on student success from first point of interest through graduation, CUE will position itself to achieve optimum enrolment while sustaining financial health, maximizing resources, and advancing its mission as a student-centred, future-ready institution.

ASSUMPTIONS

This SEM Plan is grounded in a set of assumptions that acknowledge both the opportunities and uncertainties shaping the post-secondary environment. The rapidly changing socio-economic landscape makes it difficult to predict enrolment patterns with precision; therefore, it is essential that planning at CUE remain nimble and adaptable.

The university will continuously monitor external factors such as demographic trends, labour market shifts, competitor activity, and government funding and policy, and will adjust the SEM Plan as needed to remain aligned with the evolving context. While this plan assumes that government funding and policy will remain stable, CUE recognizes that changes in this area could significantly impact enrolment and institutional priorities.

A further assumption is that CUE will have the capacity to accurately measure and evaluate initiatives, using data and evidence to guide decisions. This will allow the institution to make timely adjustments, ensuring that the SEM Plan remains a living document, updated regularly through the implementation planning cycle.

VISION

CUE WILL BE A DESTINATION OF CHOICE FOR FUTURE-READY EDUCATION, EMPOWERING EVERY LEARNER TO SHAPE THEIR OWN SUCCESS WITHIN A COMMUNITY OF BELONGING, RESILIENCE, AND LIFELONG GROWTH.

This vision for CUE's SEM Plan will be realized through four interconnected goals that guide CUE's enrolment priorities and actions over the next five years. Together, these goals strengthen CUE's position as a preferred post-secondary destination, build personalized pathways that support career readiness and lifelong learning, foster a distinctive student experience rooted in belonging and collaboration, and enhance the systems, processes, and supports that will ensure our students thrive from first point of interest through graduation and beyond.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

GOAL 1

Strengthen CUE's position as a preferred post-secondary destination in the Edmonton region and beyond by raising awareness of its unique academic programs, continuing education opportunities, supportive learning environment, and career-focused opportunities.

Strategies to achieve this goal

1.1 IDENTIFY AND CONFIRM BRAND IDENTITY	CUE must collaboratively work to identify and confirm its strengths and brand identity across the institution, to ensure that all campus community members know and support the brand.
1.2 INCREASE VISIBILITY AND RECOGNITION OF CUE	Tell the compelling CUE story outside of the community through developing distinct institutional key messages that are used throughout all CUE communications. This includes developing a bank of stories and visuals that support and portray the key messages.
1.3 TARGETED RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS PLANS	Develop and implement targeted recruitment and communications plans for each identified student segment—undergraduate, graduate, and lifelong learners—ensuring messaging, outreach, and engagement strategies are tailored to the unique needs, motivations, and goals of each group.
1.4 EXPAND CAREER ADVISING	Expand pre-enrolment information and advising by integrating comprehensive career guidance and pathway planning, ensuring prospective students clearly understand program options, potential career outcomes, and the steps needed to achieve their professional and personal goals

Outcome

CUE is widely recognized in the Edmonton region and beyond, leading to increased awareness of its programs, stronger engagement with target student segments and measurable growth in applications, conversion, and overall enrolments.

GOAL 2

Build personalized and clearly defined pathways that guide undergraduate, graduate and lifelong learners through their academic journey at CUE, providing the support, resources, and experiences they need to achieve career readiness and lifelong success.

Strategies to achieve this goal

2.1 DEVELOP PERSONALIZED ADVISING PROGRAM	Design and implement a personalized advising program that begins at first enrolment and continues through the full student cycle, offering proactive guidance at key transition points. The program will identify and support students at risk of disengagement or attrition, while continuously adapting advising approaches and resources as new teaching modalities and academic programs are introduced.
2.2 INCREASE AND HIGHLIGHT WIL AND OTHER EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES	Expand and showcase experiential and work integrated learning (WIL) opportunities across all programs, ensuring every student has access to experiential learning that connects classroom knowledge with real-world application, career exploration, and professional skill development.
2.3 FURTHER DEVELOP INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY RELATIONS	Further develop and strengthen outreach with local Indigenous communities by building meaningful, reciprocal relationships that expand engagement opportunities, increase awareness of CUE as a welcoming destination, and provide culturally responsive supports to ensure Indigenous students are well-supported and successful throughout their academic journey.

Outcome

All CUE students experience personalized and clearly defined pathways that provide consistent support, guidance, and resources throughout their academic journey, resulting in improved retention, timely progression and career readiness.

GOAL 3

Foster a distinctive CUE student experience that is rooted in meaningful relationships, collaboration, and a strong sense of belonging, ensuring that every learner feels valued, supported, and connected to the university community.

Strategies to achieve this goal

3.2 FOSTER CUE COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS	Foster collaboration and engagement across campus by creating and supporting events, spaces, programs, and initiatives that bring students, faculty, and staff together, encouraging meaningful interactions, shared learning, and a vibrant campus community.
3.3 INCREASE SENSE OF BELONGING	Increase students' sense of belonging by fostering peer-to-peer engagement opportunities, enhancing orientation programs for all CUE students, empowering student voices in committees and decision-making processes, and actively ensuring students contribute to the evolution of their learning environment.

Outcome

CUE students feel valued, supported, and connected through meaningful relationships and collaborative experiences, fostering a strong sense of belonging that contributes to higher satisfaction, engagement, retention, and overall student success.

GOAL 4

Enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of systems, processes, and supports that guide students throughout their entire journey at CUE by clearly defining student success in our context and ensuring that technologies, policies, and services are aligned to enable that success.

Strategies to achieve this goal

4.1 DEFINE STUDENT SUCCESS	Engage faculty, staff, students, and key stakeholders to collaboratively develop a CUE-specific definition of student success that reflects the university's values, mission, and vision, guiding policies, supports, and processes across the entire student journey.
4.2 ENHANCE SYSTEMS AND TECHNOLOGIES	Review, streamline, and optimize student-facing systems, processes, policies and workflows to ensure they are efficient, effective, and aligned with CUE's definition of student success. This includes leveraging technology, updating policies, and integrating services to provide a seamless and supportive experience throughout the student journey.
4.3 DEVELOP SEM DATA DASHBOARDS	Develop comprehensive SEM data dashboards, including a standardized data dictionary, that integrates with CUE's systems and technology enhancements. Ensure the dashboard supports informed decision-making, aligns with governance structures, and provides timely, accurate insights across the student lifecycle to guide recruitment, retention, and success initiatives.

4.4 ENHANCE CUE COMMUNITY CULTURE	<p>Enhance CUE's community culture by strengthening internal communications and collaboration, celebrating student achievements through events and recognition programs, and providing ongoing SEM education to faculty and staff to keep a student-centered focus at the heart of all initiatives.</p>
4.5 ADVANCE ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT IN STUDENT SUCCESS	<p>Advance systems and connections that engage alumni as mentors, career partners, and storytellers, ensuring their contributions support student success, reinforce CUE's brand, and foster a lifelong sense of belonging within the CUE community.</p>

Outcome

Students experience a seamless, well-supported journey at CUE, guided by a clear and shared definition of success, efficient systems and technologies, and timely data insights. A strong culture of communication and collaboration, combined with meaningful alumni engagement, ensures students feel supported from first interest in CUE through graduation and beyond, resulting in improved engagement, progression, retention, and measurable enrolment growth.

NEXT STEPS

The successful completion of this SEM Plan marks the beginning of an ongoing cycle of action, alignment, and assessment. In the next phase, academic and administrative units across CUE, under the guidance of the leadership team, will collaborate to translate the plan's goals and strategies into annual SEM tactics. These tactics will be advanced through focused SEM implementation planning, ensuring that each unit understands its role in achieving institution-wide enrolment and student success objectives.

Responsibility for coordinating, monitoring, and assessing these priorities will rest with the SEM Committee. With the transition from planning to implementation, the Committee will focus on driving progress, measuring outcomes, and making adjustments as needed to keep strategies effective and relevant. The annual SEM planning cycle will be closely aligned with CUE's budget process: priorities will be developed and submitted in the fall to inform budget submissions in November, incorporated into budget approvals in February, and resourced for implementation with the launch of the new budget year in April. This alignment will ensure that SEM priorities are both actionable and sustainable, with resources strategically allocated to advance CUE's enrolment and student success goals.

PLANNING PROCESS

DECEMBER, 2024

Project Initiation



FEBRUARY, 2025

Project Kick-off



MARCH-APRIL, 2025

Institutional Document Review & Data Analysis



ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN



MARCH 27 TO APRIL 13, 2025

Stakeholder Survey (Students, Alumni, Faculty, Staff, Leadership)



MAY 21, 2025 (IN-PERSON), JUNE 5, 2025 (VIRTUAL)

Stakeholder Discussions



JUNE 10, 2025

Overview of Research and Discovery (Presentation and Discussion)



JUNE 18-20, 2025

SEM Planning Committee Discussions & Planning



JULY, 2025

Develop Plan Framework



AUGUST-SEPTEMBER, 2025

Write SEM Plan



SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER, 2025

Review and Revise Plan



OCTOBER 7-8, 2025

Gallery Walk to gather Community Feedback on SEM Plan



OCTOBER-NOVEMBER, 2025

Develop Final SEM Plan



OCTOBER 14 AND NOVEMBER 13, 2025

SEM Implementation Workshops



PEC - SEM PLAN FINAL APPROVAL

2025 SEM PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Carmen Arth

Vice-President Campus Life

Brett Buchanan

Dean, Faculty of Arts;
Dean of Science (Interim)

Tim Cusack

Dean, Faculty of Education

Mandeep Dhaliwal

Director of Finance

Sherif Elbarrad

Dean, Faculty of Management

Xinxin Fang

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