



FEB. 9, 2026

Uplifting the Whole People

As a member of our community, you can help weave the U of A's values into the fabric of our daily lives. These values aren't just words on a wall; they are the guiding lights for our work, our studies and our decisions.

1. Our Values at a Glance

Our values are anchored in the founding principle of the university's first president, Henry Marshall Tory:

"...knowledge shall not be the concern of scholars alone. The uplifting of the whole people shall be its final goal."

We live this credo through:

UNWAVERING CURIOSITY devoted to *Quaecumque vera* – whatsoever things are true. It is the spark behind every courageous question, big breakthrough and bold new idea. We value the pursuit of knowledge and the continuous asking of new questions in our labs, libraries and lecture halls.

Inspiration behind the art - an abstract eye symbolizes how curiosity opens our perspective and invites deeper exploration of big ideas.

A **SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY** grounded in caring and respect. Where voices gather, belonging grows – and together we go further. We are active partners with communities locally and globally, because the work we do together reaches farther than anything we could accomplish alone.

Inspiration behind the art - overlapping faces show people coming together and sharing a common purpose.

SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY for a sustainable future. What we're given, we honour – preserving possibility for generations. We act as custodians for the long-term well-being of society, our planet, our culture and the university's legacy.



Inspiration behind the art - repeating arrows show shared directions and responsibility for the future.

The tireless pursuit of **IMPACT THROUGH EXCELLENCE** in all we do. Success is measured not only by what we create but also by the lives changed because of it. We translate knowledge into action to solve real-world problems, creating discoveries that ripple outward and shape a stronger future.

Inspiration behind the art - radiating shapes illustrate how ideas and actions spread outward and affect the world beyond their starting point.

2. Key Messages for Conversations

When speaking about U of A values to colleagues and community members, use these talking points:

- **Community-Led:** These values aren't just words from a committee; they started with a review of consultations completed during the development of several university strategies and honest conversations with thousands of students, faculty and staff. They capture the real spirit of our campus because they were defined by our community.
- **The How and Why of our Mission:** Our mission gives us our destination, but these values are our compass. They guide the way we show up for one another and the way we navigate our daily choices, ensuring that *how and why* we get things done is just as important as *what* we achieve.
- **A Tool for Accountability:** Think of these values as a mutual pact. They represent a commitment to how we'll work together and a standard for how we treat each other, helping us stay true to the best version of our community.
- **Beyond the Strategic Plan:** While our strategic goals may evolve with the times, our values are here to stay. They are the heart of the university – the steady traits and lasting character that define who we are, no matter what the future brings.

3. Bringing Values to Life: Practical Ideas

For Faculty and Staff

- **Decision Lens:** Before starting a new project, ask in a meeting: *"How does this initiative support <specific value>?"*



- **Recognition:** Use the values in “shout-outs.” Instead of saying “good job,” say, “*I really appreciate your unwavering curiosity in finding a solution.*”
- **Onboarding:** Introduce new team members to the values in their first week to set the tone for a culture of caring and respect.
- **Governance:** Participate in collegial governance in a spirit of shared accountability for our university’s future.

For Students

- **Curiosity in Study:** Don’t study just for the grade; embrace *Quaecumque vera* by asking the “why” behind the data.
- **Club Leadership:** If you run a student group, use the “spirit of community” value to ensure your events are inclusive and respectful of all members.
- **Impact:** Look for ways your research or class projects can have a tangible, positive effect on the wider Edmonton community or beyond.

4. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Why do we need these values now? As part of the [Forward Together: The University of Alberta People Strategy 2024-2034](#), we need a common basis for our work. They help build a sense of belonging and provide a lens for the university’s big decisions.

Are these just buzzwords? No. The values were developed through reviews of consultations completed with previous strategic plans as well as dedicated values conversations with employee, faculty and staff. They are meant to be action-oriented and authentic to the unique university’s culture, not “corporate speak.”

How do they relate to the university’s mission? The U of A’s mission and vision are our destination: the what. The values are our compass – the behaviour and ethics we use to get there: the how and why.

How will the university community be accountable for upholding the values? Accountability is built on a culture of collective ownership. These values provide us with a shared language to guide our decisions and help us set meaningful expectations. We hold each other accountable by consistently weaving these values into our everyday conversations, ensuring that our collective actions remain true.

5. Resources

Digital resources are available for any member of the university community. You can find virtual meeting backgrounds and materials for printing on the [University Values Website](#).