



A Place to Gather

Faculty of Social Work Strategic Plan 2022 - 2027

Territorial acknowledgement

Our students, faculty and staff are located across Indigenous lands. In Alberta, we are on the traditional territories of the peoples of 45 First Nations in five treaty areas 4, 6, 7, 8, and 10. On our Calgary campus we acknowledge the traditional territories of the Blackfoot and Treaty 7 peoples of Southern Alberta, including the Siksika, Piikani, Kainai, Tsuut'ina and Stoney Nakoda First Nations, including the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nation. The City of Calgary is also home to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III.

In our Southern Alberta Region, we acknowledge the traditional territories of the Blackfoot and the other peoples of the Treaty 7 and 4 regions. Our social work program is housed at the

University of Lethbridge. The City of Lethbridge is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III.

In our Central and Northern Region at our Edmonton campus, we acknowledge the Treaty 6 region, the traditional territory of the Cree and the homelands of the Métis people, including Region IV of the Métis Nation of Alberta, and the surrounding Métis settlements. We also acknowledge the Indigenous communities of northern Alberta, including the First Nations of Treaty 8 and 10, the Métis Nation of Alberta regions 1, 2, 5, and 6, and the northern Métis settlements. We are grateful to Indigenous peoples for the privilege of working, learning, and living on these lands.

A place to gather

Faculty of Social Work Strategic Plan 2022 - 2027

In 2020, during the global pandemic, our faculty took strength in creating a collective vision that drew on the input and inspiration of students, faculty, staff, field education partners, Elders, members of the professional social work community and many other stakeholders.

Our journey began with a shared vision quest exercise, led by Keesis Sagay Egette Kwe – Dr. Jennifer Leason and William (Billy) Iskotoohka Wadsworth. Following songs to the east, south, west and north, we collectively reflected on our strengths, weaknesses, and the challenges and opportunities facing our faculty.

Dr. Leason then painted a series of beautiful images that captured the collective vision. One of her striking

images is of lodge poles stacked against an Alberta blue sky which she saw as a metaphor for our individual strengths. We balance one another, and together we create a place for community to gather.

Our plan builds around three main lodgepoles: learning, community and research. These strategic theme areas are supported by priorities that lie at the heart of our mission to become a local and global partner in transformative social work.

So, on behalf of the Faculty of Social Work, I would like to welcome you to our community space – our strategic plan. We hope you will find yourself in this living document and join us on the journey.



Dr. Ellen Perrault, PhD, RSW
Dean, Faculty of Social Work,
University of Calgary

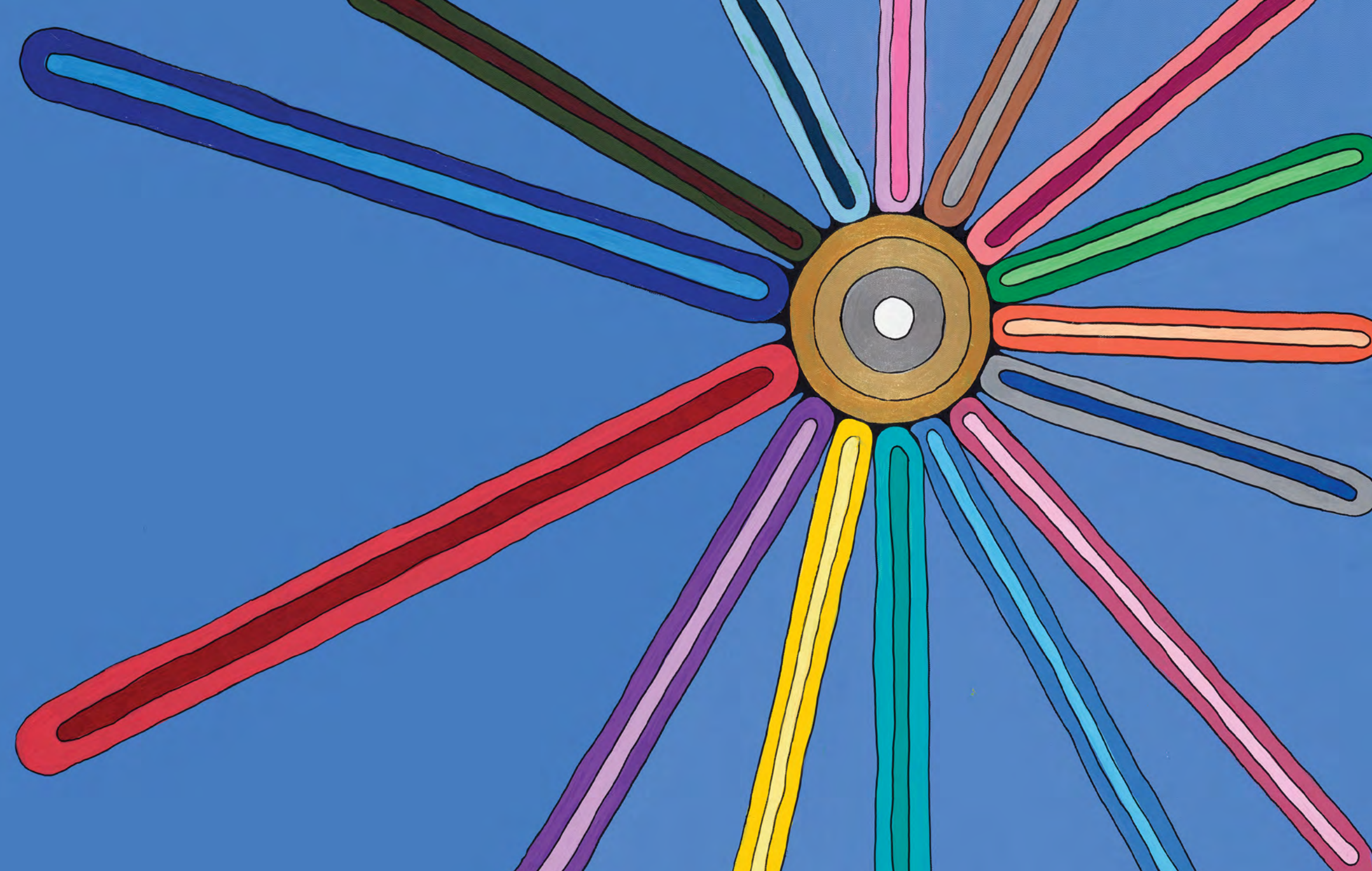


“As individuals, we come into this space with our own thoughts, ideas, beliefs, ways of doing, and being. If a single pole were to be mounted, it would fall to the ground. But we lean on one another. It’s the intersections and connections of these poles, that creates this beautiful space of connection, diversity and inclusion.”

- Jennifer Leason



Jennifer Leason
discusses this
painting.





Our Commitment to Equity, Racial Justice, Diversity, Inclusion and Decolonization

The University of Calgary Faculty of Social Work is committed to promoting and actualizing equity, racial justice, diversity, inclusion and decolonization. We align our work with UCalgary's commitment to the [Alberta Human Rights Act](#), [Canada Employment Equity Act](#), [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#), [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action](#), [Scarborough Charter](#), Dimensions: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Canada Charter, as well as related UCalgary strategies, including: the Canada Research Chair Program's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion [Awareness Strategy](#) and [Action Plan](#), [ii' taa'poh'to'p Indigenous Strategy](#), and [Campus Mental Health Strategy](#). Our work is guided by a number of [UCalgary policies and procedures](#), including: [Code of Conduct](#), [Employment Equity Policy](#), [Workplace Violence Policy](#), [Workplace Accommodation Policy](#), and [Student Accommodation Policy](#). Guided by this Strategic Plan and [Anti-Black Racism Action Plan](#), we affirm that diversity and uniqueness are enriching and valuable, and that they can strengthen our teaching, learning, research, scholarship, and community connections. We, thus, state our intention to foster an inclusive, thriving and equitable

environment for our students, non-academic and academic staff, and community members. We take the stand that [equity](#) does not mean sameness in treatment of people, but rather requires measures and accommodations for diverse life experiences and circumstances to ensure that no member is disadvantaged, underrepresented or overlooked in all aspects of our work. We intend to address systemic inequities and compounded disadvantages due to intersectionality of social locations, particularly for those who are members of racialized communities, Indigenous peoples, Black peoples, persons with disabilities, migrant groups (including refugees and immigrants), 2SLGBTQ+ communities, linguistic minorities as well as those who have experienced socioeconomic, caregiving, religious, political, and/or cultural barriers to their education and employment. We also recognize, honour, and integrate diverse perspectives, ways of knowing and doing, experiences, and strengths into our work. An anti-oppressive lens, particularly intersectional, anticolonial, ant-racist and decolonizing frameworks, will inform our work.



Creating a collaborative vision

On November 25, 2020, our faculty came together to participate in a modified version of the traditional practice of Vision Quest as a first step in the process of creating a shared vision for a new strategic plan. This approach reflects the faculty’s commitment to honour Indigenous ways of knowing, being, sharing, and doing.

The visioning exercise was facilitated by William (Billy) Iskotoohka Wadsworth and Keesis Sagay Egette Kwe – Dr. Jennifer Leason – and sought to understand:

- Song to the East: Where do you see our faculty right now?
- Song to the South: What are our hopes and dreams for the Faculty of Social Work?
- Song to the West: What are the barriers that may get in our way of achieving our hopes and dreams for the faculty?
- Song to the North: What are our strengths and gifts to achieve our hopes and dreams?

Participants heard a traditional song, sung by Iskotoohka Wadsworth, and reflected on each question. They were then asked to paint or sketch the images that came to them.

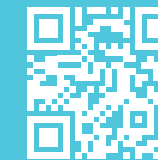
Dr. Leason spent time coding the images, and following reflection and prayer, and inspired by nature, she created a series of beautiful paintings that captured a shared vision she saw in people’s individual visions. These paintings create a remarkable celebration of beauty, diversity, and gifts.

From the vision quest process, Dr. Leason painted eight remarkable images. As you read through this plan, scan the QR codes to hear her speak about the process and vision for creating each image.



“As individuals, we come into this space with our own thoughts, ideas, beliefs, ways of doing and being – but it’s coming together in this space. If a single pole were to be mounted, it would fall to the ground. But it’s this leaning on one another. It’s the intersections and connections of these poles, that creates this beautiful space of connection and diversity and inclusion”.

– Jennifer Leason



Dr. Jennifer Leason, whose Anishinaabek name is Keesis Sagay Egette Kwe (First Shining Rays of Sunlight Woman), is an off-reserve member of the Pine Creek First Nation in Manitoba. Dr. Leason is a Canadian Institute of Health Research, Canada Research Chair, Tier II, Indigenous Maternal Child Wellness, and an Assistant Professor at the University of Calgary.

Song to the East: Where is Our Faculty Now?



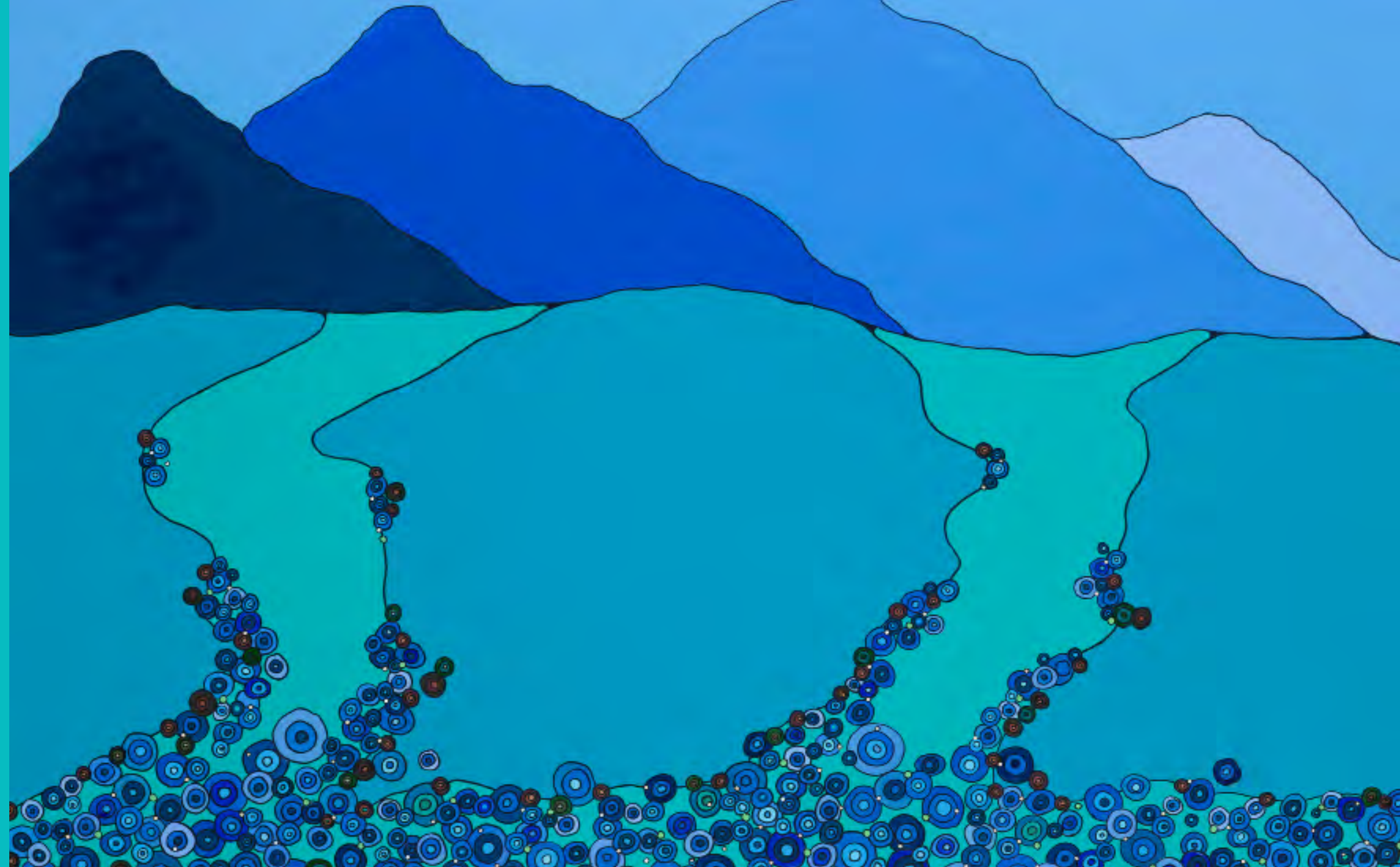
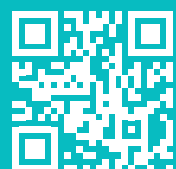
“So many times when I’m driving into Calgary, I see the sunrise and the beautiful sky, and it’s like the light is dancing. Where we see the faculty right now is that we have all these hurdles to overcome. Like the mountains we have to climb up and go down – it’s a process, it’s a journey. But looking to the east there’s also an opportunity of a sunrise – of a new day. The dancing sky and the vibrant light of that sky is a reminder that we can do this. We’ve got this, and through our connection, and through our hard work and determination it’s possible.”

- Jennifer Leason



“The two rivers merging into one represents leaving our past, but also looking towards our future – we’re merging into a new time. There’s chaos and turbulence as these two rivers merge but as we start to understand where we are, we slowly sort that out and the rivers will come together and move forward in this new direction. ”

- Jennifer Leason



Our Vision, Mission, and Values

Our strategic plan, mission statement and priorities reflect a collective expression of our vision and values. They also reflect extensive internal and external consultation with faculty, students, staff, field instructors, Elders, and community partners.



Our **vision** is to achieve and promote wellbeing, sustainability and social justice.

Our **mission** is to become a local and global partner in transformative social work knowledge, education, research, and practice.

Our **values** are the behaviours we will see as we work to achieve our vision: respect, integrity, equity and collaboration.

Strategic Theme Areas

Lodge Poles of the Plan: Creating a Space for Connection, Diversity and Inclusion



Teaching and Learning

We will empower and prepare students for the future through equitable, accessible, responsive, inclusive, and transformative learning experiences.

Community

We will support change with communities through authentic connection, collaboration, and advocacy to facilitate social change and sustainable development at local, national, and international levels.

Research

We will foster transformative research, diverse knowledge exchange, knowledge mobilization, and innovation for all our relations.



Priority: Equity, Racial Justice, Decolonization, and Inclusive Excellence

Our Commitment to Equity, Decolonization, and Anti-Racism

Objectives

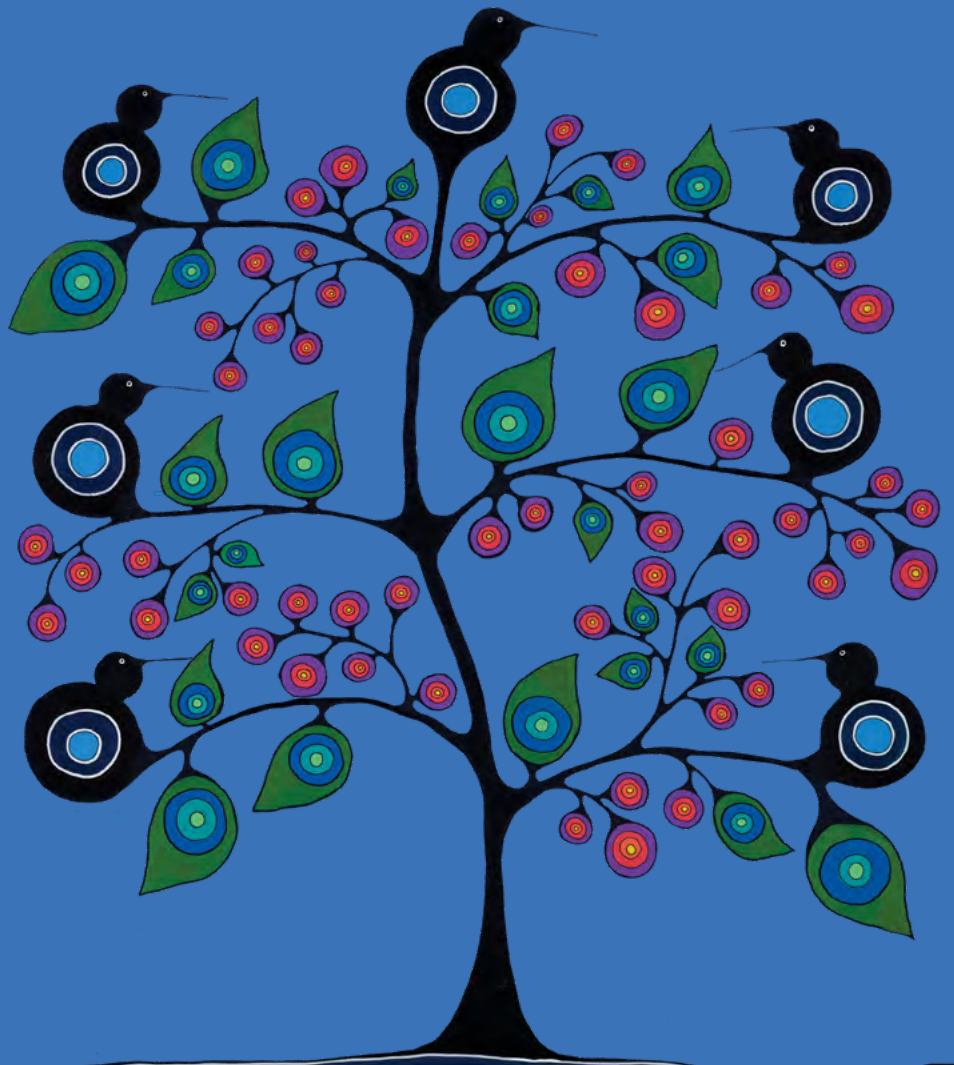
- Address racism, including anti-Black racism, and all forms of oppression, social injustice, and their intersections
- Work towards actualizing equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization within the faculty and community, including implementing the Equity Action Plan, Anti-Black Racism Action Plan, and Indigenous Strategy
- Create diverse and inclusive pathways and spaces for equity deserving groups
- Engage in knowledge development, mobilization, and teaching approaches that honour diverse ways of knowing and forms of knowledge

Song to the South: Hopes and Dreams for the Faculty



"The hopes and the dreams of the faculty are its connection to the earth, its connection to water, its connections to the environment, creating healthy environments, healthy communities, healthy families, and a tree is growing from this from these beautiful elements. The tree has seven branches representing the sacred teachings."

- Jennifer Leason



Dandelion

From birth, to life, to death.
From leaves, to flowers, to seeds.
Beauty not only rests with roses.
Beauty begins in the weeds.
Forgotten.
Passed by.
Underestimated among the perfect, colonized
green lawns...
A nuisance, sprayed to death
With Killex, Monsanto and Round up.
Resistant.
Resilient.
The wind blows the seeds.
Spreads the ashes.
Life will go on.
She will spread her beauty.

- Jennifer Leason



Priority: Student Experience, Learning, and Success

A Focus on Teaching and Learning

Objectives

- Prepare and build student knowledge, skills, and values to lead practice and change in society
- Provide a leading-edge curriculum that addresses the intersectionality of racism, colonization, social injustice, sustainability, well-being, and social change
- Support the mental health and well-being of students
- Promote student-centered and life-long learning
- Enhance experiential learning opportunities within the curriculum and field education





Priority: Impactful Research and Collaboration

Impactful Research for Today's Most Pressing Issues

Objectives

- Increase linkages between research, teaching, and field education
- Foster transdisciplinary scholarship through building connections and partnerships
- Develop respectful and accountable relationships and protocols with marginalized people
- Amplify the knowledges, experiences, perspectives, and research contributions of Black, Indigenous, and racialized people, and those with intersectional and marginalized identities
- Collaborate with communities to create and share knowledge for advocacy and change
- Build reciprocal partnerships with organizations, communities, and other educational institutions

Song to the West: Barriers and Obstacles



Windigo

Whispers in the pines, "I'm coming for you."
Windigo breathes down my neck.
I shiver. I run.
I look for my sister and cousins
Don't leave me behind.
Don't leave me alone.
Nanny warns us, "Don't stay out too late!"
Take care of each other or Windigo will find you.
Thick skin, acid organs, decaying bones, melting mind, blind, confused,
lost
Don't leave me alone.
Don't leave me behind.
Sunset and imminent darkness.
Windigo's gaze, looking through my soul.
Forever hungry, all consuming.
Darkness is surrounded by darkness
Lurking in the shadows
Distrust, disconnected, truths consumed by lies.
Don't leave me behind.
Don't leave me alone.

- Jennifer Leason



Priority: Innovation

Start Something

Objectives



- Cultivate innovative ideas, methodologies, and solutions that create social value and human connection
- Champion innovation through integrating research, teaching, and service to promote social justice
- Transform social policy, frameworks, structures, and processes through innovation

Priority: A Healthy and Inspiring Workplace

Creating a Healthy and Sustainable Faculty

Objectives



- Foster personal, interpersonal, and team well-being through relational accountability and a culture of trust
- Strengthen equitable and transparent workplace structures, practices, and processes
- Promote health, mental health, and resilience for staff and faculty
- Create meaningful learning, leadership, mentorship, and recognition opportunities for staff and faculty (particularly for equity designated groups)
- Continue to develop the FSW brand, story, and enhance communications
- Enhance Faculty sustainability for today and the future

Song to the North: Our Strengths and Gifts

There are four buildings based on the four directions. They are braided like sweet grass, representative of decolonization and working to transform our institutions and structures in a way that works best for everyone. Using sweet grass as a symbol for the buildings, is really metaphorical because it represents braiding together body, mind and spirit. It's bringing the physical, the emotional, the mental and spiritual components of Indigenous ways of knowing into the institution.

- Jennifer Leason





The Next Five Years

I'm pleased to say that as I'm writing this, in the winter of 2023, we are already hard at work implementing our new plan. In fact, once the document was (unanimously) formally adopted by our faculty council, every team, committee and individual began creating action plans to address each objective under our five priority areas.

As you've seen in the images, this is a living document - an invitation to join us in a holistic space created for connection, diversity and inclusion.

As we make our plan a reality, we pledge to keep you updated with annual reports, gatherings, and regular updates. Working with you - our treasured partners and stakeholders - we believe the next five years will move us much closer to our vision of becoming a local and global partner in transformative social work.

Please stay connected with us. Join our mailing list and share your thoughts on what you've read. Email us at fswcomms@ucalgary.ca. We're always listening.

Ellen Perrault, PhD, RSW
Dean, Faculty of Social Work
University of Calgary



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK

We are Canada's largest school of social work and a perennial North American research leader. With approximately 50 dedicated faculty members, we educate 1,000 students across Alberta and online across Canada. We prepare the leaders of tomorrow by working in our communities today.

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