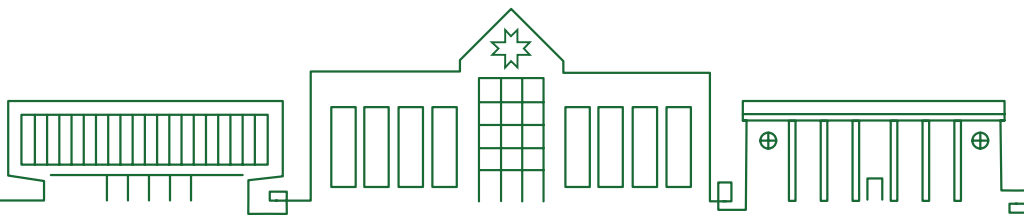


Strategic Enrolment Management Plan



2022-2027

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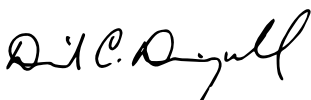
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND THE PROVOST

Cape Breton University's (CBU) first strategic enrolment management (SEM) plan sets specific objectives designed to stabilize our growth over the next five years and guide the university toward academically responsible and financially sustainable enrolment, long into the future. Most importantly, it recommends six broad strategies that together strengthen CBU's commitment to student success aligned with the priorities outlined in CBU's 2020-2025 Academic Plan.

The SEM Plan was borne out of extensive consultation and provides a framework for facilitating slow but steady culture change within CBU, gradually embedding SEM principles in all that we do. So, every time we make a work decision using our distinctive expertise, experience, and authority, we follow SEM best practices and enhance collaboration and communication across the university and within the community. In doing so, the experience of students – the heart and soul of a university – will be enhanced throughout their entire CBU lifecycle. The task at hand will not be easy and will require the collective efforts of many. However, the true benefits of purposeful SEM planning – creating the ideal environment for student success – must outweigh any resistance to innovation and development.

In addition to education, all Canadian universities play a variety of roles in their respective communities. CBU's mandate contains a special commitment to the social, cultural, and economic sustainability and revitalization of Cape Breton Island, making our university distinctly different. Managing healthy growth is a task that we must perform inside the university and, working closely with our external partners, outside the university too. As we embark on this implementation phase, we do so with unwavering commitment to our mission and confidence in our vision. Together, we will transform our campus and community while creating meaningful experiences for our students.

Yours very truly,



David C. Dingwall
President & Vice-Chancellor



Dr. Richard MacKinnon
Vice-President, Academic & Provost

PURPOSE

CBU's first strategic enrolment management plan intends to achieve a more balanced, diversified enrolment trajectory. It is defined by a series of optimal numbers: annual enrolment maximums; compositional diversity of total enrolments; and distribution through a balanced complement of programs. With this direction set, we will be able to fulfil the mission, vision, and values of the university through coordinated, SEM informed decisions or recommendations, both managerial and collegial, in an array of areas including:

- *faculty and staff resource planning;*
- *new and existing program development;*
- *physical and technical infrastructure expansion and/or upgrading; and*
- *improvements in the design and delivery of all student support systems.*

Although SEM planning encompasses the whole spectrum of activities within a university, we are primarily an educational institution. So, each action in the SEM plan should bring about a change that helps a student decide to enroll in a CBU program or motivates them to stay enrolled. The ultimate measure of the plan's success will be whether it contributes to student success, demonstrated in the purely academic realm or enhanced engagement in every facet of university life.

Implementing the SEM plan requires an immediate investment in additional human resources, physical space and related facilities, technical infrastructure, student support services, and more. Further investment will be required as we progress toward our overall SEM goal. Sound enrolment management, therefore, must be financially sustainable as well as academically responsible. That is why the implementation of the six SEM strategies (and 44 actions) depends upon meeting the six operationally set SEM objectives.

This document is a guide, not a blueprint for change. As institutional research starts to intensify (consistent with SEM strategy 5), both overall enrolment objectives and actions will become better grounded, more precise, and adjusted accordingly. At the same time, we are committed to a continuity of purpose that removes any temptation to backslide into a cycle of reacting to short-term changes with improvised policies that will backfire in the long term.

Finally, managing enrolment at a university that is growing in diverse ways will require CBU to work closely with external partners to support sustainable growth in the community at large. This is one of the important challenges to be met as we start the process of implementation.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

CBU's Academic Plan was launched in January 2020, and its first recommendation was to develop a strategic enrolment management plan. This process started in April 2021 after being delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Exploratory Phase *April 2021-November 2021*

- Performed an environmental scan – using data available through the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC), the Atlantic Association of Universities (AAU), the Province of Nova Scotia, and CBU enrolment data.
- Vice-President Academic & Provost established a SEM Task Force and appointed two SEM co-chairs.
- Created three working groups (Program & Faculty Analysis, Recruitment & Student Experience Analysis, and Financial & Space Analysis) which included all senior academic leaders.
- Reviewed enrolment trends in all CBU programs using institutional data over a five- and ten-year period; clarified existing recruitment policies (and criteria used for measuring success); and identified data and institutional research needs.
- Assessed existing classroom/lab capacity and identified essential teaching and learning space needs for an upcoming three-year period.
- Mapped interconnections between all CBU's academic programs (identifying distinctive values and/or risks) and identified faculty staffing requirements for an upcoming three-year period.
- After 45 working sessions, interim SEM recommendations were made to the President and Vice-President Academic & Provost on immediate space and faculty resource needs.

The Consultation Phase *January 2022-August 2022*

- Direct consultations were informed by academic SEM literature and available documents from other universities; co-chairs also drew on previous CBU planning processes such as strategic and academic planning consultations, quality assurance program and unit reviews.
- Co-chairs supervised intensive rounds of consultation with members of units that provide student services and supports daily, supplemented where possible with knowledge acquired from ongoing studies, initiatives, events, and Senate committees concerned with enhancing student success and engagement.
- Several sessions focused on the central role that data management and institutional research play in SEM and how more efficient, effective practices can be established.
- Groups of faculty from a representative selection of degree and disciplinary programs participated in a series of collaborative consultations that modeled the kind of collegial SEM planning that ought to be done on an ongoing basis; several Senate committees were similarly invited to consider their role in an institutional SEM context.
- Sustained consultations held with Unama'ki College staff.
- Consultations held with the Library and Cultural Resources staff, Students' Union, external community partners, and other CBU stakeholders.
- In total, consultations with close to 500 persons in innumerable formal and informal settings, culminating in CBU's annual Grand Meeting in August.

The Adoption Phase *September 2022-March 2023*

- A draft plan was progressively revised following written feedback from the Grand Meeting consultation and assessments of 2022-2023 academic terms enrolment numbers and related experiences.
- Consultation sessions were held with the CBU Senate Executive regarding the collegial dimensions of enrolment planning and overall SEM governance.
- Follow-up consultations were held with the Students' Union and community partners, and targeted questions asked of specific units to sharpen certain recommendations.
- The SEM plan was presented to Senate in December 2022 with an analytical context; after discussion it was unanimously received and in February 2023 Senate established a SEM Working Group.
- The SEM plan was presented to the Board of Governors in March 2023; after discussion it was unanimously endorsed with the recommendation that future operating and capital budgets align with its strategies.

GOAL

Achieve academically responsible and financially sustainable enrolment growth.

Objectives

- 1 stabilize total enrolment at **7,000** students by 2027.
- 2 manage enrolment in post baccalaureate programs to **38%** of total enrolment by 2027.
- 3 diversify international enrolment by country of origin and by program destination (and once desired international enrolment of 60% is reached, set realistic targets for maximum enrolment by country) by 2027.
- 4 increase the percentage of domestic student enrolment to more than **40%** of total enrolment by 2027.
- 5 increase enrolment of Indigenous students in a combination of on-campus, in-community, undergraduate and graduate programs by **4%** by 2027.
- 6 increase enrolment in online programs by **4%** by 2027.

Strategy 1

Improve the quality of the total student experience from admission to graduation

ACTIONS

- decrease admission processing time for all students (including international, domestic and transfer students) to a maximum of five business days through a review of admissions policies and procedures.
- increase the number of available entrance scholarships for international, transfer, non-traditional, Indigenous, and African Nova Scotian students while ensuring that all eligible students are offered entrance scholarships upon admittance.
- release a schedule of courses accessible for students to view at least nine months before a new academic year starts.
- provide access to mandatory first year advising for students no later than two weeks after release of the timetable and ensure transfer students receive advising from faculty no later than two weeks after transfer credits have been assessed.
- ensure first year students can register for courses at least six months prior to the start of fall term and that returning students can register for the next academic year prior to the end of the previous winter term.
- design practices to help make faculty advising of students more efficient, effective, and user friendly.
- establish a first-year experience program aimed at successfully transitioning new CBU students to university.
- enhance career services to include career counselling and part-time job search support services.
- complement in-person student services with a robust digital strategy built on a self-serve model for ease of access.
- bolster initiatives designed to establish a culturally creative and healthy campus environment.

Strategy 2

Enhance in-community programming and improve channels of communication between Unama'ki College and all CBU units

ACTIONS

- ensure that Unama'ki College, collaborating with recruitment, has strategic control of recruitment targets for all Indigenous students and the processes by which they are attracted to CBU.
- assist Unama'ki College in negotiating agreements governing the delivery of in-community programs by revising internal CBU conventions and practices.
- develop a set of Unama'ki College authorized best practices to assist all partners involved in the delivery of in-community programs.
- normalize cooperation between Unama'ki College and Registrar's Office on course scheduling, registration processes, and tracking progress of Indigenous students.
- enable effective coordination between the student advising available through Unama'ki College staff and other academic advising necessary for students in specialized programs.
- enhance and expand the Elmitek program based on a review of past practices.
- improve the procedures and practices by which potential in-community instructors are identified and the collaborative process by which they are vetted.
- establish an annual day-long retreat for all instructors teaching courses on-campus or in-community.

Strategy 3

Serve the distinctive academic and experiential needs of students in post-baccalaureate programs more efficiently and effectively

ACTIONS

- return all post-baccalaureate courses to an expanded CBU campus by September 2025.
- ensure that existing programs are regularly assessed from an academic and market perspective and that potential new programs meet institutional SEM criteria.
- review admission policies and revise procedures for post-baccalaureate programs.
- concentrate recruitment efforts on diversifying the population of students enrolled in post-baccalaureate programs by countries of origin.
- implement enrolment caps on specific post-baccalaureate programs.
- enable all students enrolled in post-baccalaureate programs receive the full array of CBU student services and can access all CBU facilities or campus life opportunities while temporary classroom space is secured off campus.
- establish an improved system for student work placements and capstone courses.

Strategy 4

Establish a culture of data-based SEM decision making at CBU

ACTIONS

- encourage the adoption of practices by which data intelligence shapes academic program decisions of collegial bodies and senior administrators through existing quality assurance practices.
- establish a vision encompassing all institutional research and planning activities which ensures that data and interpretations of data are focused on student opportunities and their academic experience.
- merge current institutional research functions in a manner that best facilitates the use of data intelligence for SEM planning purposes.
- embed quality assurance specialists in supporting roles within select academic and administrative units while ensuring that they work as part of one institutional research and planning team.
- provide broader access to automated data sets according to defined needs.
- share regular substantive updates on CBU's enrolment and academic information across organizational boundaries to support consistent strategic enrolment management planning.
- prioritize professional development opportunities across the institution to help maximize the value of existing employee data analysis strengths.

Strategy 5

Integrate SEM planning organically into CBU's collegial structures and practices

ACTIONS

- introduce the practice of providing SEM reports to Senate regularly.
- consider transforming the mandate of the Senate Planning and Review Committee into Senate's SEM Advisory Committee.
- increase the combined impact and institutional scope of the Senate Academic, Quality Assurance, and Planning and Review Committees through more deliberate coordination of their work within all areas of new and existing program development.
- provide the Senate Executive with access to institutional enrolment and academic information so that all standing committees can integrate SEM best practices into deliberations and proposals.
- establish SEM working groups within all Schools to help achieve academic-driven enrolment strategies.
- distribute institutional enrolment and academic information to academic departments so that course and timetable planning can be consistent with SEM best practices.
- enhance existing programs, revitalize strategic partnership agreements, and develop new programs according to priorities specified in the Academic Plan.
- expand efforts by the Centre for Teaching and Learning to collaborate with faculty on pedagogical means to enhance student engagement.

Strategy 6



Ensure that physical, technical, and human resources support all features of a growing CBU

ACTIONS

- develop a strategic space plan for both new space creation and redeployment of existing space.
- create a dynamic and collaborative One-Stop Service Centre in a highly visible and easily accessible location on campus.
- reconsider the location of Deans' offices so that they are closer to their respective faculty.
- implement the recommendations of the library's quality assurance review.
- provide an equitable array of services to faculty, staff, and students who experience temporary dislocation or other changes during the next five years.
- continue to upgrade classrooms and other learning spaces with innovative technologies consistent with pedagogical best practices while ensuring professional development opportunities to help faculty and staff utilize the potential of these spaces.
- support enrolment growth targets in online programs with appropriate digital upgrades and training opportunities, especially ones cultivating a culture of academic integrity.
- engage in a review of academic support staff capacity to ensure resources can efficiently and effectively deliver services consistent with CBU's SEM Plan.
- pursue all avenues and engage with all community partners to create greater housing opportunities for CBU students while continuing to provide information to students.

MISSION, VISION, & VALUES

Mission

Cape Breton University is committed to high-quality, accessible education; innovative research; and a vibrant, multicultural future for the Island.

Vision

Rooted in Cape Breton, connected to the world

Values

We are committed to:

Courage Mel kik nòti

Thriving through creativity and leadership

Cooperation Maw lukitimk

Working together for the common good

Quality Mawi kelu'k

Achieving excellence through continual improvement

