

Strategic Plan 2017-2021

Inspiring the Next Century of Women Leaders



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
Brescia
Choose to Lead.

It's almost 100 years since Brescia University College was founded by the Ursuline Sisters of the Chatham Union.

The Sisters are strong women of faith committed to social justice, community service and the development of women. Although the world has changed dramatically since 1919, the University continues this proud tradition.



The Next Five Years... and the Next 100!

The Strategic Plan will help us create new opportunities for engagement while continuing to live our mission and founding values. It will guide us as we build on our strengths. It will provide a blueprint for the next five years, and set a course for the next 100.

In the long term, the Plan will enable us to develop women leaders who:

- Live the Brescia values and demonstrate the Brescia Competencies (see page 11), and
- Contribute actively and positively to society

The Plan was developed with input from students, faculty, staff, Trustees, alumnae and community partners. It reflects the best of our past and present, and gives us a map for the future.

Moving forward, we are counting on the whole Brescia community to help us realize this vision.

Brescia's vision

Brescia is the university college of choice for women motivated by academic excellence and opportunity for service and leadership. Brescia graduates are women leaders who contribute actively and positively to society.

Our mission

Focused on academic excellence, Brescia University College creates an actively engaged student experience, educating women to think critically and to participate actively in society. A Catholic university college in the Ursuline tradition, we prepare our graduates to lead with wisdom, justice and compassion in a changing world.

Our Strategic Focus

The Plan outlines many initiatives, all designed to enhance an actively engaged student experience.

What exactly does this mean? Let's take a closer look.

"Student engagement" is a familiar phrase in higher education. One useful definition is: "the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught."(edglossary.org/)

Why is student engagement important? Research shows that when students are engaged, they learn better. Engaged students learn deeply, building strong skills. They take the learning habit with them into life beyond university.

We asked five members of the Brescia community to reflect on what an "actively engaged student experience" means to them, why it matters, and how Brescia fosters it. Here's what they had to say:





DR. DANIELLE BATTRAM AND STUDENT NICOLE RENE MARLEAU DISCUSS HEALTHY MEAL OPTIONS.

“Engaged students come to class open to learning from one another and being part of a collective learning process. They are able to think critically about what they’re learning and what it will mean to them. They get out into the community to share their knowledge and contribute to society. They learn through doing. They get engaged in student life in whatever way suits them. Engaged learning isn’t about students memorizing material: it’s about students becoming thinkers.”

~ **Dr. Danielle Battram**, School of Food & Nutritional Sciences



MACKENZIE READ (FRONT ROW, MIDDLE) KICKS OFF THE SCHOOL YEAR WITH HER FELLOW SOPHS.

“I chose Brescia when I received my acceptance letter with a handwritten note and a piece of chocolate! Because Brescia is such a small community, it’s a very safe space. You feel comfortable joining things. And when you do, you want to be on campus, see people you know, to be part of the community. The academic piece – going to class and being an engaged learner – naturally follows.”

~ **Mackenzie Read**, student and 2016 Head Soph



COURTNEY MCDONALD MEETS WITH STUDENTS TO DISCUSS EXTRA CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES.

“Actively engaging students is important because they are shaping their identities and their sense of place and purpose in the world while they’re with us. An actively engaged student experience has two fundamental attributes: 1) The amount of time and energy students put into their studies and other high-impact educational experiences, both inside and outside the classroom; 2) The amount of time and energy the institution invests in creating an environment that supports the development of the student as a whole person - their intellectual, emotional, social, cultural, spiritual, financial, physical, and career development. Brescia’s small size, student-centred focus and unique culture makes it easier to achieve an actively engaged experience where students can thrive.”

~ **Courtney McDonald**, Manager of Student Life



KATE BRYANT CONTINUES TO STAY CONNECTED,
RETURNING TO BRESCIA TO SPEAK TO A CLASS.

“Brescia has so many opportunities for students to get involved in the community – and every club and council is led by women! Getting involved helped me develop relationships and feel connected to my community. I learned about leadership not just in the classroom but through the whole experience. I attribute my success and leadership traits to the Brescia environment – to the opportunities I had to grow and develop. It made a real difference that many of those opportunities were offered to me personally by people who were role models and mentors.”

~ **Kate Bryant**, 2009 graduate, former BUCSC President, currently completing her PhD in psychology



RACHEL OGILVIE, WITH FELLOW STUDENTS ERICA DIFRANSISCO AND MOLLY SHOO TAKE A BREAK TO ENJOY THE BRESCIA CAMPUS.

“I came to Brescia because I liked the community and felt I would have more opportunities to get leadership experience. To me being an engaged learner is not solely dependent on your formal schooling. It’s about building relationships with other people and doing things outside the box. I’m at Brescia not just to study, but to learn things I can take with me in the future. I learn a lot better at Brescia than in bigger classes. My profs know who I am and I don’t feel scared to go up and ask questions. It’s a community here, and you feel that people care.”

~ **Rachel Ogilvie**, student, incoming VP Student Events, BUCSC

How We'll Do It

Brescia already fosters an actively engaged student experience in many ways. The University is well recognized for its academic excellence and capable and motivated students. Moving forward, we are committed to finding new and innovative ways for our students to stretch intellectually and build their leadership abilities.

Here's how.



→ Empower

■ By becoming a Canadian leader in outcomes-based education

Outcomes-based education is an approach that focuses on all students achieving specific learning goals. This approach has been shown to enhance the quality of learning and teaching. Our learning outcomes are called the “Brescia Competencies.”

They are:

- Communication
- Critical thinking
- Inquiry and analysis
- Problem solving
- Self-awareness and development
- Social awareness and engagement
- Valuing

The Brescia Competencies help set apart the Brescia experience and reflect the University’s unique take on leadership. They will be introduced in Brescia One, a mandatory first-year common intellectual experience, and woven throughout the entire student experience, both inside and beyond the classroom. Students will graduate with the ability to articulate and demonstrate the value of the Brescia Competencies to future employers.

■ By providing more opportunities to learn by doing

Brescia will provide more experiential learning opportunities such as internships, placements, service learning and other hands-on opportunities in all programs. Each program will also include a capstone project or course for senior students, helping them to integrate their total Brescia experience.

■ By providing more opportunities to develop leadership skills

Brescia students will continue to learn and practise leadership through a wide range of co-curricular activities and service opportunities.

■ By supporting faculty and students to achieve their academic best

Brescia will implement a comprehensive academic plan to enhance excellence in research, teaching and learning. We will use high-impact teaching practices to support our students to excel academically. Key performance indicators will be developed for all Brescia programs.

→ Support

■ By living the Ursuline tradition

Brescia is committed to keeping the Ursuline tradition alive for students, faculty and staff. Ursuline values are captured in our vision, our mission and the Brescia Competencies. They will continue to be embedded into academic, community and leadership activities. As our centennial year approaches, we will remember why Brescia was founded, and honour the wisdom, justice and compassion of its founders. We will continue the Ursuline commitment to education for all women by increasing the number of scholarships, awards and bursaries available.

■ By enhancing student wellness

Recognizing that student wellness and academic success are closely related, Brescia will implement a comprehensive mental health and wellness plan. We will ensure that students who face mental health challenges have the support they need. We will support all students in managing stress and staying healthy.

■ By providing great service

Brescia students deserve excellent student services. The Hive, our “one-stop shop,” will expand, bringing all student services together. Students will continue to experience respectful, responsive and helpful assistance when they visit or call.



→ Grow

■ By continuing to attract tomorrow's leaders, and helping them to succeed in their studies and develop a global perspective

Brescia is a nationally-recognized leader in women's higher education. We attract outstanding students, and will continue to do so. We will develop and implement a comprehensive plan to guide recruitment, retention and student success. We will honour our traditional values of inclusion and access for all women, and support the goal of broadening and strengthening our students' engagement with the world.

■ By strengthening our international engagement

Today's leaders must be able to see beyond their own borders and work across diverse cultures. Brescia will increase the number of international students and ensure they have the supports and services they need. We will also ensure that our curriculum has a truly global perspective. We will triple the number of student and faculty exchanges and study abroad opportunities, and increase the number of international partnerships.



→ Enable

■ By ensuring financial stability

We will ensure that financial resources are in place to enable these initiatives by:

- Increasing operating revenues
- Controlling operating expenses
- Meeting student enrolment targets
- Executing a fundraising campaign
- Implementing a Campus Master Plan that includes new food lab facilities and other enhanced learning facilities

■ By building on partnerships

To make the best use of our resources, we will build on our partnerships with:

- The Ursuline Sisters of the Chatham Union
- Western University and the other Affiliates
- All levels of government
- Other academic institutions



Moving Forward Together

In 1919 the Ursulines understood the importance of women learning together to prepare for lives of purpose. One hundred years later, that goal is as important as ever. Brescia University College has a unique role to play in educating future women leaders. We will prepare them with knowledge and skills, but also with wisdom, justice and compassion. With this Plan, we re-commit ourselves to our mission and vision, and ready ourselves for an exciting future. Support us as we prepare the next generation of women leaders.



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