Moving through Conflict
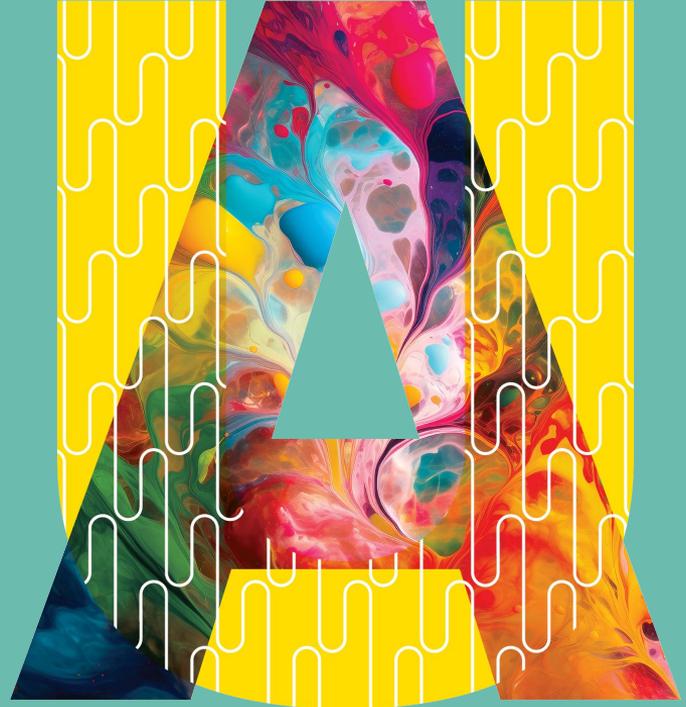
Community Update

September 22, 2025

Prepared by the Office of the Vice-Provost (Access, Community and Belonging)

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Moving through Conflict — Origin & Pathways

- Developed Summer 2024 with feedback from Palestinian members of the U of A; supported by leadership

- Draws on mutual aid principles

- Embraces strategies of:
  - Lateral acts of care
  - Collective approaches
  - Conflict resolution
  - Transformative action

- Learnings and activities informed *Changing the Story* Trajectory 1: Supporting Uncomfortable Encounters

- The following offers a non-exhaustive selection of activities undertaken/in progress along these pathways

Holding Harm, Grief, Imagination & Stories.

AIM: Support collective practices for holding harm and grief while encouraging diverse University communities to share their stories, learnings, imaginations and strategies towards mutual flourishing. Launch Micro-mutual aid project grants in July 2024 to offer avenues to support this collective work.

Transparency & Accountability.

AIM: Prioritize transparency in establishing trust and accountability (i.e., arms-length investigation). Initiate restorative approaches that address the impact of institutional decisions as well as our responsibility to broader scholarly communities (i.e., supporting displaced Palestinian scholars).

Principles of Responsible Investment.

AIM: Disclose university's endowment pool (UEP) investments and ensure investment decisions align with University Funds Investment Policy and responsible investment principles. Engage investment expertise and consult on outcomes.

Safety & Policing.

AIM: Review or develop clear, transparent and accountable guidelines around the use of surveillance, police and determination of threat in times of protest and beyond. Multiply alternative pathways beyond security and police.

Freedom of Expression.

AIM: Clarify and defend the different rights, responsibilities and limitations (collective agreements, laws, etc.) of U of A's diverse community members. Expand understanding of and capacity for respectful dissent.

Communications in Times of Conflict.

AIM: Develop transparent guidelines for official U of A communications about conflicts both within and beyond the University. Align these guidelines with principles around U of A's role in times of crisis, conflict and harm.

Pathway: Holding Harm, Grief, Imagination, & Stories
Mutual Aid Project Micro-Grants

PURPOSE:

○ Inspire diverse, community-specific approaches to grieving and conflict resolution.
○ Foster collective holding toward care.

FOCUS:

○ Encourage collective practices for holding harm and supporting uncomfortable encounters.

○ Promote storytelling, learning, imaginations, and mutual flourishing.

→ **17 projects have been funded to date. Renewed call for Oct. 1, 2025 to end March 31, 2026.**

PROJECT EXAMPLES:

○ *Storytelling:* Sharing circles, digital storytelling - storying experiences of harm, mutual aid, resilience.

○ *Creative Practices:* Zines, writing circles.

○ *Collective Learning:* Teach-ins on conflict, mutual aid for transformation, workshops on trauma-centred approaches.

○ *Cultivating practices for Emergent Needs:* Collective meals, supporting displaced students.

Completed & Ongoing Work in Pathways 2−4

Pathway: Transparency & Accountability

Pathway: Principles of Responsible Investment

Pathway: Safety + Policing

Advisory Committee on Support for Displaced Palestinian Scholars and Students (DPSS)
Co-Chairs Dr. Yasmeen Abu Laban and Dr. Vivian Mushahwar

- Scholarships and bursaries to 21 Displaced Palestinian Students starting this Fall 2025.
- Virtual Scholars Program - Winter 2026 virtual residency for Displaced Scholars, in collaboration with the Emergency Committee of Gazan Universities.
- 1 Displaced Scholar hosted at U of A.

Independent Review of May 2024 Encampment: Kent Report received by the Board of Governors in Dec. 2024.

Investment Holdings Disclosure
U of A Endowment Pool investments disclosed to U of A website.

Review of Investment Policies
Board of Governors reviewed and updated investment policies and practices, and a "What we Heard Report" was issued March 2025.

Reviewing Processes Active conversations around non-policing alternatives, transparent guidelines, training, and feedback mechanisms.

Expanding Partnerships: Community-led services and restorative models of conflict resolution being expanded.

4

Completed & Ongoing Work in Pathways 5−6

Pathway: Freedom of Expression

Pathway: Communications in Times of Conflict

Fostering Respectful Dialogue Ongoing exploration of ways and resources to foster free expression awareness, including updated Student Group website.

Pluralism Initiatives Multiple initiatives underway to build capacity for dialogue; hosted Global Centre for Pluralism in talks and workshops February 2025.

Protest Rights Development of information guides on freedom of expression for non-academic staff categories.

Clarity on Resources
To ensure crisis support information and paths are accessible and equitable.

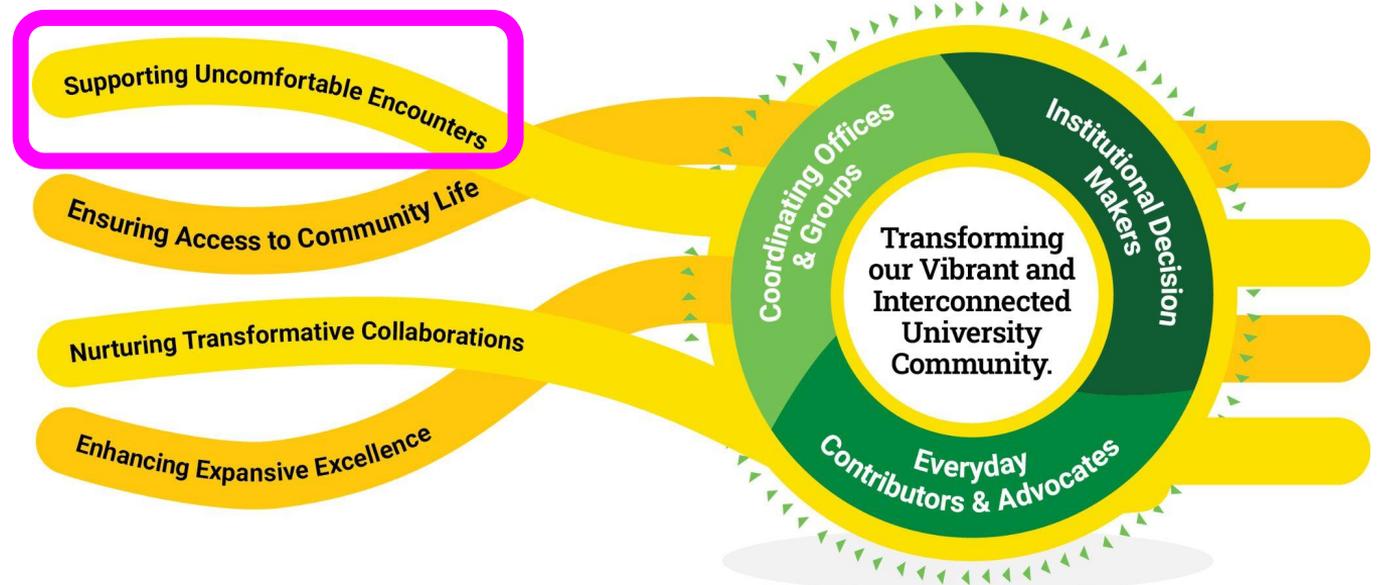*https://www.ualberta.ca/en/about/university-community-care/index.html*

WEBSITE LINK HERE →
https://www.ualberta.ca/en/access-community-belonging/initiatives/moving-through-conflict.html

From Moving through Conflict to Changing the Story

Actions to improve
- STRUCTURES that guide us
- CULTURES that support us
- the WAYS we share KNOWLEDGE

The learnings and commitments from Moving through Conflict informed the development of actions in Trajectory 1: Supporting Uncomfortable Encounters, launched Feb 2025, therefore the work continues.