



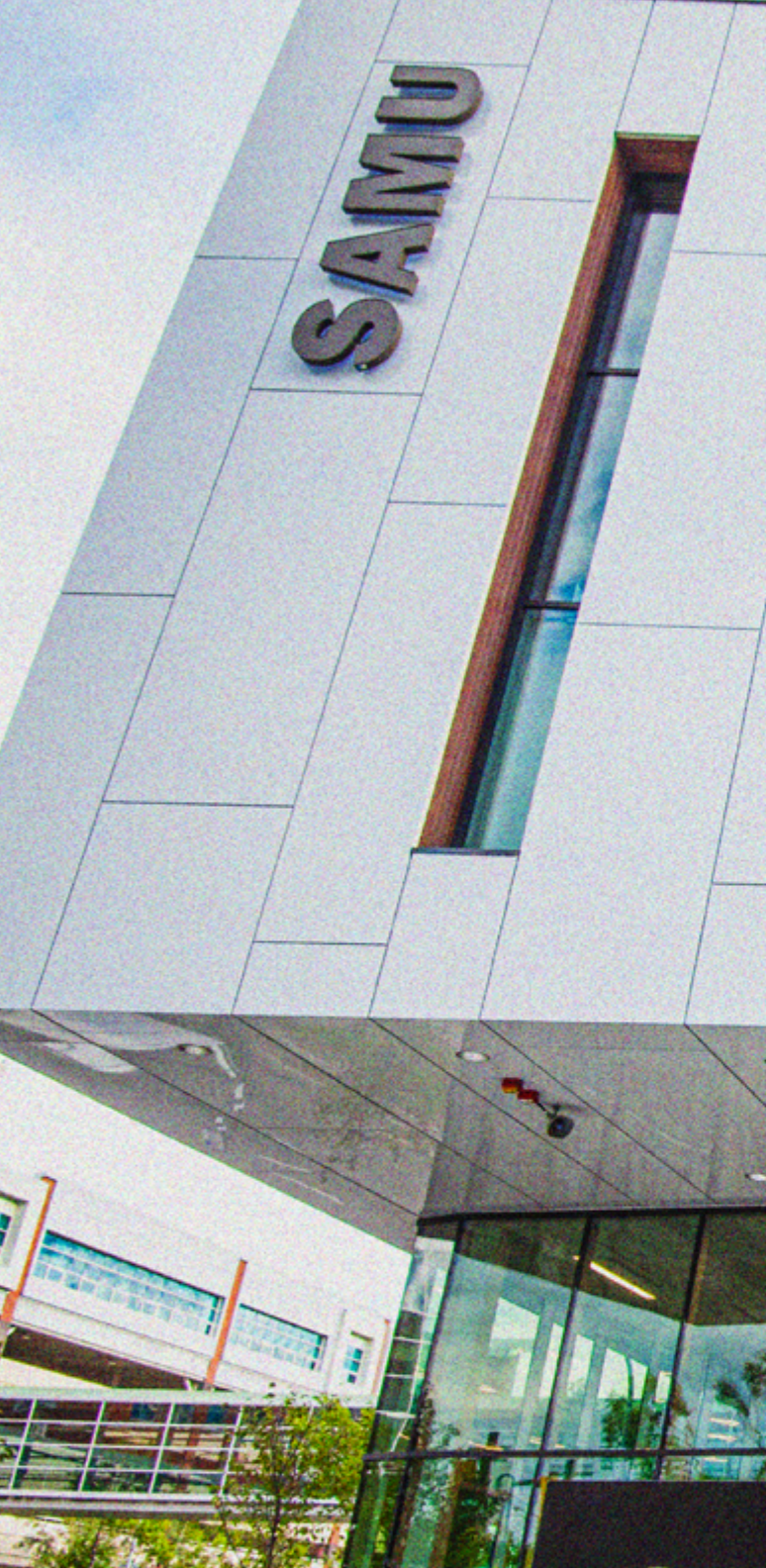
# STRATEGIC PLAN

**2021-26**

**RECOGNIZING  
OUR PAST AND  
PLANNING OUR  
FUTURE**

**SAMU**







# INTRODUCTION



The Students' Association of MacEwan University (SAMU) is a not-for-profit organization working independently from MacEwan University to support students. With over 45 full and part-time staff, SAMU exists to serve students' non-academic needs.

SAMU celebrates its 50th Anniversary in October 2021. That's **50 years of student councils and governance, milestones, learnings, growth and most importantly service to MacEwan students.** The latest milestone has been the completion of the SAMU building, which provides a wide variety of opportunities for the organization.

Elected student representatives govern SAMU. Part of good governance is to have a strategic plan, providing visionary direction for the organization. Past strategic plans focused on the need of SAMU to construct its own building to enhance service to students. Completion of the SAMU Building in 2020 was a significant accomplishment for our Association. As the building project is now complete, this plan outlines the next steps in SAMU's future.

The strategic planning process began by updating SAMU's Vision, Mission and Values. Next, Students' Council and staff were surveyed to gather feedback. Overwhelmingly, it was reinforced that SAMU's primary focus must continue to be our students. As such, students are intentionally front and centre throughout the plan.

Next, the SAMU Executive Committee (EC) and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) looked at internal and external trends, issues, data, as well as future aspirations for SAMU. This analysis helped to design a strategic framework used to shape the plan. Finally, EC and staff developed goals and strategies to help SAMU maximize opportunities and fulfill its purpose.

As with all good plans, the details will be worked out to determine the scope and speed of implementation. SAMU will need to balance its commitment to delivering quality programs and services, while working on transformational projects to modernize the organization. And in the spirit of SAMU's value of accountability, the organization will recognize the confines of resources and the need to be transparent with students.

SAMU has a talented team of staff and volunteers that are at the heart of the organization. This plan is the call to action for everyone to embark on the next chapter of SAMU's journey.

***"...SAMU's primary focus must continue to be our students."***

## SAMU HISTORY

**1971** Grant MacEwan Community College Student Union was formed, originally on Scona Campus

**1988** College Receives approval to offer university transfer programs, which increased enrollment

**1995** SAMU's Peer Support program began

**1997** Adopt-a-Family, now SAMU Cares was established

**1998** Health and Dental Benefits Referendum

**2006** The Pantry started providing food hampers to students in need

**2007** First U-Pass Referendum

**2009** College becomes University, and SAMU name is changed

**2015** Referendum on new SAMU Building, and Building Design begins; first VP External elected

**Apr 2017** Ground-breaking ceremony for new SAMU Building

**Jan 2020** SAMU Grand Opening Ceremony

**Mar 2020 – 2021** SAMU's operations were adapted to serve students during a global pandemic



# VISION, MISSION & ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

## VISION

All students benefit from a vibrant student life and a culture of empowerment.

## MISSION

SAMU builds a positive student experience by creating a place to engage and connect, being a champion for all students, and providing opportunities that allow them to get the most out of their educational journey.

## VALUES

Our values are the basic tenets of how we as SAMU staff and elected student representatives act and make decisions.

### Students First

SAMU is here for the students. As such our decisions and actions need to be in the best interest of current and future students.

### Accountability

At SAMU, we take responsibility for our actions and decisions. Likewise, we are responsible stewards of the resources entrusted to us by students.

### Relevance

SAMU continually listens to students, monitors trends, builds partnerships and works to be on point to the changing student population.

### Inclusiveness

All students belong to SAMU and should feel welcomed and safe. Diversity is embraced, and we continue to learn new ways of being respectful and empathetic to all students and each other.

### Adaptability

Underlying all the values is SAMU's ability to adjust and respond quickly to meet students' needs.





# 1 - STUDENT EXPERIENCE & ENGAGEMENT

**The overall student experience is enhanced by the opportunities provided by SAMU.**

## What it Means

The student experience goes beyond attending classes. SAMU offers people the fun and social side of student life by hosting programs and events and providing students space to connect. SAMU also provides volunteer and employment opportunities while also supporting student groups on campus. All of the above reflects SAMU's commitment to making on-campus life more accessible for all students.

## What Success Looks Like

- SAMU Building is a hub for student activity.
- SAMU is identifiable by students as the organization “for the students by the students”.
- SAMU programs, services and events are well-attended, utilized and enjoyed by students.
- Students are gaining experience and developing new skills from the employment and volunteer opportunities offered by SAMU.
- Student Groups are thriving and attracting an abundance of members with diverse interests.

## Strategies

- 1.1** Put the finishing touches on the SAMU building, enhancing the safe and intentional spaces for students to gather, relax and study.
- 1.2** Increase student awareness of SAMU and its opportunities through strong communications and engaging marketing and branding.
- 1.3** Increase student engagement by offering relevant and meaningful events, programs, services, volunteer activities and employment opportunities for students.
- 1.4** Support Student Groups by offering networking opportunities, meeting space, outreach support and online platforms.





## 2 - STUDENT VOICE

The Student Voice is amplified by SAMU.

### What it Means

SAMU is a Students' Association, meaning it provides ways for students to be heard collectively by the University, and at all levels of government. Students also have a voice through its democratic processes, electing Students' Council and Executive Committee members to govern SAMU.

### What Success Looks Like

- Advocacy efforts by SAMU result in positive changes for students.
- SAMU election ballots offer choice to students, and students are coming out to vote.
- SAMU is actively involved with other Students' Associations and organizations to have the Student Voice heard at all levels of government.
- SAMU is a valued partner of MacEwan University.

### Strategies

- 2.1** Develop an Advocacy Plan and implement processes to strengthen SAMU's advocacy program.
- 2.2** Enhance awareness and interest in SAMU's democratic processes through education and encouraging student participation.
- 2.3** Continue to build collaborative relationships with other Students' Associations and organizations to enhance the collective student voice with all government levels.
- 2.4** Foster positive relationships with MacEwan University to better serve students.



# GOALS & STRATEGIES



## 3 - STUDENT SUPPORTS

**Student supports provided by SAMU are responsive to unique and evolving needs.**

### What it Means

Student life can be difficult. SAMU offers students a variety of programs and services to help with financial, mental, physical, and social stresses. SAMU is an inclusive organization, supporting diversity and participation of all students. As student needs evolve, SAMU watches trends and listens to students to ensure that SAMU offerings are reflective of those needs.

### What Success Looks Like

- Students are accessing SAMU programs, events and services to alleviate the financial, mental, physical and social stresses of being a student.
- SAMU is responsive to the feedback received about its programs and services, meeting the needs of all students.
- SAMU programs, services and events are inclusive and support all students.
- SAMU is working collaboratively with other organizations to benefit students.
- SAMU staff are trying new approaches to meet the changing needs of students.

### Strategies

- 3.1** Develop and deliver initiatives that are inclusive and are responsive to all student needs.
- 3.2** Evaluate and assess student supports to remain relevant and accountable to students.
- 3.3** Strengthen collaborations and partnerships with MacEwan University to expand supports and resources for students.
- 3.4** Enhance relationships with external organizations to leverage resources and supplement new and existing initiatives.



# GOALS & STRATEGIES



## 4 - STRENGTHENING SAMU OPERATIONS

**SAMU is an innovative and sustainable organization with an engaging work environment.**

### What it Means

SAMU can best serve students with its own house in order. By fostering strong relationships between elected student roles and staff, documenting policies and processes and being responsible stewards of resources, SAMU can be a supportive and sustainable organization for students for years to come.

### What Success Looks Like

- Elected student roles and staff roles are well-defined, and decisions are made seamlessly.
- Policies and processes are documented, and best practices are implemented.
- SAMU is in a stable fiscal situation, with multiple revenue sources.
- SAMU's operations are environmentally conscious, reducing ecological impacts where feasible.
- SAMU has a vibrant organizational culture, attracting, onboarding and retaining quality staff, volunteers and elected student representatives.

### Strategies

- 4.1** Review SAMU governance structures and make improvements to reduce duplication of efforts and delays in decision-making processes.
- 4.2** Document main policies and processes to support business continuity and transitions in leadership and staff.
- 4.3** Diversify revenue streams to reduce reliance on student fees.
- 4.4** Act as financial and environmental stewards and implement effective practices to enhance sustainability.
- 4.5** Foster a professional and supportive work environment that lives the organizational values and delivers a culture of excellence.





# **RECOGNIZING OUR PAST AND PLANNING OUR FUTURE**

