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UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

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THE SKY'S NO LIMIT: HIGH-FLYING UCALGARY EYES GLOBAL RESEARCH IMPACT

A conversation with **DR. ED MCCAULEY**, President and Vice-Chancellor, University of Calgary



The University of Calgary has bold ambitions. Under its *Eyes High* strategy, it aims to deliver research impact that extends far beyond Canadian borders. To get there, the university rolled out refreshed research and academic plans last year, and will build capacity in strategic research areas including energy, aerospace, health and wellbeing, biomedical engineering, and human dynamics. Ed McCauley, the university's new president, discusses steps his team is taking to implement these plans moving forward.

Where is UCalgary positioned in the landscape of Canadian research universities?

When we initially launched the *Eyes High* strategy in 2011, almost every ranking system placed us either ninth or tenth in the country. Fast-forward to 2019, and we've moved up to a firm sixth place. In that time, we have grown our sponsored research funding from around C\$280 million [US\$210 million] to about C\$420 million. No other university in Canada is increasing sponsored research funding as fast as we are, and each year we continue to grow.

How have you made such rapid progress?

The University of Calgary is young (53 this year), bold and dynamic. We have a clear vision and plans for how to achieve our aspirations. Our scholars have really rallied around the *Eyes High* strategy as well as our academic and research plans. These collectively provide us with clear objectives and goals, which centre around increasing research impact and enhancing the student experience. We see these goals as interconnected, because rising to the challenge of tackling major research questions that improve lives and transform the world inevitably creates an academic environment in

which students can actively participate in discovery, explore new forms of creativity and think about innovation.

Is your community supporting you on this journey?

We try to make sure we are improving all the time — which is why we undertook Canada's third-largest fundraising campaign ever. We've already raised over C\$1.18 billion in philanthropic support toward our goal of C\$1.3 billion, with all those dollars going into improving student experience and strengthening the impact of our research. We've been able to do this because of the incredible generosity of the Calgary community. They see the university as a bright light for economic diversification—one that is creating the next generation of leaders.

What is the university's competitive research advantage?

We looked at our capacity in terms of expertise and excellence, and then established a bottom-up process in which our own investigators — our 'Confederations of Scholars', — identified the six areas where we feel we can have a global impact. The first of these focuses on energy innovations to help bring about a low-carbon

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future. We're located in the 'Energy Capital of Canada', home to the country's oil and gas industry, and we have more than 270 faculty members, 1,000 graduate students and 200 postdoctoral scholars that we have pulled together to work collaboratively on this challenge. Of course, as a comprehensive research-intensive university, we support scholars in all areas of inquiry and creativity, providing an environment in which they can grow while addressing the world's greatest challenges.

What are some of the other crosscutting research themes?

We have three signature initiatives related to health and wellbeing. One is in brain and mental health; one in infections, inflammation and chronic disease; and another is in biomedical engineering. Then we have one called 'Human Dynamics in a Changing World', that's really trying to understand how our scholars can influence policy, wellbeing and the general evolution of societies. Another theme centres on new Earth-space technologies. As our capacity

and strengths expand, so are our priority areas. Newly emerging themes focus on One Health (the interdependence between human, animal, and environmental health) and child health and wellness.

Why would emerging researchers want to choose the University of Calgary as a place to grow their careers?

Our strategic research themes are a rallying cry for colleagues to come together across campus and work on some very important 'grand challenges.' Because we've identified these broad, multidisciplinary priority areas, we are able to target and attract some of the best and brightest from around the world to join our research family and work in this very collaborative environment. We are expanding our research fields and building capacity, so new scholars are able to grow along with us. It also helps that we have excellent campus infrastructure and that Calgary is repeatedly identified as one of the most livable cities in the world.



CAN YOU FAST-TRACK YOUR RESEARCH AND MAKE A GLOBAL IMPACT WHILE ENJOYING NORTH AMERICA'S MOST LIVABLE CITY*?

Absolutely. Become a catalyst of innovation at the University of Calgary.

The combination of your passion and curiosity with our bold vision, accomplished scholars, and focus on grand challenges will yield interdisciplinary advances that can impact society worldwide. Calgary's innovative spirit, advanced infrastructure, affordability, stunning natural surroundings, and safe environment make it a great place to make a living while building a life.

We're seeking great global research talent to join us on this journey. Together, our work will advance fundamental science and engineering, improve quality of life, and help secure a prosperous and sustainable future beyond our borders.



LEARN ABOUT THE IMPACT OUR SCHOLARS HAVE BEEN MAKING AT ucalgary.ca/research

