

Brock University

Strategic Plan

December 2010

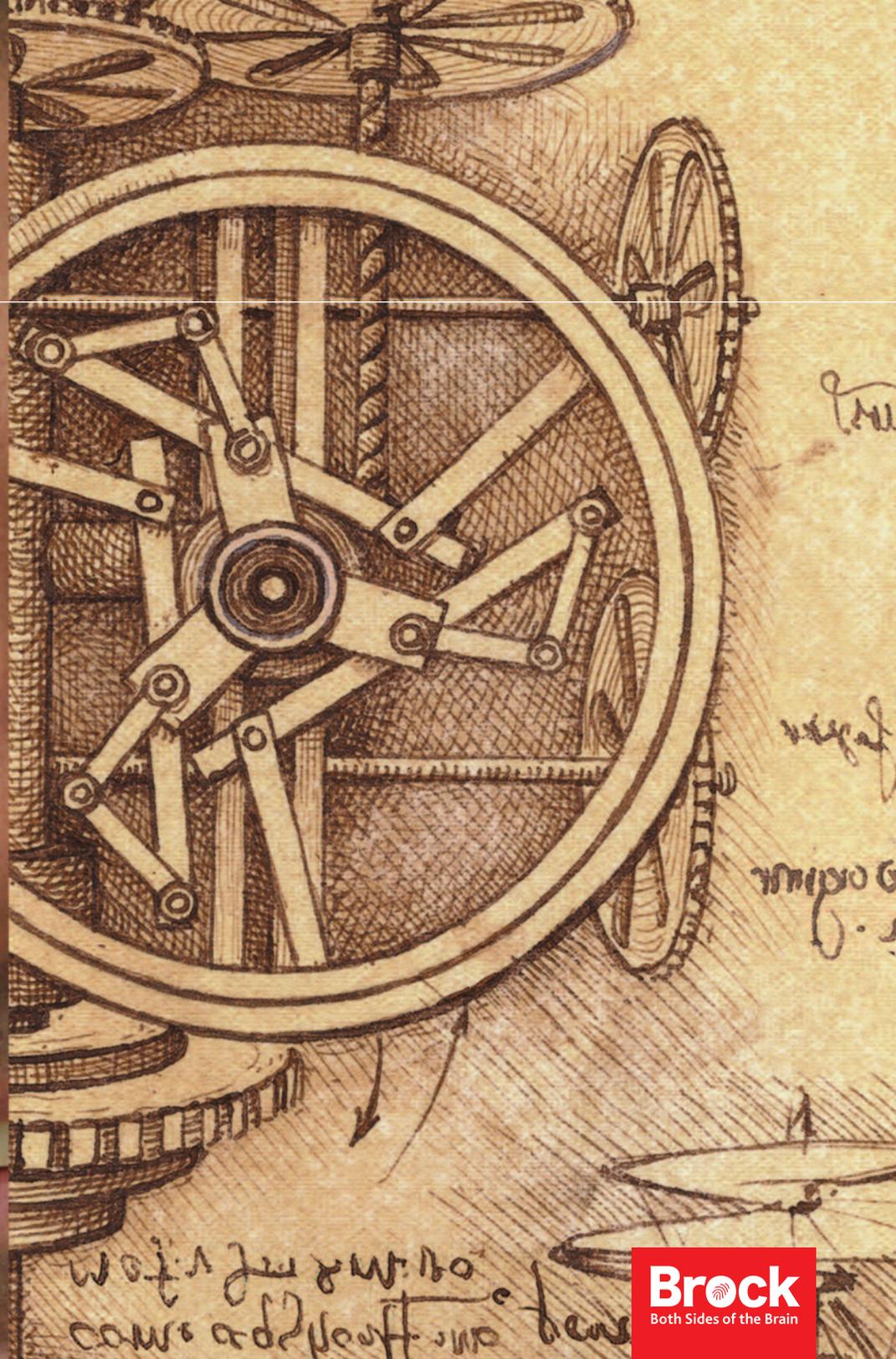


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Brock University Strategic Plan	





1. Introduction

A strategic plan outlines where an organization is at a given time and how it got there, where and why it understands itself to be going, what it will take to get there, and how it will know when it has arrived. The path to any destination is governed by both external and internal factors. For universities, the chief external factors include such realities as government policies and regulations, societal need, and student demand. The main internal factors include the institution's academic strengths, opportunities, and aspirations at the time of planning. Whatever the path, a university must continually respond to changes in the external and internal environments to meet its future goals and aspirations.

Strategic planning has become the primary mechanism by which private and public institutions both define themselves and chart their course for the future. For a University such as Brock, a strategic plan is necessary if we are to control our own destiny while addressing a number of immediate and longer-term issues in a systematic manner. As a University that benefits from significant public and private funding, Brock's strategic path will necessarily be affected by its social, political, economic and cultural moment, and we need to look ahead to the horizon of changing conditions in the post-secondary education climate if we intend to succeed.

In a complex, decentralized institution such as Brock, a strategic plan – as one component of an overarching integrated plan – is articulated at several levels, from the institution-wide level through the Faculty or administrative unit middle level to the department, centre, school or institute level. While the strategic plan articulates the institution's vision, mission, core values and strategic priorities, the implementation of the plan necessarily takes place at the Faculty and unit levels. Therefore, all the levels must be understood as intimately integrated and mutually dependent. The integrated plan refers to the overall protocols and processes that will be put in place to implement and evaluate the strategic plan at all levels.

Brock University is fortunate in having many strengths on which to build an integrated plan: our people—faculty, students, administrative and support staff, alumni, and government and community partners; our programs, which combine the best of both established and emerging fields of knowledge, offering innovative opportunities for learning in both disciplinary and transdisciplinary dimensions; our size, which allows us to engage in a comprehensive range and depth of research and teaching while maintaining a human scale of contact and community with our students and with one another; and our strategic location in the Niagara region, offering us unparalleled natural and built environments, proximity to major centres, and access to unique regional, national, and international opportunities.

The purpose of this strategic plan is to provide academic direction as Brock pursues its unique course as a comprehensive university that is:

- research-intensive in its scholarship and creativity and student-centred in its teaching;
- strategically focused in its graduate expansion and transdisciplinary in its intellectual reach;
- international in its ethos and community-minded in its service.

2. Brock's Planning Context

Brock University, named after Maj.-Gen. Sir Isaac Brock, who lost his life at nearby Queenston Heights in the War of 1812, was created in 1964. General Brock's last word, "Surgite!" or "Push on!" is the University's motto. Brock University was founded in large part as the result of sustained pressure and support from many sectors of the Niagara community to have a university in the region. An important early step was a 1957 resolution passed by the Allanburg Women's Institute urging the government to build a university in Niagara. The idea of the University was the community's, and the people of Niagara dug deeply into their own pockets through local businesses, labour movements, and the population at large to raise money to ensure that their University would become a reality. As a result, Brock has always had a sense of place: historically connected to its immediate geographic position, yet increasingly aware of binational and international opportunities on its doorstep, Brock now makes its presence felt in both local and global communities.

Brock University's first half-century of existence has seen it grow from fewer than 150 students in a facility at the foot of the Niagara Escarpment to nearly 18,000 atop the escarpment. It was the first Canadian university to be designated as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) International Biosphere Reserve. The main campus has grown significantly since the early 1970s when its first buildings were constructed. Expansion continues with construction of the Cairns Family Health and Bioscience Research Complex, future home to research and innovation that will infuse new life into the regional economy and cement the University's reputation as a world-class centre for scientific research and business incubation. Brock has also extended its presence beyond the main campus to include a campus in Hamilton, serving undergraduate and graduate students, and is currently developing a state-of-the-art downtown St. Catharines campus to house its Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts for students, faculty and staff in Dramatic Arts, Music, and Visual Arts.

Brock has grown from a small, community-based University to a global force in research and education. In doing so, it has been remarkably successful at developing the breadth of excellence that is absolutely necessary to allow a modern University to thrive and to maintain its ability to give back to a deserving community.

3. Vision – Mission – Values

Vision

Brock University envisions itself as a dynamic post-secondary educational institution that:

- Makes a difference in the lives of individuals in our Brock community, the Niagara region, Canada, and the world.
- Demonstrates leadership and innovation in teaching and learning across disciplines.
- Extends knowledge through excellence in research, scholarship, and creativity.





Mission

Brock flourishes through the scholarly, creative, and professional achievements of our students, faculty and staff. Although we share a common purpose, we recognize and honour knowledge pursued through a diversity of perspectives and approaches. Our academic mission is to nurture and support our faculty and students in the discovery of knowledge through exemplary scholarship, teaching, and learning.

We provide undergraduate and professional education of the highest quality, while continuing to expand graduate programs that are integrated into Brock's growing reputation for excellence in research and innovation. We provide a transformative experience for our students inside and outside the classroom by helping to develop their full potential as creative, educated citizens in a global community. Brock graduates go out into the world as leaders, with a track record of entering fulfilling careers across all disciplines.

Brock University works to enhance the economic, social, cultural and intellectual lives of the communities around us – Niagara, Ontario, Canada, and beyond – and to demonstrate the vital ways in which we contribute to the betterment of society in the 21st century.

Values

Brock is committed to seven core values that inform and strengthen our actions.

1) Integrity and respect

Living these foundational values in all our relationships, we make Brock University a preferred and humane place to study and work.

2) Freedom of thought and expression coupled with academic responsibility

We serve society through the cultivation of the inquiring mind while acknowledging that our freedoms are accompanied by a responsibility to foster civility in critical dialogue.

3) Unique student experience

We seek to uphold Brock University's commitment to a unique student experience at the individual level that responds effectively to the changing landscape of knowledge through relevant curriculum and innovative pedagogy. We are proud of our tradition of small-group or seminar learning, as well as our co-operative, experiential, service and transdisciplinary modes of teaching and learning.

4) Innovation

We respect the traditions of the academy while embracing innovation in our curricular offerings, pedagogy, e-learning, scholarship, research and service. We seek new opportunities and partnerships in order to facilitate innovation and entrepreneurship.

5) Accountability and stewardship

We are stewards of public and private resources and are accountable for our performance. We commit to provide sufficient information to allow informed evaluation of our performance by the Board of Trustees and the public at large.

6) Sustainability

We ensure sustainability through an appropriate balance of resources and activity. In setting our goals, we evaluate their impact on our human, financial and environmental resources to ensure that the outcomes will not only be sustainable but will also form a solid academic foundation for our future scholarly endeavours. We are committed to sustainability in human, financial and environmental contexts.

7) Generation and mobilization of knowledge

Through dynamic teaching, learning, research and creative activity, we develop the intellectual potential of our students, thereby enriching the material, cultural and intellectual dimensions of the communities into which they graduate.

4. Strategic Priorities

Building on our existing Academic Plan Brock 2014: Knowledge, Engagement, Transformation, the Brock University community is committed to seven strategic priorities:

- Ensure Brock is a preferred place to work and study.
- Support Brock's undergraduate student-centred focus while maintaining excellence in graduate education.
- Foster excellence in research, scholarship and creativity.
- Serve the social, cultural, and economic well-being of the University, as well as the local, national and global communities;
- Encourage transdisciplinary initiatives.
- Promote internationalization.
- Practise accountability, fiscal responsibility, and stewardship.





2. Academic Plan: Knowledge, Engagement, Transformation

Brock 2014: Knowledge, Engagement, Transformation articulates five key academic directions for Brock:

- Develop an institutional culture rooted in pervasive research and creative activity.
- Preserve and enhance the quality of undergraduate programs, emphasizing the education of students for leadership, social responsibility, and innovation.
- Expand graduate and professional programs reflecting the University's research strengths and capacity for innovation, particularly in response to areas of emerging need.
- Encourage interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary approaches to research and teaching.
- Engage with the community to enhance the economic, social, cultural, and intellectual lives of the citizens of Niagara and beyond.

Brock 2014 also identifies four areas of focus: research, graduate studies, teaching and learning, and community outreach. Specific objectives are attached to each of these areas of focus.

The political, economic, and social landscape has shifted sufficiently since *Brock 2014* was introduced to call for a more focused articulation of Brock's academic directions in the years ahead. While maintaining our commitment to the five directions and four areas of focus in *Brock 2014*, it is now time to recalibrate our academic directions.

Disciplinary Foundations/Transdisciplinary Innovation

Faculty-Based Academic Strengths

Brock's foundational strength resides in its unique combination of existing academic communities with emergent transdisciplinary programs and fields. In the spirit and letter of our belief in academic freedom, we welcome and support our collegially sanctioned specializations and their attendant diversity, while acknowledging that as an academic community we are bound by institution-wide strengths and a common sense of pride based on specific commitments:

- To create a human environment that enables the flourishing of the full potential in every member of the Brock community as we strive to stimulate intellectual curiosity, a love of learning, and respect for diversity.
- To provide opportunities for personal and professional growth among our valued service, support, administrative, and executive co-workers who help Brock realize its mission.
- To facilitate transformation in teaching, pedagogy, and high-quality learning experiences for all our students.
- To strengthen our innovative culture of research and scholarship that recognizes the diverse forms of creativity and discovery in the 21st century university.
- To enhance Brock's contributions to the Niagara region, including partnerships with Aboriginal/First Nations groups, the binational arena, and the world at large.

'Spaces' for Innovation across departments, Faculties, and institutions

While we support and relish foundational discipline-based and specialized academic activities, we acknowledge that universities are faced with new opportunities and challenges to understand our dynamic and complex world. Supporting our discipline-based strengths, we will foster new opportunities for transdisciplinary discovery, learning, and scholarship. Informed by a sense of our historical, geographical, political, social and cultural position, and energized by our commitment to transdisciplinary creativity, scholarship and teaching, Brock has, through extensive consultation with a broad cross-section of our community, identified a number of overarching fields of inquiry for which we are justifiably known on local, national, and international stages – fields that demonstrate both our existing strengths and our aspirations to create new human, institutional and intellectual 'spaces' for discovery.



These 'spaces' – intellectual, discursive, and virtual – will leverage the energy of interested scholars so as to move investigation of discipline-based fields or area-based strengths into transdisciplinary arenas across departments, Faculties, and institutions. These analytical, synthetic and discursive spaces serve to combine the specializations of our scholars with expanding modes of scholarship and inquiry.

Small-group consultations have identified several thematically related transdisciplinary or cross-department/cross-Faculty strengths and aspirations for future development. Precise articulation of the initiatives that will develop is difficult to predict in the abstract, but certain areas of engagement emerge as potential models. Our established presence in fine and performing arts might be integrated with our strengths in cultural and textual literacy and our growing competence in digital, visual and interactive media as they relate to technology and society. Similarly, shifting societal concerns and demographic patterns provide an opportunity to expand the expertise in the area of health and development across the lifespan.

Given Brock's commitment to enhancing the economic welfare of our region and the province, transdisciplinary and cross-department/cross-Faculty engagement in intrapreneurship, entrepreneurship, and innovation provides an opportunity to reinforce both our academic and service roles. The new Cairns Family Health and Bioscience Research Complex, using interdisciplinarity to help transform inventions into innovations via market incubators, will offer opportunities to engage a wide range of scholars in the exploration of novel molecular design and materials as well as the fields of bioscience and biotechnology, including plant repurposing.

As the first Canadian university to be located in a UNESCO International Biosphere Reserve, Brock is actively attempting to minimize its environmental impact, and as a result we are well placed to promote our existing strengths and expand our activities relating to ecological, economic, and social sustainability.

Brock is also committed to Aboriginal issues and education, and nurtures partnerships, scholarship, and teaching on Aboriginality in Canada and worldwide. Like many major institutions today, Brock operates in a globalized context that affects all dimensions of human existence, thus making international studies vitally important. To make a difference in the lives of members of the University and local, national and global communities, Brock will build upon its established reputation for excellence in programming, research and community engagement on social justice and equity issues.

The themes highlighted above are not exhaustive. However, they illustrate some of the major possibilities that emerged during the consultative process undertaken throughout spring, summer, and autumn 2010. Given that there is no reason to expect that the pace of economic, social, political and cultural change will decrease, it is entirely reasonable to expect that transdisciplinary and cross-department/cross-Faculty initiatives will shift and change over time.



The Provost will consult with Senate to establish criteria for a peer-review adjudication process to allocate resources to groups of scholars seeking to create spaces for innovation across departments, Faculties and institutions. This process will also include the establishment of suitable governance and accountability structures and procedures for Brock spaces.

The participation of Brock community members in these initiatives would, of course, be entirely voluntary, varying over time and with shifting career paradigms. The initiatives will facilitate creativity and discovery in both traditional and established fields of inquiry and in new and emerging interests and issues.

3. Faculty and Administrative Unit Plans

Brock is characterized by self-governing Faculties, departments, and centres. It follows that the implementation of this strategic plan must occur from the ground up. Faculties and units must, within the overarching longer-term course charted by the integrated plan, choose their own particular path on the road to Brock's future. It is at the Faculty and unit levels that we must specify the concrete actions, mechanisms and operational policies by which we will realize Brock University's Strategic Plan.

Deans, chairs, directors and others involved in day-to-day unit operations will, utilizing the governance modes appropriate in their units, revisit and revise their existing unit plans in conjunction with this overall strategic plan. Although individual unit differences require some measure of flexibility, the following template provides a model of the main categories to be included in strategic plans:

1. Vision statement
2. Mission statement
3. Unit's relation to Brock's integrated plan, including Faculty-based academic strengths and 'spaces' for innovation across departments, Faculties and institutions
4. Steps to implement unit's strategic plan

First, each Faculty, centre and unit will articulate its own strategic plan in support of its particular operations and objectives. These plans will be developed at the Faculty and unit levels using modes of consultation and governance that are appropriate. Potential issues to be addressed include research and teaching; programs of study; partnerships; resources (including faculty and personnel, physical space, IT and related technology); and organization and administration.

Second, each Faculty, centre or unit will then articulate a detailed action plan in order to realize its strategic direction, supporting Brock's strategic plan in theory and in practice. Action plans will necessarily include cyclical plans for implementation and evaluation. Within each unit, centre or Faculty, this will include the creation of an established matrix or set of measures, including objectives, articulated levels of achievement, and criteria for evaluation, by which the Faculty, centre or unit will demonstrate and report the outcomes of its efforts.

4. Implementation Plans

As the integrated plan moves through the various levels of review and endorsement, the appropriate vice-presidents and administrative units will attach the relevant implementation plans, including:

1. Operating budget plan
2. Capital campaign plan
3. Facilities plan
4. Recruitment and marketing plan
5. Community engagement plan
6. Information technology plan
7. Alumni Association strategic plan

5. Future Planning

President's Integrated Planning Committee

Maintaining the integrated plan and all its component elements is an ongoing task that requires systematic attention and engagement. To that end, the President will establish an Integrated Planning Committee representing a broad cross-section of University interests and operations. This committee will oversee the annual process of reviewing and updating all elements of the integrated plan as necessary.

The actual implementation of the integrated plan occurs at the operational level of the Faculties and administrative units. Each of these units will have developed operational plans and means of determining how the overall and unit-specific vision, mission, and values are being realized and how successful the unit is in satisfying its priorities and in contributing to the overall institutional priorities. As noted above, each operational unit, including Faculties and centres, will establish a set of measures by which it demonstrates and reports the outcomes of its efforts. The Integrated Planning Committee will aggregate the results of these measures and the outcomes posted by the various units and present the President with an annual Institutional Performance Report.



Cover:

Glenn Stevens

Master of Business Administration candidate.

Inventor, volunteer, hockey coach/referee, mountain biker.

Goals: Imagine. Invent. Involve.

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