

# Strategic Plan 2011

University of Alberta Students' Union

DRAFT

Context:

# What is a strategic plan?

A strategic plan is a disciplined, coordinated, systematic, and sustained effort that enables an organization to fulfill its mission and achieve its vision.

Strategic planning is a process.

This document, the formal Strategic Plan, lays out the Students' Union mission, values, and priorities at an organization-wide level. It is general and broad, and defines the overall direction the SU is driving towards over the long term. It is the first step in the process.

The formal Plan is supported by a number of more-detailed planning efforts, such as the annual Executive plan and departmental operating plans, that map those big-picture priorities to specific programs and activities.

Context:

# Structure of the Strategic Plan

## Mission

The mandate of the Students' Union, what our ultimate aim is.

## Values

Principles that guide how we operate and articulate what is important to us.

## Vision

Answers the question, what does success look like?

## Critical Success Factors

What do we have to do right, and what does that look like?

## Strategic Goals

What are we going to try to do in the next five years?

# Mission

The Students' Union exists to serve and represent University of Alberta undergraduate students in order to support their pursuit of knowledge and enhance their university experience.

# Values

*Who we are is expressed, in large part, by the values we live by. As an organization, our shared values guide our actions and shape our culture.*

# Values

## Stewardship

We value practicing responsible governance by following accountable, transparent, and stable democratic processes within a collaborative culture of honesty and integrity.

## Innovation

We value approaching challenges with openness, ingenuity, and initiative, while embracing change and encouraging creativity.

## Compassion

We value respecting and supporting the rights, dignity, needs, and talents of all within an inclusive, diverse, and safe community.

# Values

## Sustainability

We value ensuring the ability to serve generations to come by being socially, environmentally, and economically responsible.

## Citizenship

We value fostering an environment that encourages critical thinking, leadership, personal growth, and active participation in the community.

# Vision

Our Students' Union reflects the passion, ambition, and unbounded potential of our members. We will strive to exceed student expectations by championing their interests and needs, playing a central role in how they engage and connect with their university.



# Critical Success Factors

*Critical Success Factors are strategic themes that the Students' Union must pay attention to in order to fulfill its Mission and Vision.*

Critical Success Factor:

# Good Governance

- \* **Student-directed**, with the ultimate authority in the Students' Union resting with elected students;
- \* **Responsive to students**, accurately reflecting the needs and wishes of members;
- \* **Transparent and open**, ensuring accountability and enabling an ongoing dialog with students and stakeholders;
- \* **Well-understood**, with clear lines of responsibility and a shared understanding of our mandate;
- \* **Responsible and ethical** conduct in our daily operational and advocacy efforts; and,
- \* **Vibrant**, with competitive, fair, well-contested elections and an engaged student leadership.

Critical Success Factor:

# Engagement

- \* **Developing student leaders** and fostering an environment of empowerment;
- \* **Maintaining a strong image and clear identity**, distinguishing the SU within the larger University community;
- \* **Actively promoting strong campus spirit**, encouraging identification with the University community;
- \* **Providing opportunities for students** to make a real, direct, and positive impact on their immediate community; and,
- \* **Increasing the involvement opportunities available** and communicating them and the benefits of involvement to students.

Critical Success Factor:

# Planning and Assessment

- \* **Understanding the needs of our members**, and our other stakeholders, to ensure that our programs and activities are meeting their needs;
- \* **Effective planning and evaluation mechanisms**, to define what we want to do and how we will measure our progress;
- \* **Encouraging ongoing innovation and improvement**, by providing the resources, systems, and organizational culture that empowers staff and volunteers to develop effective long-term solutions; and,
- \* **Transparency of success or shortfall**, being honest about what works and what doesn't, and using our experiences to learn and do better the next time.

Critical Success Factor:

# Resources

- \* **Sufficient financial resources** to support short-term flexibility and long term viability;
- \* **Motivated, qualified, and well-supported personnel**, both employees and volunteers, coupled with effective recruitment, retention, and staff development programs;
- \* **High-quality physical and space assets** sufficient to allow the organization to both deliver its existing program and to pursue new opportunities;
- \* **Efficient information systems and operating processes** that match program needs and allow for growth; and,
- \* **A sustainable approach to resource use**, keeping in mind the social, environmental, and economic impacts of our actions.

Critical Success Factor:

# Continuity and Transition

- \* **Strong records management**, to ensure the accessibility and usability of current and past records;
- \* **Developing student staff effectively**, to allow elected and term staff to quickly learn their roles and how they fit in, and contribute, to the overall operations of the organization; and,
- \* **Strong internal communications**, to allow ideas and information to move easily throughout the organization.
- \* **Fostering a common identity** and unifying organizational culture within the Students' Union.

Critical Success Factor:

# Credibility

- \* Establishing a relationship of trust with our stakeholders, based on our open and honest communications with them;
- \* Being consistent and fair in our relationships with individuals and communities; and
- \* Demonstrating competence and consistency in both the actions we take and way we communicate.





# Strategic Goals

*The strategic goals outline the key priorities of the Students' Union, stated broadly.*




*They drive the development of specific programs and objectives within individual departments of the Students' Union, as outlined in Executive goal statements, Operating Plans and budgets.*



# Strategic Goals

-  Effective representation and advocacy of student needs, and ensuring clear accountability of student representatives.
-  Establish an environment that promotes student spirit and involvement, and maximizes students' sense of ownership of the Students' Union and their university experience.
-  Develop an expansive communication infrastructure to support effective communication both internally and externally.
-  Ensure the seamless continuity and transition of elected representatives, staff, and volunteers on an ongoing basis.

# Strategic Goals

-  Support the educational and university experience of students by providing relevant programs and services.
-  Provide sufficient and sustainable financial, human, capital, and technical resources to achieve the mission of the Students' Union.
-  Create and maintain systems and a culture that support continuous review, evaluation and ongoing improvement.

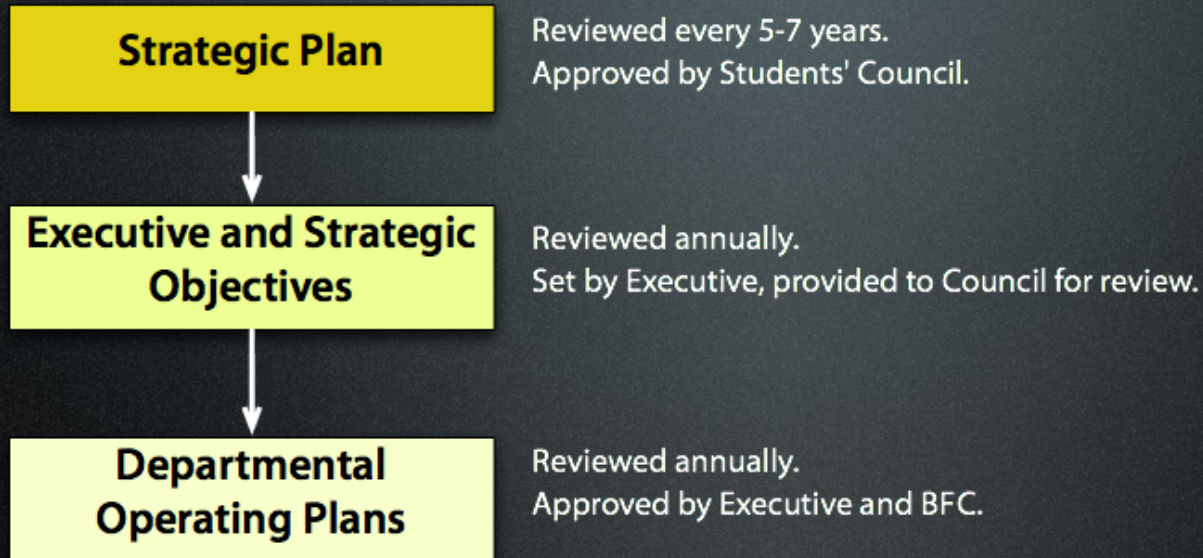
Context:

# The Role of the Strategic Plan

The formal Strategic Plan presented here provides a very high-level, big-picture outline of what the Students' Union seeks to do.

The programs and activities that help us meet our goals/plan are laid out in, in order of increasing specificity, our strategic objectives, annual Executive plans, and departmental operating plans. These documents take their guidance from, and are assessed for their adherence to, the Strategic Plan.

# Maintaining Focus



The Strategic Plan provides long-term focus and guidance for the Students' Union's short-term and annual planning.