

# EPIC

EMPOWERING **PEOPLE**  
INSPIRING **CHANGE**



OPERATIONS & FINANCE STRATEGIC PLAN, 2024 - 2029





# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek Haudenosaunee, Lunaapéewak and Chonnonton Nations, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. We respect the longstanding relationships that Indigenous Nations have to this land, as they are the original caretakers. We acknowledge historical and ongoing injustices that Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) endure in Canada, and we accept responsibility as a public institution to contribute toward revealing and correcting misinformation as well as renewing respectful relationships with Indigenous communities through our teaching, research, and community service.





## OUR WAY FORWARD

In June 2021, Western unveiled its new strategic plan, *Towards Western at 150*, which showcased the university's accomplishments and impact on the world and outlined a distinct path forward to achieve its aspirations. The plan culminated with a call to action, urging everyone to tap into their full potential to elevate Western's impact to greater heights. The Operations & Finance team embraces this call to action and commits to being innovative, collaborative, and courageous.

As a team, we are proud of the distinctive role that Operations & Finance plays at Western University. We manage and connect crucial infrastructure, functions, and services that keep Western operating at peak capacity. Operations & Finance is comprised of more than 2000 exceptional staff and leaders from Campus Safety and Emergency Services, Facilities Management, Financial Services, Housing and Ancillary Services, Internal Audit, and Legal Counsel.

## OUR COLLECTIVE WORK:

- Shapes the quality of Western students' campus experiences and outcomes.
- Supports academic excellence in teaching, learning, and research.
- Helps build safe campus communities of belonging, where all students, staff, and faculty can thrive.
- Advances the sustainability of our campus and models environmental stewardship.
- Guides university financial decision making, risk management, and resource allocation.
- Contributes to ensuring that alumni, visitors, and external community partners feel welcome at Western.

Building on our team's strengths and track record of success, and in response to *Towards Western at 150*, the Operations & Finance team embarked on a strategic planning journey to develop a roadmap that will chart our course forward. Our journey encompassed an environmental scan to identify Operations & Finance's strengths, limitations, opportunities and threats. We also engaged leaders, staff, and campus partners to better understand their needs, expectations, and aspirations. As a result, we reached a solid consensus on the strategic priorities and key areas that will be the focus of our collective efforts over the next five years.

As we look to the future, we envision Operations & Finance continuing to make significant contributions to Western University's mission and objectives. Our new strategic plan, EPIC, is our commitment to 'Empower People and Inspire Change.' It represents our determination to unite and mobilize the diverse talents, passions, and expertise of our staff and leaders to amplify our collective impact on the communities we serve. The plan recognizes the importance of innovation, agility, and collaboration, and inspires us to think creatively, be proactive, and take action to create positive change. With EPIC as our roadmap, we are confident that Operations & Finance will continue to play a crucial role in supporting Western's aspirations and achieving its vision.

# OUR STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

## OUR VISION

**EPIC: Empowering people. Inspiring change**

**Creating safe, sustainable, and inclusive campus communities for today and tomorrow.**



## OUR MISSION

As an integrated and passionate team, we collaborate, partner, and take action to advance Western University's full potential in teaching, research, community engagement, and social accountability.

We continually innovate, adapt, and deliver exemplary services, facilities, and expertise to support the university's strategic goals and impact locally, regionally, nationally, and across the globe.

## OUR GUIDING VALUES

As an Operations & Finance team, we have committed to six values that will guide how we act, make decisions and interact with one another, our communities and the world.



### Collaboration and Communication

Sharing diverse skills, knowledge, ideas and perspectives to achieve greater and more inclusive results.



### Innovation

Prioritizing creative thinking, experimentation, and adaptability in how we solve problems, make decisions, and plan for the future.



### Leading With Integrity

Being honest, ethical, and consistent in our words and actions, and treating people equitably and with respect.



### Pursuit of Excellence

Striving to achieve higher standards of quality, performance, and achievement.



### Safety and Inclusion

Intentionally fostering spaces and places where all people feel physically and psychologically safe, valued, and included.



### Sustainability

Striving to meet the needs of our present communities while ensuring the needs of future generations are met.



# COLLECTIVE IMPACT

THRIVING STUDENTS, STAFF, FACULTY AND COMMUNITIES



The integrated and collaborative efforts of the Operations & Finance team are essential to realizing Western's strategic vision. Our work ultimately supports Western students, staff, faculty, leadership, and the broader community in achieving their goals. Whether it involves providing thousands of students with safe and inclusive "homes away from home," equipping leaders with the necessary data and guidance to make major decisions, creating a secure and safe campus environment, or constructing and sustaining cutting-edge facilities, we are dedicated to making a difference.

Our promise to Western's communities is one of collective impact and thriving, underscoring our commitment to advancing meaningful change and having a positive effect on those we serve.

## STRATEGIC OUTCOMES



### Western students, staff and faculty will:

- 1 Feel safe and included while learning, working, living, and participating in Western communities.
- 2 Successfully engage with world-class and inspiring campus facilities, spaces, and amenities that respect and celebrate a diversity of cultures and backgrounds.
- 3 Experience inclusive gathering and collision spaces that encourage and stimulate collaboration, creation, and socialization.
- 4 Recognize the scope of campus resources and services that are available and how to access and interact with them.
- 5 Value campus and individual safety and take responsibility for contributing to a safe Western community.

### Western communities:

- 6 Leaders will be supported with excellent data and counsel for informed decision making to elevate performance.
- 7 Alumni will be proud of Western's campus and give back to the university, helping future generations of students to thrive and make a difference.
- 8 People outside of Western will feel connected to Western's campus, brand, communities and experience.
- 9 Londoners will benefit from Western's many contributions to the well-being and growth of the city and surrounding region.



# IGNITING OUR IMPACT

Western is dedicated to expanding its impact in research, teaching, and community engagement, as well as in building a more inclusive world. Achieving these objectives will require Western to take more risks, experiment, innovate, and pursue transformational action.

We will continue to strive for excellence in everything we do and lead change in areas of strategic significance to advance Western's goals.

## 1 Care for Our Environment and the World



- Lead the development and implementation of Western's next-generation climate and sustainability strategy.
- Apply a rigorous sustainability lens across all operational decisions to nurture our communities' health and well-being.
- Employ analytics and innovation to fast-track the university's pathway to energy efficiency and net-zero carbon emissions.
- Actively pursue the decarbonization of Western's investment portfolio.
- Advance the Open Space Strategy to create a safer, more connected and accessible campus, with a strong sense of place and history.



# IGNITING OUR IMPACT

## ② Create and Care for Campus Places and Spaces



- Update Western's infrastructure to create more multi-purpose and accessible indoor and outdoor spaces.
- Partner to build or adapt first-class inclusive and accessible teaching and research spaces and labs that advance learning, scholarship, and creative activity.
- Plan, design, and deliver all construction projects effectively, and with a low carbon footprint.
- Include and elevate the voices and needs of diverse communities in designing, building, maintaining, and managing university facilities and spaces.
- Embed Indigenous and diverse identities within campus communities in visual images, signage, naming, and ceremonies.
- Reframe campus safety and emergency services to be people-centered, multi-disciplinary, and trauma-informed.

## ③ Deliver a Dynamic Student Housing Experience



- Revitalize our 21st-century housing strategy to accommodate student growth and meet the diverse scope of backgrounds, needs, and expectations across the entire learning journey.
- Renew how we take care of residents and support them, 24/7, to be themselves and experience a sense of belonging and well-being across the residence community.
- Support and prepare all students for the housing transitions they will experience during their time at Western.



# IGNITING OUR IMPACT

## 4 Provide Exemplary Hospitality and Retail Experiences



- Design a cost-effective and sustainable operating model aligned with visitors' diverse expectations, dietary palettes, behaviours, and perceptions.
- Create high-quality culinary experiences that celebrate different foods and menus in safe, welcoming, and accessible spaces.
- Leverage technology and explore innovative service and product approaches to meet community needs.
- Evolve the university campus retail experience to meet changing needs.
- Continue to be the preferred source of learning materials on campus.



## 5 Innovate Financial, Risk Management and Legal Services



- Deliver expert counsel, reporting, and solutions to decision makers to support operational sustainability and growth, and protect university assets, resources, and reputations.
- Collaborate across the university to deliver best-practice services and solutions that preserve, protect, and create value.
- Accelerate our use of data analytics to inform planning and budgeting, and generate predictive insights for better decisions.
- Lead enterprise-wide risk management to understand, prepare, and manage risks, and enable resilience and value creation.
- Innovate Western's Emergency Management plan, including capacity.



# ENABLING OUR IMPACT

Every day members of the O&F team come to work in support of our vision of “creating safe, sustainable, and inclusive campus communities for today and tomorrow.” While the needs of our students, staff, faculty, and wider communities are at the forefront of their efforts, our employees serve as the foundation of our Operations & Finance function, and we are committed to supporting and empowering them to thrive in their roles.

We will foster a culture that is safe, supportive, and inclusive, where every team member feels heard, welcomed, and valued. We will prioritize innovation, learning, and development to enable our employees to keep pace with the speed, complexity, and scale of change in our environment. We will invest in the technology and tools that our team needs to plan, collaborate, and perform their work at the highest level.



## 1 Foster A Culture Of Engagement And Inclusion

- Ensure each member of the Operations & Finance team feels they belong and has every opportunity to participate and add value.
- Strive to expand and engage the diversity of our workforce.
- Create the conditions that foster mental, physical, and emotional well-being and resiliency for all.
- Unite around our commitment to serve the needs of students, staff, faculty, and the university.
- Promote a work environment of curiosity, reflection and lifelong learning.
- Choose courage over complacency by implementing changes that will make a difference for the people we serve.
- Embed ongoing Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Decolonization training, awareness, and mentoring across Operations & Finance.

## 2 Engage The Full Potential Of Our People

- Foster a work environment where cross-functional teams are empowered to act and respond to new challenges and opportunities.
- Attract, retain, and empower exceptional talent that represents the diversity of the students and communities we serve.
- Elevate employee and leadership development through coaching, mentorship, and training.
- Recognize and celebrate individual and team successes and contributions.

## 3 Harness Technology And Infrastructure For Impact

- Invest in digital and mobile solutions and tools to advance Operations & Finance agility.
- Build capacity and employee capabilities to support rapid shifts in technology and knowledge requirements.
- Develop a holistic data infrastructure that unifies and mobilizes data to inform and support Operations & Finance priorities.
- Leverage data and technology to ignite operational efficiencies and modernize client solutions.
- Invest in the equipment and tools Operations & Finance employees need to meet the demands associated with expanding student enrolment, research, campus utilization, safety, and sustainability.
- Expand Operation & Finance's access to meeting, collaborative and collision spaces.



# SUSTAINING OUR IMPACT

To advance Western's strategic plan and achieve our ambitious objectives, it will be necessary to expand and diversify our revenue sources, while also carefully and rigorously allocating resources in alignment to our strategic priorities. This will require us to work in close partnership with Western leaders, faculty, staff and students and with local and regional communities, including municipalities, service providers, and neighbourhood groups. Building robust, innovative, and reciprocal partnerships will allow us to mobilize resources, share knowledge, and build capacity for positive change.

As we move forward, incorporating a strong framework of shared accountability into Operations & Finance is essential. To achieve this, we will define performance metrics and targets that align with our strategic goals, and systematically measure, evaluate, report on, and manage our performance against these benchmarks. Furthermore, we will regularly engage with our communities to gather feedback and identify opportunities to refine our focus and improve performance.



## 1 Optimize Revenue Growth, Efficiency, and Resource Allocation

- Enlarge and diversify revenue streams across the Operations & Finance portfolio.
- Advocate for and deploy the incremental resources needed to enable university-wide growth and strategic goals.
- Identify and act on opportunities to optimize operational efficiency and effectiveness.
- Deploy financial and planning expertise to achieve optimal return-on-investment across capital and service-related projects.
- Embrace new operating models that maximize Operations & Finance agility, efficiency, and responsiveness.

## 2 Build an Integrated and Collaborative Ecosystem of Partnerships

- Cultivate an integrated network of multidisciplinary partnerships, united around driving transformational change and delivering on our strategic promises.
- Actively communicate, collaborate, and share ideas and information across the ecosystem, generating trust and enhancing performance.
- Champion and promote Operations & Finance's value proposition by sharing impact stories with leaders and the stakeholders and communities we serve.

## 3 Manage and Continuously Improve Performance

- Implement Key Performance Indicators to track and measure progress and achievement of Operations & Finance goals.
- Utilize analytics and benchmarking to inform and accelerate system and process improvements.
- Strengthen our capabilities and capacity to lead complex projects from conception to execution.
- Develop a roadmap for improving environmental and sustainability performance across the Operations & Finance portfolio.
- Track and adapt to new trends, opportunities, and threats.



# CLOSING WORDS

**Building on  
our strengths  
and seizing  
opportunities  
to create  
greater impact.**



Our EPIC plan for Operations & Finance will enable and support Western to educate and prepare students to thrive and make a difference in the world, to conduct groundbreaking research, and to engage with global partners to tackle some of the biggest challenges facing humanity. EPIC inspires us to question the status quo, innovate, and provide high levels of service and support to Western's students, staff, faculty, and leaders. For London and the world, EPIC focuses us on stewarding, developing, and sustaining an inclusive, safe and vibrant university campus, ready for learning, living, working, and exploring.



EPIC is our collective response to the challenge of envisioning the future of Operations & Finance. It is a testimony to what we learned during our planning process, while building on our competencies. We are ready to move forward and bring the strategies and ideas in this plan to life, and we are committed to continually elevating our performance and monitoring our progress along the way.



EPIC is Operations & Finance's call to action, charting our course forward to greater impact. It asks each member of our team to step forward and work together to achieve our vision of:

**EMPOWERING PEOPLE. INSPIRING CHANGE.**  
**Creating safe, sustainable, and inclusive campus communities  
for today and tomorrow.**

**Please join us on this EPIC journey.**

