



RESEARCH STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030



PREFACE: RESEARCHING THE NEEDS OF RURAL, REMOTE AND NORTHERN COMMUNITIES FROM WITHIN AT KEYANO COLLEGE

In 2024, Keyano College was awarded a \$750,000 Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) Mobilize grant to lead a multi-year research program focused on **Human Sustainability in the North**. This milestone marks a significant development in our institution's research journey and is a foundational element in shaping our broader strategic research direction.

As a community college proudly situated in the heart of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and on Treaty 8 territory, Keyano recognizes the unique role we play in supporting knowledge creation that is both relevant and rooted in place. Our strategic research plan reflects a deep commitment to engaging with the realities, needs, and strengths of rural, remote, and northern communities—not only through individual research projects, but through an institutional vision that values collaboration, reciprocity, and long-term impact.

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo is a complex and dynamic environment. Known internationally for the Athabasca oil sands, the region has also been shaped by population booms, climate-

driven disasters, and ongoing shifts in infrastructure and industry. Residents here face a set of challenges—environmental, social, economic—that are often misunderstood or overlooked by researchers from outside the region.

This realization has strongly informed our strategic priorities. While the NSERC Human Sustainability in the North research program is just one example of our applied work, it reflects a broader commitment to reshaping how research is approached at Keyano College.

The award of the NSERC Mobilize grant marked a turning point—but it is not the whole story. It signaled that Keyano College is ready to lead research from within our own communities, and that we are committed to a new model: one that values equity, access, and collaboration.

Our strategic research plan builds on that momentum, expanding our capacity to generate knowledge that matters—here, in the North, and for the North.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We respectfully acknowledge that Keyano College is located on Treaty 8 territory, the traditional & contemporary meeting grounds and gathering places of the Denesuline, Cree and Métis Peoples of this region. Our name, Keyano (kiyânaw in nêhiyawêwin - Cree language), translates to “we, us, our” and speaks to the connection we have as a community and our commitment to being in right relationships with the First Peoples of these lands.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

At Keyano College, research is more than an academic endeavor—it is a commitment to partnership, respect, and growth alongside the communities we proudly serve. Our region is rich in culture, knowledge, and resilience, and it is essential that the work we do reflects and uplifts these strengths.

This strategic research plan embodies our vision for research that is rooted in local experience and designed to support thriving rural, remote, and northern communities. Whether addressing environmental stewardship, education, health, housing, or youth leadership, our research will be collaborative, inclusive, and focused on creating meaningful, positive impact.

The NSERC Mobilize grant supporting our Human Sustainability in the North initiative has reinforced the importance of centering community voices and fostering research that truly belongs to the North. It has illuminated the power of working together to build solutions that are grounded in place and purpose.

We are excited to share this plan as a foundation for ongoing partnership and innovation, and to invite our communities, organizations, and partners to join us in shaping a sustainable and vibrant future for northern Alberta and beyond.



MISSION

To advance inclusive, community-led, regionally relevant research that honors and amplifies the voices, knowledge, and priorities of remote and northern communities, fostering equitable partnerships that address local challenges and promote sustainable, culturally grounded solutions.



VISION

To be a leader in transformative, place-based research that uplifts remote and northern communities, where innovation and community collaboration come together to shape resilient, thriving futures.



VALUES

All values are guided by a commitment to truth and reconciliation, the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging, and a recognition that we work, play, and live in relationship to one another and to the land where we are situated.

**VALUE 1**

Respect, Equity,
and Integrity

VALUE 2

Regional
Stewardship

VALUE 3

Excellence and
Innovation

VALUE 4

Sustainability

VALUES

All values are guided by a commitment to Truth and Reconciliation, the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging, and a recognition that we work, play, and live in relationship to one another and to the land where we are situated.

VALUE 1: RESPECT, EQUITY, AND INTEGRITY

We are committed to ethical, transparent, and inclusive research that respects and centers diverse voices and knowledge systems. We work to reduce barriers, foster accountability, and create equitable spaces where all individuals and communities are valued and empowered to contribute.

VALUE 2: REGIONAL STEWARDSHIP

As an institution rooted in the North, we embrace our responsibility to conduct research that is co-created with our communities, guided by shared goals, and grounded in deep local knowledge. Our work is shaped by lived experience, responsive to regional priorities, and committed to non-extractive, ethical practices that build lasting capacity, resilience, and shared prosperity.

VALUE 3: EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION

We are committed to the highest standards of research and education, driven by curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking. Grounded in integrity and a deep responsibility to our region, we foster a culture of innovation that advances knowledge and responds to the evolving needs and aspirations of our communities.

VALUE 4: SUSTAINABILITY

We value research that is enduring, impactful, and aligned with the needs of our communities. Our commitment to sustainability is reflected in long-term, community-driven projects that foster environmental, social, and cultural resilience. We prioritize ethical resource management and collaboration to ensure that our research continues to benefit Northern Alberta for generations to come.

PILLARS

PILLAR 1: COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- **Purpose:** To design healthcare and community support systems that are accessible, responsive, and grounded in the realities of northern life, incorporating both clinical and community knowledge while supporting community health and well-being through northern-led innovation, developed in and for northern communities.
- **Why it matters:** Health and well-being outcomes and quality of life in northern communities are shaped by low population density, distance from service centers, and limited infrastructure that has resulted in both systemic inequities and opportunities for innovation. This pillar centers community-driven approaches and recognizes the importance of northern-led research in achieving health and social equity.
- **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Alignment:**
 - SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being
 - SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities
 - SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities
 - SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions



PILLARS



PILLAR 2: NORTHERN COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY

- **Purpose:** To foster inclusive, community-driven research that strengthens the resilience of northern communities by researching northern priorities in education, sustainable economic development, responsive governance, and the preservation and revitalization of local histories and identities.
- **Why it matters:** True resilience in the North is built on the knowledge, leadership, and lived experience of its people. This pillar supports research that empowers communities to respond to change—whether social, environmental, or economic—by honoring cultural heritage, fostering local innovation, and promoting self-determination in education, governance, and disaster preparedness.
- **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Alignment:**
 - SDG 4 – Quality Education
 - SDG 5 – Gender Equality
 - SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth
 - SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities
 - SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities
 - SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
 - SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals



PILLAR 3: ENVIRONMENTAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION

- **Purpose:** Advancing research in environmental sustainability and technology development to address the unique challenges, needs and opportunities of life in the North.
- **Why it matters:** Communities in the North are innovating at the frontlines of climate change, rapidly changing industries, and shifting regional priorities. They require practical, place-based approaches that enhance resilience, protect the natural environment, and support northern sustainability and growth through innovation that is cost-effective and tailored to the challenges of remote environments.
- **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Alignment:**
 - SDG 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation
 - SDG 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy
 - SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
 - SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities
 - SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production
 - SDG 13 – Climate Action
 - SDG 15 – Life on Land



SDGs

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a concrete roadmap—17 goals and 169 targets—designed to address urgent global issues. Embedding the SDGs into our research strategic plan ensures that Keyano's research endeavours are not only rigorous but also purpose-driven. They foster interdisciplinary collaboration, emphasizes real-world impact, and positions our research to contribute meaningfully to a sustainable future.

RESEARCH GOALS

Rooted in Northern Alberta and responsive to the unique needs of our communities, Keyano College's research goals are informed by our evolving research program focused on Human Sustainability in the North. Our strategy is to:

1. Develop a sustainable Centre for Research and Innovation that supports faculty, students, industry, and community partners in building capacity and advancing research excellence in accordance with Tri-Council standards.
2. Enhance research capacity that supports student, faculty, and staff development as researchers.
3. Build a vibrant and inclusive College-wide research culture through ongoing training and development opportunities, supporting faculty, staff and students in engaging with applied research, discovery ("pure") research and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL).
4. Foster responsible community-based research aligned with the principles of Truth and Reconciliation and with Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI), and ensuring research reflects the voices, lived experiences and priorities of Northern populations.
5. Cultivate collaborative partnerships and knowledge sharing with local, regional, national and international partners to co-create solutions for social, cultural, political and economic challenges guided by respect and reciprocity.

Keyano's research efforts are grounded in quality, with a focus on meaningful knowledge mobilization and impact at the community, provincial, national, and international levels while ensuring that academic freedom, research integrity, and rigorous peer review remain central. They align with Keyano College's Strategic Plan and Academic Plan.



KEYANO COLLEGE STRATEGIC ACTIONS (2025–2030)

To achieve our research goals and contribute to the pillars and outcomes of Keyano College's 2025–2030 Strategic Plan, the following strategic actions will guide the implementation of the Research Strategic Plan:

1. Centre for Research and Innovation

- Increase the number of **external research funding** and diversify external research funding through grants, partnerships, and collaborative initiatives.
- Establish a **Centre for Research and Innovation** with dedicated staffing and operational capacity by 2030.
- Create a **publicly accessible space** for the Office of Research and Innovation to support community and industry engagement, interdisciplinary collaboration and knowledge sharing by 2026.

2. Enhance research capacity:

- Develop a **Faculty and Student Training Plan** by 2026 that includes:
 - Research ethics and integrity
 - OCAP® principles (Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession)
 - Applied research methodologies
 - Technology transfer and commercialization pathways

- **Increase participation and skills** in research by faculty, staff, and students across disciplines through targeted incentives, mentorship, and structured support by 2026.
- Develop a **streamlined pathway** for student research linked to program curriculum and foster opportunities for students to engage in research projects by 2030.
- Develop and implement **robust infrastructure, resources, and standardized procedures** to support the full lifecycle of research projects, including ethics, data management, reporting, and knowledge mobilization by 2026.
- Establish a **Research Lab** to support ongoing staff, student and course-based research by 2027.
- Launch an **institutional repository** to preserve and share Keyano's research outputs by 2026.

3. Build a vibrant and inclusive College-wide research culture

- Maintain a dynamic and strong **online presence** for the Centre for Research and Innovation, highlighting current projects, researchers, and events by 2026.
- Actively **promote research accomplishments** through conferences, media, internal communications, social platforms, and scholarly publications.
- Build **internal recognition structures** that celebrate excellence, innovation, and impactful research by 2026.
- Create a **research communication strategy** that includes external partners by 2027.

4. Foster responsible community-based research

- **Signing and implementation of national and international pledges** such as DORA and the Tri-Council Dimension Charter to commit to responsible research assessment and impact measurement by 2027.
- Create a Research Advisory Committee to support research endeavors at Keyano College by 2026.

5. Cultivate collaborative partnerships and knowledge sharing

- Align research efforts with **community-identified needs** and emerging priorities related to human sustainability in northern communities by 2026.
- Identify and pursue **strategic partnerships** with local communities, Indigenous groups, and industry to co-develop and co-lead research projects by 2027.
- Integrating the **Indigenous Advisory Committee** in driving research in the region.



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