



University of Calgary Social Innovation Taskforce Report to the Vice-President (Research)

January 2021

The responses to many of society's challenges call for technical and social innovation. The University of Calgary has a long history of social innovation and some marked successes, such as Living Works. The Social Innovation Taskforce was created in response to an invitation by the Vice-President (Research).

University of Calgary Social Innovation Support Framework

University efforts to support social innovation should help:

UNDERSTAND SOCIAL INNOVATION

- Define social innovation and key terms (including public value) for University of Calgary collaborators

BUILD SOCIAL INNOVATION

- Consult/engage collaborators and design/implement/resource effective support programs and products including social investment strategies

REWARD SOCIAL INNOVATION

- Value, highlight, amplify, recognize the work of social innovators

Social Innovation Taskforce Terms of Reference

Purpose

The University of Calgary Social Innovation Taskforce helps the University define and execute strategies for achieving novel solutions to societal challenges, which are more effective, efficient, sustainable, and/or equitable than current approaches, while also striving for research excellence at national and international levels. The Taskforce is advisory to the Vice President (Research).



Roles and Responsibilities

The Taskforce shall:

- Function as thought-leaders in social innovation, remaining current in the field and sharing that expertise with University stakeholders
- Alternate/iterate between 'thinking' and 'doing', to maintain balance between critical thinking and support activities for University stakeholders
- Champion social innovation as a critical element of the University's Human Dynamics research priority, contributing to the "2.0" version
- Support UCalgary's "growth through focus" strategy, and take advantage of UCalgary's unique strengths, by encompassing and integrating within UCalgary's SI enterprise the best elements of STEM and Social Sciences
- Participate in the University's social innovation activities, allocating their own and their affiliation's resources as possible
- Support social innovation in all University disciplines (including those not normally profiled as social innovators (e.g., STEM)), emphasizing innovation at the intersection of disciplines, and in all relevant stakeholder units and groups (faculty (junior through senior), trainees, staff, external partners)
- Be ambitious, aiming to lead compared to other institutions, and to take on society's biggest challenges
- Model the concepts of social innovation within the taskforce (e.g., learn from failure, engage unusual suspects, effectively represent stakeholder groups, evolve operational definitions of social innovation based on iterative interactions with stakeholders)
- Raise recognition of UofC social innovators, and advocate for appropriate institutional reward mechanisms for these faculty
- Anticipate and work to overcome skepticism among faculty who have innovated despite, rather than because of, previous University support systems
- Advocate for and assist the University to understand, build, and reward social innovation (see framework)

The Vice President (Research) Office shall:

- Allocate administrative, communications, and management resources to execute approved Taskforce recommendations.