

## Introduction

Dalhousie University's first Digital Strategy is a people-centric, comprehensive plan for Dal's digital infrastructure, supporting excellence in teaching, learning, research, the student experience, and administrative functions at Dal. The strategy was developed through an extensive consultation process with the Dalhousie community, and addresses a wide variety of gaps and priorities.

The Digital Strategy provides a holistic framework for decision making and provides guidance on foundational digital supports needed achieve the goals laid out in Dalhousie's Strategic Plan "Third Century Promise".

The strategy outlines a people first approach to technology, while at the same time focusing on cybersecurity and information privacy through an enhanced data governance structure and technology education for all. Dal's Digital Strategy ensures our ability to be a digitally innovative leader in the community of the world's greatest universities.

### The five strategic pillars are:

1. Teaching and Learning
2. People Centric
3. Research and Innovation
4. Community Collaborations
5. Digital Foundations

### Overarching and Integrated themes across all strategic areas:

- **Shared values** -- Dalhousie's digital environment will reflect and support our values of inclusiveness, equity, diversity, accessibility, seamlessness, integration, lifelong learning, transparency, sustainability, privacy, security, digital literacy, and community focus.
- **Integration** -- Well-integrated and well-supported systems and platforms will enable all users to thrive.
- **Shared data** -- Data is an institutional asset, which supports transparent and data-informed decision-making.
- **Communications and training** -- Improved communications on governance, systems availability, and training opportunities will increase cooperation and digital competency.
- **User-focused** -- Keeping the user experience simple, accessible, and barrier-free is a guiding principle.

## **1.0 TEACHING & LEARNING**

### **DIGITALLY SUPPORTED, DIFFERENTIATED PEDAGOGY, AND EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EXPERIENCES**

#### **1.1 Goals:**

1. Create online experiences of exceptional quality;
2. Integrate digital literacy as a core skill for all students to acquire through their academic programs;
3. Develop a strategy for a digital campus encompassing all aspects of the digital student learning journey

## **2.0 PEOPLE CENTRIC**

### **DIGITALLY COMPETENT STUDENTS, STAFF, AND FACULTY**

#### **2.1 Goals:**

1. Enhance digital literacy through ongoing training and as part of orientation for new faculty and staff;
2. Enable everyone to be mobile-ready and normalize and enable remote work, when appropriate;
3. Keep the user experience simple by adopting person-focused accessible systems and applications.

## **3.0 RESEARCH & INNOVATION**

### **SEAMLESS, ENABLING DIGITAL RESEARCH ENVIRONMENTS**

#### **3.1 Goals:**

1. Create a researcher oriented digital environment;
2. Support innovation and achievement of research goals.

## **4.0 COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS**

### **DIGITALLY ENHANCED RELATIONSHIPS & SERVICES**

#### **4.1 Goals:**

1. Grow community relationships, using digitally enabled systems;
2. Better segment external and internal information on Dalhousie's internal intranet and external website;
3. Encourage a culture that supports innovation, creativity, risk-taking, and open communications.

## **5.0 DIGITAL FOUNDATIONS**

### **ETHICAL, EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE, SUSTAINABLE, RESPONSIVE, FUTURE-READY**

#### **5.1 Goals:**

1. Design transparent, visible digital governance that enables ethical and environmentally and financially sustainable decisions;
2. Utilize a University-wide approach to systems, software, and equipment acquisitions to ensure integration, coordination, security, privacy, and cost-effectiveness;
3. Share data as an institutional asset;

#### 4. Redesign and digitize business processes.

Approved by the Dalhousie Board of Governors June 22, 2021

### Digital Strategy Background

Dalhousie has developed its digital strategy to leverage an increasing digital world to positively impact our academic mission in research, teaching, service, student life, as well as in processes and systems in administrative and support functions, as a foundational support for all aspects of the University.

As the University undertakes renewal of its strategic priorities and direction, a comprehensive digital foundation is an essential enabler. Therefore, in parallel with the final phase of completing the University's strategic plan, a digital strategy was created to provide a framework related to data governance, security, infrastructure, and services to ensure the University is digitally prepared to address the University's priorities and requirements.

### Process

- In September 2020; Provost and Vice-President, Academic appointed a Digital Strategy Steering Committee (DSSC) to develop a digital strategy for Dalhousie University based on broad university consultation, best practices, evidence-based information, and experience (See Appendix A).
- The DSSC began meeting in October and created a process to quickly obtain input from across the University, through a series of 29 discussion groups, on six broad topics and subtopics related to the University mission. Please see Appendix B for discussion group topics and Appendix C for discussion group participants. Additional consultations took place with the six subcommittees of the Accessibility Committee during November.
- The discussion groups met through November and early December, wrapping up with a reflection meeting on December 14<sup>th</sup>, to confirm the discussions had been accurately recorded and synthesized into 10 potential goals and 10 potential values. Please see Appendix D for the longer list of potential values and goals.
- The DSSC took the synthesized data from the discussion groups and created the first draft of the Digital Strategy, to share with the University community for wide and extensive consultation in January.
- A thoughtful, comprehensive Implementation Plan for the Digital Strategy has been identified as a critical success factor, including key performance indicators and clear accountability by units involved.
- Resource requirements are outlined in the Implementation Plan to ensure goals in the Digital Strategy receive appropriate support.

**Draft Digital Strategy Consultations in 2021**

- **January:** Draft Digital Strategy will be circulated to: DSU, SLTC, SAPRC, AQT, IGSC, ADAC, Data Access Committee, DRAC, Deans’ Council, alumni, community groups, and requests will be made to all Senior Management unit heads (with particular emphasis on units not represented on the Digital Strategy Steering Committee) to distribute and discuss with their teams as appropriate.
- **February:** Feedback will be collated from January consultations, and a new version issued to same groups for additional comment.
- **March:** After a second round of feedback, the penultimate draft will be presented by Provost to Senate and the Board of Governors for final input. Strategy will be approved by the Board of Governors.
- **June:** Approval for Fiscal 2021-22, at June Board meeting, 2021.

**Consultations December 2020 – April 2021**

President’s Executive	DSU Executive
Board of Governors (2)	Chair of Senate
Discussion Groups (29)	Senate Learning & Teaching Committee (2)
Senate Academic Program Review Committee (2)	Senate Policy & Governance Committee (2)
Senate (2)	DSU Council
Dalhousie Agricultural Students’ Association	ADAC (Associate Deans Academic Council)
DRAC (Dalhousie Research Advisory Committee)	Information Governance Steering Committee
Black Faculty & Staff Caucus	Queer Faculty & Staff Caucus
Indigenous Advisory Council	Advancement Staff
Library Council	Faculty of Management Faculty Council
Book Store Staff	College of Continuing Education Council
Deans’ Council	Dalhousie Faculty Association Executive
DPMG General Meeting	Centre for Learning & Teaching Staff
Ancillary Services Executive	ACENET, Portage/NDRIO representatives

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## Appendix A: Digital Strategy Steering Committee (DSSC) Membership

Chief Information Officer (co-chair) – Josh Leon  
Dean of Libraries (co-chair) – Donna Bourne-Tyson  
Vice-Provost Planning & Analytics – Susan Spence  
Privacy Officer – Heather Casavechia  
Vice-President, Research & Innovation (designate) – Graham Gagnon  
Vice-President, Finance & Administration (acting) – Susan Robertson  
Chief Legal Counsel – John Hope  
Vice-President, Advancement (designate) – Kevin MacDonell  
Registrar and Assistant Vice-Provost – Adam Robertson  
Assistant Vice-President, Human Resources – Jasmine Walsh  
Dalhousie Analytics Managing Director and University Chief Analyst – Claudia Rangel Jimenez  
Associate Vice-President, Academic – Vivian Howard  
Vice-Provost Student Affairs – Verity Turpin  
Assistant Vice-President, Communications, Marketing and Creative Services – Matthew Proctor  
Dean & Campus Principal, Faculty of Agriculture – David Gray  
Dean of College of Continuing Education – Dianne Tyers  
Dean, Faculty of Computer Science – Andrew Rau-Chaplin  
Dean, Graduate Studies – Marty Leonard  
Director, MedIT – Ian Taylor  
Director, Academic Technology Services, Dal Libraries – Marc Comeau  
Director, Indigenous Community Engagement – Catherine Martin  
Director, African Nova Scotian Community Engagement – Jalana Lewis  
DSU Vice-President Students – Jad Ghiz  
Director, Office of Sustainability – Rochelle Owen  
Associate Dean Academic – Christian Blouin (Computer Science)  
Associate Dean Academic – Michael Fournier (FASS)  
Associate Dean Academic (former) – Krista Kesselring (FASS)  
Associate Dean Academic – Mike Smit (Management)

**Writing Team:** Cassie Guinan, Cassandra Larose, Anette Petersen, Richard White, Chris Moore, Marlo MacKay, Ryan McNutt

**Appendix B: Components of Digital Strategy -- Fall 2020 Discussion Group Topics**

<b>1. Academic Programming</b> Leader: Vivian Howard	Digital student experience (learning) – online teaching
	Online teaching infrastructure
	Digital skill sets and training -- data and digital literacy/fluency as core staff and leadership competency for students, faculty and staff
	Online course development and enhanced learning and teaching
	On-campus classroom technologies design, support & scheduling
	DalOpen & online credentials
	Faculty IT coordination and supports
<b>2. Enrolment Management – Recruitment, Scheduling, Student Experience</b> Leaders: Adam Robertson/Verity Turpin	Student recruitment and program information and communication
	Digital marketing and institutional branding
	Course scheduling and bookings
	Forecast impact of accessibility legislation
	Student experience (other than learning – health, athletics, recreation, social)
<b>3. Digital Research and Innovation</b> Leaders: Graham Gagnon / Marty Leonard	Digital research infrastructure
	Digital research data management and data repositories/archives for knowledge sharing and preservation
	Digital scholarly records, open access publishing and preservation infrastructure and services, OER creation and publishing
	Digital research areas -- Evolution and impact of digital technology on society, research employing technologies
<b>4. Administration and Supports</b> Leader: Josh Leon/ Kevin MacDonell	Administrative/operational infrastructure, services, functions related to all university units
	Business process review to move to paperless university -- e-records management

	Flexible work arrangements, remote/hybrid models
	One university data model, consolidation across silos, central data management (ITS, Dal Analytics)
<b>5. Digital Infrastructure</b> Leader: Josh Leon/ Heather Casavechia	Cyber Security and privacy
	Network architecture
	Website and Intranet redesign
	Links to national initiatives and infrastructure -- CANARIE, ACORN, ACENET, NDRIO
	External digital engagement, with Integrated student-to-alum lifecycle, reflected in engagement platforms (SA, Advancement) Integrated corporate relationship management – research funders, donors, corporate partners, local business
	Facilities, physical plant, sustainability, and Internet of Things
<b>6. Governance</b> Leaders: Susan Spence/Andrew Rau-Chaplin	Decision making re: policies, procurement, data governance, privacy, security
	Accountability and Assessment
	Social media policies, infrastructure, preservation

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**Appendix C: Fall 2020 Discussion Group Participants**

Al-Wazeer, Saira	Fraser, Heather	Munroe, Laurel
Balser, Teri	Gagnon, Graham	Newhook, John
Barrett, Ann	Ghiz, Jad	Obed, Diane
Barrett, Creighton	Gillis, Louise	Owen, Rochelle
Bayne, Courtney	Goree, Bianca	Packer, Tanya
Beck, Krista	Gray, David	Paquet, Wayne
Bennett, Lynn	Green, Julie	Phillmore, Leslie
Bennet, Michael	Greenlaw, Amarea	Proctor, Matt
Bernier, Stephanie	Harrie, Robert	Quinn, Lyle
Birmingham, Donna	Hattie, Chris	Rangel Jimenez, Claudia
Blair-Reid, Sheila	Hawkes Ulrich, Lorelee	Rau-Chaplin, Andrew
Blouin, Christian	Hayden, Jill	Robertson, Adam
Bourgeois, Fallon	Hemrajana, Varsha	Ryan, Anne Marie
Bourne-Tyson, Donna	Hewitt, Kevin	Seelemann, Erica
Brousseau, Susan	Hope, John	Sheffield, Suzanne
Brown, Geoff	Irwin, Keri	Siegel, Angela
Brown, Marion	Johnson, Les	Smit, Mike
Cann, Beth	Kesselring, Krista	Spence, Susan
Careless, Erin	Kirkland, Susan	Stinson, Madeleine
Casavechia, Heather	Kittilsen, Tracy	Tay, Derek
Colp-Rutley, Lindie	Lake, Craig	Taylor, Ian
Comeau, Marc	Leon, Josh	Thompson, Elizabeth
Coutts, Peter	MacDermid, Ken	Tyers, Dianne
Crooker-Smith, Queena	MacDonell, Kevin	Van Dommelen, Jennifer
Demont, Isobel	MacPherson, Erin	Walsh, Jasmine
Doyle, Heather	Magboo, Raphaela	Ward, Lori
Farmer, Jim	Marsman, Melisa	West, Robin
Fitzgerald, Morven	Matthewman, Anne	White, Jenny
Forbes, Donna	McSweeney, Jill	Wilson, Scott
Fournier, Michael	Mooseburger, Michael	Wuetherick, Brad



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## Appendix D: Selected Bibliography

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