



ACADEMIC PLAN 2019-2024



Columbia College
Vancouver, Canada



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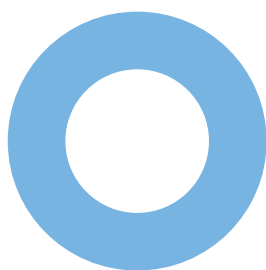


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BEGINNINGS

A Message from the Principal

Columbia College's new Academic Plan embraces the international and diverse setting of our institution and Vancouver. It recognizes the value of student engagement based upon three pillars: flexible progression, global engagement, and effective communication.

This plan builds upon Columbia College's strength in supporting flexible progression through personalized learning and building community as our students progress through our pathway programs to graduation and ultimate university completion. It builds upon a commitment to be a leader in global engagement, delivering an education committed to creating an awareness of and appreciation for current, complex global challenges while delivering an education rooted in global citizenship, equity, and social inclusion. Finally, Columbia College recognizes the importance of effective communication in the development of a successful citizen, believing communication to be beyond the ability to read, write, and speak but additionally to gather, synthesize, and share information—to collaborate, and be socially aware across all aspects of life itself. In today's digital reality, the ability to be open to new ideas and to use technical expertise to critically and creatively analyze problems as they arise is an important skill.



Robin Hemmingsen
Principal, Columbia College



This plan is grounded in academic excellence under which all of these pillars fall. Within the concept of academic excellence the Academic Plan sub-committee has identified seven areas of focus: continuous curriculum planning, leadership of the academic board, innovation and technology, global engagement, flexible academic pathways, effective communication, and Indigenization.

Taken together, this plan will not only see Columbia College through the next five years and effectively engage and prepare our student body, but it will also inform the College for decades beyond, committing to both flexibility and ongoing renewal. This plan will ensure we continue to not just meet the needs of our students, but to give them the best post-secondary experience in Canada.

Many thanks to the Academic Vice-Principal Matt Wadsworth and the engaged sub-committee of Deans: William Cheng, Gi Chien, Ana Culibrk, Hema Giesbrecht, Fatin Jallad, Leslie Mer Tara Todoruk, and Shahnaz Winer, whose leadership values are used in this introduction to the Academic Plan. Congratulations



WHY AN ACADEMIC PLAN?

Columbia College has a long history in Vancouver, nearly 85 years. Over this time the College has evolved. The College's faculty and staff have always had the goal of providing students with the best possible educational opportunity, notwithstanding the economic or political dictates of the outside world. The pride in Columbia College's identity as a non-profit Society, dedicated to student excellence has never wavered. As a degree-granting institution, the College prepares students for academic studies, encourages a passion for lifelong learning, which helps to enable success in life, no matter the student's path. The internationalization of education, global systems of communication and movement, changing expectations and interests of students and evolving geopolitical circumstances have, and will continue to, impact the College in meaningful and complex ways.

To navigate the complexity that impacts the College and its students, the Academic Board called for the creation of an Academic Plan in the summer of 2018. Over the course of nearly six months, the Deans of the College's five academic divisions and the English Language Centre, worked to develop a plan that would carry the College into the future. Drawing from data collected during the creation of the College's draft strategic plan and the collected decades of experience represented by the Deans and VP-Academic, the Academic Plan sub-committee has developed a robust and flexible Academic Plan, designed to ensure continuous excellence and rigorous academic programs, which are flexible so as to meet the needs of our students, both today and into the future. It embraces the international and multicultural setting of our College and our city. Finally, it recognizes the value of engaging students, in unique and innovative ways, to instill the idea of flexibility and a well-rounded skill base, so as to best prepare our student body for the challenges they will face once they graduate.

These values and goals represent the Committee's collective vision towards meeting the College's objective of becoming the best college in Canada. This plan is an important first step along the path to achieving this goal.



THREE PILLARS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN



The Columbia College Academic Plan is built on the three stated pillars of the College's Strategic Plan:

1. Flexible Progression

Columbia College's strength is supporting personalized learning, allowing students to progress through a flexible, academic framework. Students may begin in the English Language Centre and transition to the Secondary and University Transfer programs, before continuing on their path to university. The student's transition to each level is eased by the sense of community amongst students, faculty and staff, and the strong connection between the programs.

2. Global Engagement

The Columbia College community lives their values as part of their daily experience in their multicultural environment, practicing cultural awareness and inclusivity. The College community is committed to creating an awareness of and appreciation for current, complex global challenges, and to promoting understanding and sensitivity while engaging in partnerships with local, national, and global entities through student volunteering and mentoring opportunities. Employees of the College approach their work with the intent to provide opportunities for all students, including connections within and beyond the College.

3 Effective Communication

Columbia College recognizes the importance of effective communication in the development of a successful citizen. Communication is not just the ability to read, write and speak in an accessible and meaningful manner, but it is also an understanding of, and competency in, numeracy, technology and the sciences. It is the ability to gather, synthesize and share information. It is the ability to collaborate, be socially aware and empathetic across the sectors of one's life. Finally, it is the ability to be open to new ideas, use technical expertise and critically analyze problems so as to develop creative solutions to the problems in front of us.

First and foremost, however, comes academic excellence, under which all of these pillars fall. Within the concept of academic excellence, the Academic Plan sub-committee identified seven areas of focus in the development of this plan: Flexible Academic Pathways, Continuous Curriculum Planning, Leadership of the Academic Board, Innovation and Technology, Global Engagement, Effective Communication, and Indigenization.

Taken together, this plan will not just see Columbia College through the next five years and effectively engage and prepare our student body, but it will also help set the school up for decades beyond and instill a flexible and nimble academic structure. This will ensure that we continue not just to meet the needs of our students, but to give them the best post-secondary experience in Canada.



FOCUS 1: FLEXIBLE ACADEMIC PATHWAYS

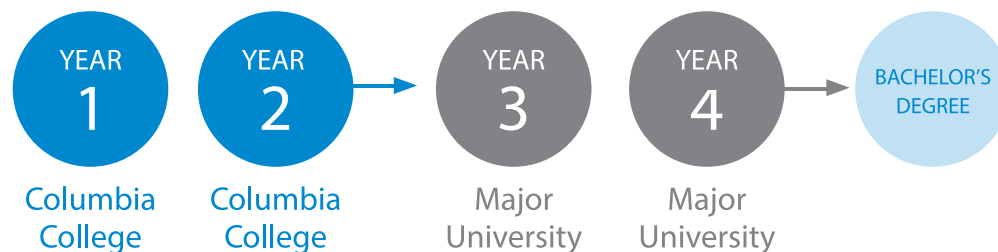
Columbia College is a proud advocate of seamless transition in education. In support of BCCAT's mandate to build a flexible post-secondary system in BC, Columbia College provides its students with flexible academic pathways through the College's programs in advance of their post-secondary study.

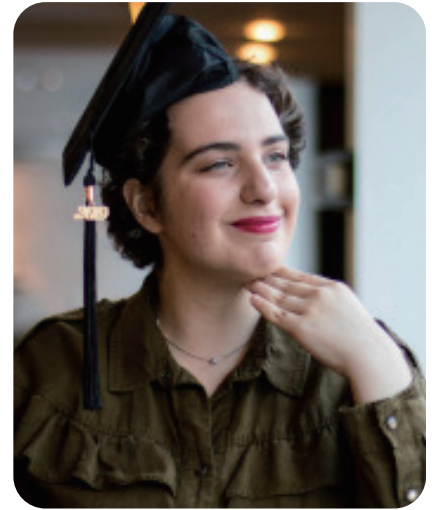
Our Goals:

- 1 Review and further develop our internal transfer options.
- 2 Articulate courses that are broadly transferable to research universities.
- 3 Lead in advocating seamless transition and transfer credit agreements.
- 4 Consider innovative academic courses, programs, and pathways so as to best prepare our students for the contemporary world.
- 5 Provide flexible specialization and concentration options for students.
- 6 Strengthen college academic leadership.



OR





FOCUS 2: CONTINUOUS CURRICULUM PLANNING, EVALUATION, AND IMPROVEMENT

Columbia College is committed to providing the best possible educational experience to its students. To do so, the College must ensure excellence in its programming. To this end, the College believes that continuous curriculum planning, review and evaluation is necessary to ensure programs and courses remain current in an ever-evolving world.

Our Goals:

- 1 Standardize course outlines.
- 2 Continuous review of learning outcomes for courses and programs.
- 3 Construct innovative programming given the existing resources at the College.
- 4 Hire, retain, and mentor incredible faculty members.
- 5 Increase experiential learning opportunities.
- 6 Fully engage BCCAT and be an upstanding citizen in the post-secondary community.



FOCUS 3: REFINING THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE ACADEMIC BOARD

Columbia College recognizes the important academic leadership role of the College's elected representatives that sit on the Academic Board. The leadership role that the Academic Board has maintained can be further refined in order to provide guidance and support in all academic matters.

Our Goals:

- 1 Reinforce the leadership role in creation and revision of academic policies and the academic plan.
- 2 Commit to continuous organizational improvements in the functioning of the Academic Board.
- 3 Maintain constant communication with different departments to ensure that all aspects of an issue are addressed when decisions are made.
- 4 Redefine the position of Dean and Department Chair to create a more definitive leadership role.
- 5 Recognize innovation in teaching.



FOCUS 4: INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION IN ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Columbia College will develop a comprehensive framework for the sustainable use of technology supporting the best pedagogical practices, curriculum development and enhanced learning experience.

Our Goals:

- 1 Continue to refine, update, and upgrade CAMS and other relevant software and hardware.
- 2 Increase student engagement and participation by implementing interactive tools in informal and formal settings.
- 3 Promote ethical and responsible practices in digital learning and emphasize the importance of being accountable digital citizens. Educate all staff and students on engaging in safe digital practices abiding by the Privacy Policy.
- 4 Provide greater PD Day opportunities to familiarize faculty with innovation in best practice in international education.
- 5 Fuel students' academic achievements through multimodal delivery methods.
- 6 Increase students' technological literacy in an academic context.

FOCUS 5:

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

Columbia College recognizes and embraces the internationalization of education, through a commitment to global engagement. Global engagement refers to “a committed, meaningful interaction with the world as a whole” (Embleton, 2015). The College will strive to embed a global engagement perspective in all we do, including in learning outcomes, curriculum, student activities, and community outreach at the local, national and international levels.

Our Goals:

- 1 Implement progressive and dynamic learning strategies that are appropriate for an international and diverse classroom.
- 2 Provide students with opportunities to become involved locally, nationally, and internationally by seeking domestic and international partnerships.
- 3 Foster global environmental sustainability by supporting academic programming with global environmental themes, supporting connections between students with local environmental organizations and broader global movements in clubs, as well as by modelling sustainable practices on campus.
- 4 Prepare students to become global leaders by providing them with a future-oriented skill set, as well as strong interpersonal skills that include cross-cultural communication, multicultural communication and networking; and supports alumni activities in the global arena.
- 5 Support an environment of inclusion and diversity.





EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Columbia College recognizes the importance of Effective Communication in the development of a successful citizen. Communication is not just the ability to read, write and speak in an accessible and meaningful manner, but it is also an understanding of, and competency in, numeracy, technology and the sciences. It is the ability to gather, synthesize and share information. It is the ability to collaborate, be socially aware and empathetic across the sectors of one's life. Finally, it is the ability to be open to new ideas, use technical expertise and critically analyze problems so as to develop creative solutions to the problems in front of us.

Our Goals:

- 1 Develop literacy across disciplines and mediums and work to develop common language across disciplines.
- 2 Nurture greater diversity in pedagogical approaches to the classroom, so as to reach as many students as possible.
- 3 Integrate interactive activities into the classroom to better prepare students for responsibilities in their field of study, academically and at the job market.
- 4 Recognize that while academic pursuit is the primary goal of the institution, it is one of a number of motivating factors for students.
- 5 Offer the most well-rounded student support system in the province of BC for international students.
- 6 Inform, promote, and provide students with research opportunities.
- 7 Support the development of the student as a citizen through local community engagement.

FOCUS 7: INDIGENIZATION OF CURRICULUM

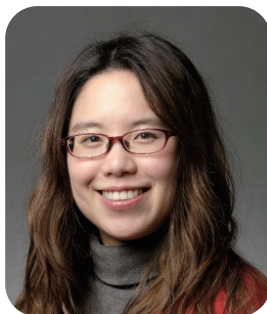
This concept is two-fold: first, it is the incorporation of culturally appropriate content. Second, it is engaging in diverse and inclusive teaching and assessment methods to better engage cultural differences in learning and knowledge synthesis. In the short term, the College will focus on developing content and building meaningful relationships with the local Indigenous communities. The next plan should engage delivery and assessment.

Our Goals:

- 1 New courses and concentrations consider opportunities for Indigenous engagement in the curriculum
- 2 Ensure that the Indigenization process is undertaken in collaboration with local Indigenous knowledge.
- 3 Encourage community service opportunities to learners that can help the vulnerable in the False Creek Flats.
- 4 Encourage PD opportunities related to Indigenization for instructors.
- 5 Encourage the acknowledgement of Indigenous rights in every classroom to ensure that all learners are exposed to the reality of unextinguished rights of Indigenous peoples.



ACADEMIC PLAN SUB-COMMITTEE



William Cheng
Ginny Chien
Ana Culibrk
Hema Giesbrecht
Fatin Jallad
Leslie Mercer
Tara Todoruk
Matt Wadsworth
Shahnaz Winer



Special Thanks: Gabrielle Flores-Santiago for editing.



Admissions Office
438 Terminal Ave.
Vancouver, BC
V6A 0C1 Canada

T +1 604 683 8360
F +1 604 682 7191
E admin@columbiacollege.ca

North Campus
333 Terminal Ave.
Vancouver, BC
V6A 4C1 Canada

 @columbiacollege1936
 @columbiacollege1936

www.columbiacollege.ca