

UAP Progress: Year 1 (2025-26) Executive Report

Executive Summary

The first year of Brock's University Action Plan (UAP) update provides an early measure of progress toward the University's 2030 targets. This report provides a high-level summary and qualitative narrative of the Year 1 (2025-26) dashboard that features thirty-four primary indicators their associated 2024-25 baselines, Year 1 progress and 2030 targets.

The UAP Data Governance Committee, reporting to the President and Vice-Presidents, supports the tracking, performance measurement, and institutional accountability for the UAP.

In year two of the tracking cycle (2026-27), the Data Governance Committee will reassess the 2024-25 baseline values and progress to ensure indicators remain accurate, relevant, and track toward achievable 2030 targets.

University-wide indicators of success

Academic Revitalization

The primary indicators for academic revitalization include: the number of first-choice Ontario Universities' Application Centre applicants; the number of first-, second-, and third-choice undergraduate applicants as a proportion of overall applications; number of undergraduate programs with highest-volume of first choice applicants; and the percentage of graduates that complete their program (undergraduate, masters and PhD) on time in relation to their program length. These measures are intended to reflect Brock as a destination of choice for students and are predicated on accessible, flexible, customizable, and market-relevant program offerings that respond to changing student and labour-market needs.

Enrolment and financial sustainability pressures require stronger alignment between the academic portfolio, student demand, and market opportunity. Data collected on these measures are tracking either flat or slightly below baseline. The [degree architecture initiative](#), passed in June 2026 and to be implemented in Fall 2028, is an anticipated driver for improving these indicators. A Steering Committee and Implementation Team have been established to oversee and support the implementation of the new Degree Architecture. The working groups will begin meeting in September to confirm the implementation approach, timeline, and key project milestones.

Strategic Enrolment

The primary indicators for strategic enrolment include: total number of students; number of undergraduate students; and number of graduate students. These measures are intended to reflect the optimal enrolment mix of undergraduate and graduate students (domestic and international), student retention, and student progression to graduation.

Total student enrolment is tracking positively, driven by an increase in undergraduate domestic enrolment. Graduate student enrolment reflects a moderate decrease which may be attributed to the historical geopolitical environment which has dampened Canada's ability to attract international graduate students.

Student retention and progression remain critical to sustaining enrolment and improving the proportion of students who successfully move through their programs to graduation. Changing student demographics and market conditions require continued attention to the balance of domestic and international, undergraduate and graduate enrolment, and to a sustainable, diversified program mix aligned with market demand and institutional priorities. The launch of the [Strategic Enrolment Management Strategy](#) in February 2026 outlines how Brock will revitalize our academic portfolio and strengthen our enrolment mix.

Future-Ready Learners

The primary indicators for future-ready students include: graduate employment rate in related field; graduation rate; and number of non-credit PCS learners. These measures are intended to reflect educational experiences that provide students the learning outcomes that enable them to be academically prepared, digitally fluent and career ready.

Both the proportion of undergraduate student graduation rate and the number of PCS learners exceeded baseline levels, whereas the graduate employment rate dropped slightly below 2024-25 levels. Although the modest drop in the self-reported graduation rate may be reflective of the employment rate slippage in Canada's overall employment rate between May 2024 and May 2025, Brock University's graduate employment rate remains higher than the Ontario University average. Furthermore, the recently implemented Strategic Enrolment Management Strategy and the Degree Architecture initiative are designed to both enhance undergraduate and graduate student success and refine degree opportunities that are more aligned with labour market opportunities.

Notably, the number of PCS learners markedly exceeded the 2030 target, which is attributed multiple to strategies adopted over the course of the last year. These drivers included: expansion of course offerings; improvements to registration and customer service; and improved marketing.

Research Scholarship and Creative Activity

The primary indicators for research scholarship and creative activity include: total research revenue (3-year rolling aggregate) and research revenue from private sources (3-year rolling aggregate). These measures are intended to reflect increased research activity from inception to mobilization.

Research revenue from all sources, including grants, is a critical driver of research activity and impact. As a comprehensive university, research activity and impact are foundational to our institutional mandate.

External research grants are included in this measure when cash is received from granting agencies. These amounts reflect the direct costs of research projects, but do not account for the full costs of doing the research. Indirect costs of research are funded through other related external and internal mechanisms.

A 3-year rolling aggregate measure is employed to smooth out natural fluctuations arising from numerous factors. These include not just the partly stochastic nature of grant winning, but the irregular multi-year application cycles of some major grant programs, varying funding periods of successful grants, and the impact of grant-winning on subsequent application rates.

Results include expenditures of external funding awards, such as the [Canada Foundation for Innovation – Innovation Fund \(CFI-IF\) award for the Clean Agriculture in Sustainable Production \(CASP\) project](#). Although year one outcomes for total research revenue currently exceed the total plan target, for the reasons noted, this is apt to change as some annual results drop out of the smoothed average.

The implementation of this indicator is guided by the [Research Enterprise Plan \(REP\)](#), launched in December 2025, which adapts the core themes of Brock University's Institutional Strategic Plan to the team and infrastructure supporting Brock's research-related priorities and directions. Outlining the goals and values for the Research Enterprise, the REP ensures the alignment of its Action Plan, developed separately, with the institution's established strategic directions.

University Advancement

The primary indicators for university advancement include: total impact of philanthropy in a fiscal year and alumni engagement index. These measures are intended to reflect total revenue

from philanthropic contributions to the University and activities that engage and develop relationships with prospects, donors and other partners for funding opportunities.

Total impact of philanthropy represents contributions across realized and gift-in-kind revenue, new pledge expectancies and new planned gift expectancies. The 2025-26 fiscal year total is projecting well towards the 2030 target of \$23.5M and exceeds the \$5.1M established baseline. Results this year were strengthened by a [transformational legacy gift of more than \\$7 million from Norris Walker](#). The gift will support the Brock University Norris W. Walker Research Farm, bolstering the University's innovative work in sustainable agriculture.

A slightly lower alumni engagement index represents a reduction in mass communication being reduced in favour of higher-quality, targeted outreach. Thoughtful planning towards more strategic engagement will lead to improved response rates and will drive improved progress towards the 2030 target.

Dynamic and Inclusive Culture

The primary indicators for dynamic and inclusive culture include: student engagement survey results; employee engagement survey results; number of equity diversity and inclusion (EDI) and Indigenous learning sessions, events, programming offered and number of attendees; and equity census response rates. These measures are intended to reflect how students, faculty and staff experience the campus environment, including their perceptions of engagement, equity, decolonization, and inclusion which is created and influences by the efforts and resources invested, and by interactions both with the University and amongst the diverse members of the Brock community.

EDI and Indigenous activities are tracking well ahead of 2030 targets due to policy changes and several strategic enhancements to programming significantly increasing engagement and participation enabling both offices to achieve several long-term objectives significantly ahead of schedule. Throughout the 2025-26 year, consultation has been underway on the development of the Indigenous Strategic Plan and the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization Action Plan with both plans being launched in 2026-27.

The employee engagement survey has yet to be initiated and is expected to be launched in 2026-27. The equity census response rates are tracking ahead of baseline for both employee and student groups whereas the student engagement survey is tracking slightly below 2024-25 baseline levels. The student engagement survey draws on a number of student satisfaction surveys that assess both the academic experiences of students (e.g., academic student engagement) and the administrative experiences of students (e.g., food services, residence life, etc). As such, improvement in student satisfaction levels will be more closely monitored via the newly launched Survey Sharepoint Site, designed by the Office of Institutional Planning and

Data Governance, for use by the Survey Management Committee. This tool will significantly enhance the ability to more accurately assess student satisfaction and target support interventions where needed.

Financial Health

The primary indicators of financial health include: viability ratio, which measures financial capacity relative to debt obligations; Brock's Morningstar DBRS credit rating, which assesses creditworthiness and financial stewardship; and the funding budget net surplus/deficit, which indicates the sustainability of annual operations and capacity to invest in strategic priorities. These measures are intended to reflect the university's ability to sustain its academic, research, and community mission over the long term while remaining financially resilient.

The 2025-26 viability ratio has declined from the 2024-25 baseline, reflecting ongoing operating deficits and the spending from reserves exceeding transfers in. Our budget planning strategy is actively addressing this trend through increased strategic reserve funding and a continued focus on achieving a balanced budget over the long term.

Brock's Morningstar DBRS credit rating remained at A (High) in 2026, as evidence of sound fiscal management; however, the outlook was revised from 'Stable' to 'Negative' due to sustained operating deficits and a significant new capital lease obligation that will increase reported debt levels upon completion of the SPARK initiative in 2028-29. While the revised outlook may indicate the potential for a future rating downgrade, no new debt financing is anticipated that would see higher interest rates due to the change.

Lastly, the 2026-27 budgeted deficit of \$6.1 million represents a significant improvement from the \$13.6 million budgeted deficit in 2025-26. The forthcoming Fiscal Framework will road map long-term financial sustainability with a target balanced operating result

Sustainability

The primary indicators of sustainability include: annual performance in the sustainability higher education ranking STARS; The Times Higher Education (THE) sustainability impact ratings; reduction in scope 1 carbon emissions; and number of sustainability related courses. These measures are intended to reflect advancing sustainability across all dimensions – academic, research and operational- by aligning with the social, environmental, and economic pillars of sustainable development.

During 2025-26, efforts to improve Sustainability Impact Rankings, specifically THE Sustainability Impact Ratings and STARS, have focused on strengthening the specificity and delivery of ranking

evidence. This work has included more detailed gap analysis and interdisciplinary collaboration, which will support more comprehensive ranking submissions in upcoming years and provide a clear picture of the incremental initiatives needed to achieve ranking goals.

In addition, year one results demonstrate strong progress toward Brock University's commitments related to energy management and greenhouse gas emissions. Third-party verified greenhouse gas emissions decreased to 17,949 tCO₂e, representing a reduction of 6,711 tCO₂e, or 27.2%. These improvements were supported by lower overall site-energy consumption, significant reductions in natural-gas use, and the continued transition of campus energy demand toward electricity.

While the [SPARK Initiative](#) is expected to contribute to future energy and emissions reductions, the current results are primarily attributable to existing operational improvements, energy-management initiatives, electrification measures, and ongoing efficiency projects already underway across the campus.

Reputational Strength

The primary indicators of reputational strength include: favorability rating as part of an awareness and perception survey; Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Subject Matter ranking (sports-related subjects) ranking in Canada; and QS World University Subject Matter ranking (5-year aggregate academic nomination count). These measures are intended to reflect the perception and standing of Brock University in the minds of key audience groups.

The favourability rating has not yet been established, as the Awareness and Perception Survey is scheduled to be launched in the 2026-27 fiscal year under the leadership of the Executive Director, Marketing and Communications, and the Vice-President, External.

Brock demonstrated positive year-over-year movement across both QS reputation indicators, with its ranking in Sports-Related Subjects improving from 127th to 102nd, while five-year aggregate academic nominations increased from 92 to 109. Progress was anchored by strong, coordinated efforts from Institutional Planning and Data Governance (IPDG), valuable contributions from the Deans' offices, the Office of Sustainability, as well as support from Advancement and Alumni.

To accelerate movement towards 2030 targets, Brock is implementing a coordinated QS strategy centered on decanal sponsorship, increased rankings awareness, systematic alumni identification, and earlier engagement of future graduates. These actions are intended to substantially expand Brock's nomination pipeline and translate increased academic recognition into stronger future ranking performance.

Community Impact and Global Reach

The primary indicators for Community Impact and Global Reach include: number of community MOU partnerships; economic impact; number of contactable international located alumni; number of Brock students studying abroad; and number of international academic pathway partnerships. These measures are intended to reflect advancing partnerships across both our local and global communities that foster reciprocal exchange of knowledge, resources and experiences driving meaningful impact and mutually beneficial partnerships.

The number of community MOU partnerships remained stable against the 2024-25 baseline of 15 active partnerships. As new strategic partnerships are explored, progress will track well towards the 2030 target. The number of contactable international alumni tracked above baseline, illustrating the positive impact of Brock's expanded international alumni engagement efforts.

Progress toward the 2030 international academic pathway partnership target remains strong, with performance currently exceeding planned growth. While outbound student mobility has declined slightly from the previous year, this is largely attributable to a reporting adjustment that redefined inbound Double Degree students to a secondary indicator. With sustained efforts to expand international opportunities, International remains confident in achieving the 2030 mobility target.