



Building a Healthy World for All

2024-28 Strategic Plan
Faculty of Health
York University

health





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The time to act is now

At York University's Faculty of Health, we are striving in all we do to be leaders and partners for a healthy and just 21st century world.

Our six degree programs — Global Health, Health Studies, Kinesiology & Health Science, Neuroscience, Nursing and Psychology — expand our understandings of health, bring innovations to health education, and contribute to the wellbeing of people and communities all around the world.

Through our teaching and research excellence, and with our community partners — locally and globally — we are acting every day to build a healthy world for all. Because we believe health is a fundamental human right. For everyone.

Yet, global phenomena such as economic disruption, wars, pandemics, climate chaos, political polarization, and systemic discrimination are exposing our vulnerabilities. There are heightened inequities in our societies and the need to take better care of ourselves and others is more pressing than ever.

That's why we're seizing the opportunity for transformation — for healthier people, a healthier planet, and a healthier and just world.

Through our innovative academic programs and our cutting edge research, we are working together to make life better for everyone.

We have set this course together, with our faculty, staff and students, with our alumni and donors, and with the communities and partners we serve.

You told us the time to act is now.

And we are.

We want you to feel confident that the vision our communities have created together will help us build a healthy world for all.

Dr. David Peters, MD, MPH, DrPH
Dean, Faculty of Health



Setting our course together

As we set out to create our Strategic Plan, we sought to better understand who we are and who we want to be. We wanted to probe what we value deeply for ourselves and for those we serve. We asked ourselves and others, in what do we excel? Where is there room for improvement?

And we took care to put our work and plans for the future within the context of the big and complex questions with which our Faculty and York University are grappling. Our skills and knowledge cross many disciplines with direct ties to health and wellness. We want to use that expertise for good – to address the real-life problems confronting the people and spaces around us. We want to confront the challenges to health and wellness echoed across the globe, and push for a better future for all.

To that end, we spent a full year engaging with students, faculty, staff, community partners and

alumni on what we could be and what it would take to get there. We sought feedback from civic and government leaders and representatives of diverse non-government and community organizations.

Getting to this point is a testament to the remarkable efforts of many individuals across the entire Faculty and to the willingness of many students, faculty, staff, community members and alumni to offer their thoughtful insights, perspectives and experiences.

But it's just the beginning

Our Strategic Plan is a living document that we hope will not just be read. We hope this plan will engage and inspire audiences and propel them to take action throughout its lifetime. We will hold ourselves accountable to the vision we have set together and we will share and celebrate our successes.

Analysis of frameworks, policies, think pieces and research productivity	Environmental scan	1,900 responses to multiple online surveys	21 focus groups with students, staff and faculty
20 interviews with students, staff, faculty and community partners	2 Advisory Board facilitated retreats	Listening tour involving every Faculty, School, and Department	In-depth discussion at two Student Success Council meetings



A welcoming place for all

Creating a just 21st century world starts with ensuring all voices are heard. Every effort was made to ensure our strategic planning process was transparent, accessible and welcoming of diverse perspectives, knowledges and practices. Our values directly align with York University's commitment to decolonization, equity, diversity and inclusion and the fundamental belief that everyone should be treated fairly and equitably, with respect and dignity.

Land Acknowledgement

York University recognizes that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships with the territories upon which York University campuses are located that precede the establishment of York University. York University acknowledges its presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been care taken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee

Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat. It is now home to many First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.

Our Vision

To be leaders and partners for a healthy and just 21st century world.

Our Mission

To positively influence health, wellness and their determinants through leading-edge education, research and practice.

Our Values

- Equity, inclusion, truth and reconciliation
- Interconnectedness and collaboration
- Social responsibility and advocacy
- Excellence and innovation
- Caring, respect and integrity

Our five strategic directions

Together, through our 2024-28 Strategic Plan, we have identified five key areas where we can make positive change. To help us deliver on those strategic directions, our communities have also helped us identify a set of goals.

1 We will advance social justice

2 We will create opportunity for student engagement and impact

3 We will amplify research impact

4 We will partner for positive change

5 We will see, hear and support each other

Advancing social justice



We will advance **accessibility, equity, inclusivity, truth and reconciliation** in our academic and research programs, spaces, operations and institutional culture.

People in Canada have had cause to reflect on ways in which we have unjustly treated Indigenous, Black and other racialized people. At the same time, there is attention to the social injustice in our daily lives that denies access, opportunity and support to some groups, especially those from underrepresented and marginalized communities. In Canada and around the world, people and communities are navigating troubling times and with greater awareness of the complex intersections of inequity that privilege some and oppress others. We are witnessing inequality in health and wellbeing.

Globally, public health crises, and geopolitical forces such as war, an economy disrupted by technology, and climate change have heightened inequality in health and wellbeing. While some are thriving, others are being left behind.

Through our research, our teaching and our organizational culture, the Faculty of Health seeks to advance social justice and remove barriers people face because of financial insecurity, sex, gender identity, age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture or disability. It starts with us. We want to create an inclusive environment where we work, teach and learn – where everyone feels welcomed and valued. As part of this, we seek to achieve a deeper understanding of Indigenous peoples' cultural history and traditions by incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing and doing into our teaching and learning.

“The Faculty of Health has been at the forefront of the integration of Indigenous knowledges, ways, and being. My colleagues and I have actively sought to engage Indigenous communities into the classroom, including pedagogy that brings students out on the land for land based learning, healing, and understanding traditional medicines and how we integrate those within a Western paradigm.”

Dr. Sean Hillier

York Research Chair in Indigenous Health Policy & One Health; Director, York University's Centre for Indigenous Knowledges & Languages

Indigenous peoples comprise 5% of the world's population, yet safeguard 80% of the planet's biodiversity. Where Indigenous peoples have control of the land, forests and biodiversity flourish. Their sustainable land use fights climate change and builds resilience to natural disasters. We must support Indigenous peoples and preserve this knowledge as a vital tool to protect the environment and tackle climate change.

– **Amnesty International**

“Quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all are central to ensuring a full and productive life [while] equality and prosperity must be available to everyone - regardless of gender, race, religious beliefs or economic status.”

– **United Nations**

Health Ministers from around the world, as part of the OECD's Health Committee, have agreed to make health systems more resilient to shock, to improve equity, and to address future health systems challenges. They agreed to prioritize people's needs, resilience and to address climate change for a healthier future for all. They urged work to secure better health for people across society.

– **The Declaration on Building Better Policies for More Resilient Health Systems**

To achieve this commitment, by 2028 we will:

- Incorporate the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action in our education, research and practice.
- Develop an Indigenous Health and Wellness Hub for situating Indigenous ways of knowing and doing in health and healing education, research and practice.
- Pilot a support program for equity-deserving learners who have faced barriers or interruptions in their educational journey.
- Recognize the efforts of our learners, staff and faculty contributing to accessibility, equity, inclusivity and belonging in our programs, spaces, operations and institutional culture.



Creating opportunity for student engagement and impact



We will enhance our learners' opportunity and capacity to succeed in their education through greater access, meaningful community engagement and experiential and work-integrated learning.

We are focused on the needs of students, removing barriers that prevent some from realizing the benefits of postsecondary education and supporting academic success throughout their learning journey. We are cultivating an environment that supports mental health and wellbeing, and provides an accessible and inclusive place to learn and grow.

We take pride in the state-of-the-art teaching and learning provided by our faculty. And we recognize the value in creating opportunities for students to apply what they learn in the classroom to real-life situations. We want them to experience the satisfaction that comes with making an impact on others and to test avenues for themselves that could help determine their career path.

Our diverse campus and community are a microcosm of the world around us, providing students with real-world environments in which to learn and apply their skills. That could mean learning about emerging public health issues in Africa through interactive workshops in Ghana. It could mean understanding the human impact on people and our planet through a study abroad course in biodiverse Costa Rica. It could mean Kinesiology students are helping teenagers with physical disabilities from the Jane-Finch area of Toronto take part in the Aspire Games sporting event.

"I volunteered in the Student Success programs at Calumet and Stong Colleges in the Faculty of Health, which changed my life. As a Global Health Student Association Peer Mentor, I helped students succeed academically and socially to help them get the best experience at York. My message to students is, if you want to make a difference in your community, get involved."

Amina Fadzha Abam
Global Health Student

York University's top-five reasons why hands-on experience is crucial to being career-ready:

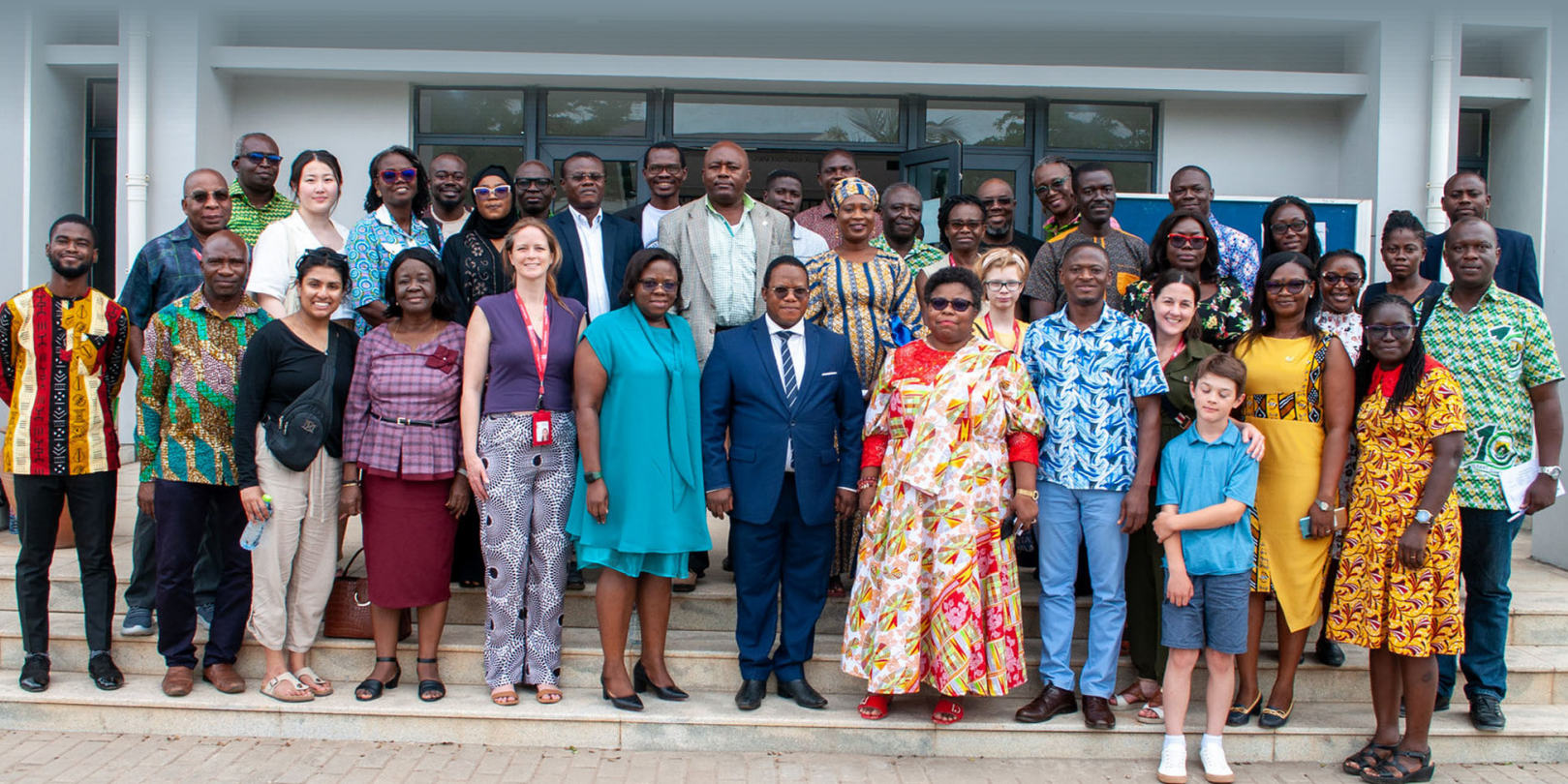
1. It introduces you to the world
2. It sets you apart from other candidates
3. It helps identify strengths and skills
4. It shows areas of interest and character
5. It helps build industry connections

“The program in Ghana surpassed my expectations. The vibrant culture, engaging educational activities, and meaningful connections I made were truly life changing.”

– **Kinesiology & Health Science student Robyn Ahn (2nd row, 2nd from left) on the University of Health and Allied Sciences' Summer School Programme**

To achieve this commitment, by 2028 we will:

- Advance state-of-the-art teaching and learning through faculty development and support.
- Strengthen resources to meet demands for experiential learning for all students.
- Advance academic, mental health and social supports for all students, with a focus on equity-deserving learners who have faced barriers in their educational journeys.
- Explore possibilities for and build new professional Master's programs in such areas as digital health, mental health, population and planetary health, rehabilitation sciences and nursing.
- Introduce interdisciplinary pan-Faculty general education courses that build an understanding of health equity and actions to contribute to achieving social, economic and environmental sustainability – a commitment to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.



Amplifying research impact



We will be leading innovators, collaborators, and changemakers in health research, education, and practice, locally to globally.

Research keeps humanity moving forward. Fuelled by curiosity, innovative thinking and a desire to solve problems, almost 200 researchers at York University's Faculty of Health are testing, exploring and experimenting with ideas that are changing lives for the better. The impact of their research and collaborations is improving health and wellness in their own communities and across the globe.

We're advancing our understanding of the body and muscle wasting experienced by cancer patients. We've discovered a protein that protects against inflammation caused by gout. We're an international leader in vision research and we're addressing dangers posed by problem wildfires. We're setting out to tame the unruly world of AI so all humans can benefit in a machine-driven world. We're exploring how bicycles

can transform the life of girls and women by building awareness of bicycle use in social entrepreneurship and environmental sustainability.

We aren't stopping there.

We want to expand our impact across the globe by partnering with other countries to address emerging health challenges. We want to get at the social determinants of health by investing in research that improves social, economic and environmental sustainability. And we want to share our success stories so that we can inspire others to push boundaries too.

"Virtual reality technologies present unique opportunities in health care. In our research, we looked at how it can manage challenging symptoms in people living with dementia, and also help connect care givers and their loved ones at a distance. We have managed anxiety in people living with epilepsy, provided rehabilitation for pediatric oncology patients. I'm excited about the potential of this technology."

Dr. Lora Appel

Associate Professor, School of Health Policy & Management
Executive Director, Prescribing Virtual Reality (VRx) Lab



SHERMAN HEALTH SCIENCE
RESEARCH CENTRE

- **191** researchers
- **\$21.5M** generated annually in research income
- **320** active research grants
- **90+** domestic/international research funders
- **27+** research partnerships
- **30** partner countries

“York University leads groundbreaking research to ensure the technology revolution leaves no one behind. \$318-million Connected Minds initiative to bring equity and inclusion to murky waters of AI.”
– **Toronto Star**

To achieve this commitment, by 2028 we will:

- Lower barriers to research and innovation through needs-driven support and mentorship for all faculty.
- Support equity-deserving groups through strategic hires, dedicated funding and Endowed Chairs.
- Facilitate multi-country research to address current and emerging health-related challenges.
- Invest in collaborative research and activities that develop undergraduate and graduate students’ research knowledge and skills and contribute to improving health and social, economic and environmental sustainability – a commitment to the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals.
- Promote our research impact and knowledge further so that we can make positive change in the world.



Partnering for positive change



We will strengthen ethical, respectful, collaborative, and reciprocal relations with governments, health organizations, community groups and alumni.

We know we are stronger when we collaborate with others. That's why we are seeking out partnerships locally and globally in education, research and practice so that we can fulfill our vision to be leaders and partners for a healthy and just 21st century world.

Our fundamental belief is that everyone should be treated fairly and equitably, with respect and dignity. That's why we are strengthening partnerships with Indigenous peoples, so that we can do better, and so that we can collaborate respectfully.

We are partnering with government, community groups, and other postsecondary institutions to solve big, complex global challenges. We are forging new relationships and expanding our ability to protect

the health and wellness of our communities through a health care precinct that is creating education, research and practice opportunities and a School of Medicine.

We are seeking out the real-world expertise of alumni who are leading organizations whose challenges our students and researchers might help resolve.

“Our collaboration with York University’s School of Health Policy and Management provides students with the hands-on skills in data collection and analysis they need to become health care professionals and benefit society at large. Toronto Grace benefits as we’re able to collect the data we need to implement programs to support our patients.”

Jake Tran
President & CEO, Toronto Grace Health Centre





York is in a new era of internationalization with its Engaging the World global engagement strategy. The Faculty of Health is committed to global engagement and expanding York's position as an agent of positive change on global challenges such as health equity, connections between health and the environment, poverty, systemic inequality and political polarization.



York University is moving forward with plans to establish a new School of Medicine that will focus on training primary care doctors in an inter-professional and community-based setting. The model will create greater health equity for diverse communities across Canada, including more than two million Ontarians who do not have access to primary care.

To achieve this commitment, by 2028 we will:

- Nurture relations with the York University Indigenous Council and Indigenous communities for collaborative programming in education, research and practice.
- Explore possibilities for formal affiliations for health care professional training and research with Indigenous partners.
- Strengthen partnerships with local and global community groups and partners to co-create opportunities for sustainable and equitable collaborations in education, research and practice.
- Leverage the Connected Minds project, Vaughan Healthcare Precinct and Ontario Health Teams to increase education, research and practice opportunities.
- Contribute to the development of a community-based School of Medicine in partnership with government, community groups and health care organizations.
- Engage with alumni and donors to increase opportunity, collaboration, inclusion and the advancement of common goals for positive change.



Seeing, hearing and supporting each other



We will cultivate a healthy place to learn, teach, research and work through positive organizational policies, culture and supportive practices.

As we strive to achieve equity, health and wellness for the communities we serve, we must give equal consideration to how to achieve those conditions on campus.

Our ambitious vision can only be realized if everyone responsible for reaching our goals feels seen, heard and supported.

We want to celebrate the values of diversity, equity and belonging that are such a focal point of our work as staff, instructors and researchers. The creation of our Strategic Plan was a time to reflect on our achievements and recommit to embodying the values that got us here.

It was also an opportunity to better understand the needs of our students, staff and faculty so that we can create the kind of organizational culture in which

everyone can feel a sense of pride and passion for the work that we do.

We're proud of the positive change we are creating and we want to support our people and celebrate their achievements so that they can be the changemakers they want to be.

“Students should feel that they belong to the York community. As an academic advisor, I ensure that students feel seen, heard, and supported throughout their studies until graduation.”

Valerie Thomas
Undergraduate Program Advisor
Department of Psychology

Building an inclusive workforce requires understanding and action to address barriers and exclusions. This could include more supports for workers, helping employers plan for their workforce's future and addressing impediments at the policy and system level that prevent people from achieving their potential. – **Canada's Future Skills Centre**

“The Faculty of Health is known for our collaborative spirit, high quality academic and co-curricular programs and where faculty, staff and students feel an immense sense of belonging. People matter and this is modelled to our students through our policies, procedures and programs. This value inspires our students to continue to prioritize care and compassion in their professional and personal lives.”
– **Faculty of Health staff member response when asked about a desired workplace**

To achieve this commitment, by 2028 we will:

- Recognize the efforts of staff who contribute to the Faculty's effectiveness and supportive organization processes and culture, both internally and with our broader communities.
- Champion the Faculty's presence and impact through effective communication and strategic branding.





Thank you

Dean David Peters would like to thank and acknowledge the members of both the Strategic Planning Drafting Team and the Advisory Board, without whom our plan would not have been possible. Together, we're building a healthy world for all.

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