

Draft Strategic Entrepreneurship Plan 2020 – 2025

February 14, 2019

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Context, Objectives and Methodology

Context, Objectives and Methodology

In April 2019, the Strategic Entrepreneurship Council (SEC) at York University launched a strategic planning process for entrepreneurship at the University. A third-party consultancy was engaged to support the development of a strategic plan, which would advance the University Academic Plan and the Strategic Research Plan.



The SEC identified the following objectives for the strategic planning process:

- Develop an Entrepreneurship Purpose and Guiding Principles that support York's strategic direction.
- Create a deliverable that is an energizing "positioning document", which elevates the reputation of York.
- Capture and communicate the intentionality and value proposition of the entrepreneurship offering at York.
- Develop a differentiated offering for entrepreneurship at York, for both the short- and long-term, with a view to the competitive context.
- Engage in energetic consultations that market entrepreneurship, while capturing deep insights from important audiences.
- Engage key stakeholders who have varying perspectives from inside of the University and outside, including experts and entrepreneurs themselves.
- Ensure that the language and approaches used in the report are authentic to York.

Context, Objectives and Methodology

Stakeholder research was undertaken to support informed decision-making for the strategic planning process. The objective of this research was to gather perspectives on entrepreneurship at York University and related potential strategic opportunities.



Methodology and Participants

Participants were engaged through live focus groups with up to 30 participants each.

The following audiences were engaged in the consultations:

External

- Entrepreneurs/Intrapreneurs (with a current or former connection to York)
- Individuals in 'the Business of Entrepreneurship' (other institutions, not-for-profits, funding organizations, entrepreneurial companies who want to engage with resources on campus, etc.)

Internal

- President and Provost
- Deans and Associate Deans
- Strategic Entrepreneurship Council (SEC)
- Faculty representation from the Faculty of Health, Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies, Lassonde School of Engineering, Osgoode Law School, and Schulich School of Business

Students

- Student Clubs
- Student Entrepreneurs

Note: This involved representation from undergraduate and graduate programs, including the Faculty of Health, Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies, Lassonde School of Engineering, Glendon Campus, Osgoode Law School and Schulich School of Business

Context, Objectives and Methodology

On January 9th, 2020, representatives from the SEC met for a full-day strategic planning session. The objective of the session was to reflect upon key learnings from the stakeholder research and co-create key elements of a draft strategic plan for entrepreneurship at York, including a Purpose Statement and Guiding Principles that support York's strategic direction.

This document summarizes the draft elements of the strategic plan developed on January 9th.

Purpose Statement

Purpose Statement - Context

A purpose statement is a unified statement that reflects the role and central aspiration of an entity. It speaks to why an entity exists.

This statement is meant to:

- Be aspirational, yet achievable
- Help to differentiate from other organizations
- Demonstrate the group's role, but not everything it does
- Be short & memorable
- Express a profound belief about what's good for the world
- Be a simple, unified prism for decision-making
- Timeless
- Ultimately reflect what we are doing, and how we will achieve it

Purpose Statement - Drafts

There is a shared understanding that the purpose of entrepreneurship at York would align to – and advance – the University’s Mission.

Additional considerations were explored including “potential” and “passion”.



Unleash the talent of our students and community through the spirit of purposeful entrepreneurship



“Purposeful” was added to align with the notion of a new kind of entrepreneurship that is unique to York.

Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles - Context

Guiding principles capture how an organization performs its work, manifested through the actions and interactions of people.

These principles are meant to be:

- Action-oriented
- Focused on not only what we do, but also how we will do it
- Unique and differentiating

Guiding Principles - Drafts

The following Guiding Principles shape a culture of entrepreneurship at York.

Experiment, learn and grow. We encourage people to try new things, learn from failure and celebrate successes as we move forward. In this way, we live our motto, *the way must be tried*.

Be courageous. We chase curiosity and are bold in our approach to try what has never been done before.

Insist upon diversity. We demand diversity of thought, experience, and ideas; we are inclusive in our approach.

Make entrepreneurship accessible, friendly and fun. While fostering the entrepreneurial mindset, we are intentional with our behaviour; we are respectful, open and collaborative.

Be wary of the wake. We are self-aware and considerate of the potential consequences – both positive and negative – that come from our actions.

Listen to mobilize. We actively listen; we pay attention and have a pulse on what is next. We anticipate our community's needs and have a bias for action.

As we live our Guiding Principles, we will create a new kind of entrepreneurship.

Strategic Objectives and Priorities

Strategic Objectives and Priorities

Strategic Objectives are the areas where we will focus our efforts and resources.

Strategic Priorities define the actions we will take to deliver on our Strategic Objectives.

Strategic Objectives and Priorities

Strategic Objective #1: Develop and deliver purposeful and impactful interdisciplinary programming

Strategic Objective #2: Establish energizing real and virtual hubs in accessible, neutral spaces

Strategic Objective #3: Position York as a leader in entrepreneurship research

Strategic Objective #4: Make entrepreneurship at York self-sustaining

Strategic Objective #5: Build strong connections and enthusiastic engagement through strategic partnerships

Strategic Objectives and Priorities

Strategic Objective #1: Develop and deliver purposeful and impactful programming

Short-term Strategic Priorities:

- Connect with executive education and continuing studies.

Medium-term Strategic Priorities:

- Integrate entrepreneurship into the curriculum through one or more cross-faculty entrepreneurship courses open to all students.

Long-term Strategic Priorities:

- Equip our educators to help students build an entrepreneurial mindset (e.g. problem solving, teamwork, communication).
- Develop courses, programs and co-curricular activities grounded in research and what works (e.g. an entrepreneurship minor).

Strategic Objectives and Priorities

Strategic Objective #2: Establish energizing real and virtual hubs in accessible, neutral spaces

Short-term Strategic Priorities:

- Centralize all the available virtual resources into a one-stop-shop online.

Medium-term Strategic Priorities:

- Create a new faculty-agnostic entrepreneurial space on Keele campus.

Strategic Objectives and Priorities

Strategic Objective #3: Position York as a leader in entrepreneurship research

Medium-term Strategic Priorities:

- Create an organized research unit for entrepreneurship.

Long-term Strategic Priorities:

- Build an entrepreneurship institute.

Strategic Objectives and Priorities

Strategic Objective #4: Make entrepreneurship at York self-sustaining

Short-term Strategic Priorities:

- Secure diverse sources of entrepreneurship funding.
- Create a brand for entrepreneurship at York.
- Gain buy-in and engaged support from internal audiences.

Medium-term Strategic Priorities:

- Make entrepreneurship a priority for advancement and, specifically, Alumni Relations. Leverage our alumni and donors to tell the stories of our student and alumni champions.
- Develop a fund to support entrepreneurship.
- Articulate the brand of entrepreneurship at York to external audiences.

Long-term Strategic Priorities:

- Understand and leverage the University's financial and reward incentives, systems and processes. (tenure and promotion).

Strategic Objectives and Priorities

Strategic Objective #5: Build strong connections and enthusiastic engagement through partnerships

Short-term Strategic Priorities:

- Build strong, creative and welcoming partnerships with our local communities and key stakeholders.
- Amplify and connect existing initiatives.
- Connect entrepreneurship to the University academic, capital, and strategic research plans.