

U SPORTS STRATEGIC PLAN

2019-2024





WE ARE UNIVERSITY SPORT
NOUS SOMMES LE SPORT UNIVERSITAIRE

WELCOME

U SPORTS Members, Conferences and National Partners,

On behalf of the U SPORTS Board of Directors, we are pleased to present you with the 2019-2024 U SPORTS Strategic Plan, a document that will guide and inform the priorities and decisions that will continue to shape and transform university sport in Canada. The U SPORTS Strategic Plan is reflective of a thorough and exhaustive consultation process which gathered the feedback and perspectives of a wide spectrum of internal and external stakeholders. Specifically, the U SPORTS staff, leaders of the four conferences, Athletic Directors and Presidents of our 56 member institutions and Professional / National Sport Organizations were surveyed and all involved in the process of charting the next five years.

Additionally, a select group of elite student-athletes provided input, as did senior executives from Sport Canada, Own the Podium, Coaching Association of Canada, Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association, Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sports, and the Canadian Olympic Committee. Ultimately, U SPORTS' new Strategic Plan is reflective of the position that U SPORTS must strive to be a leader nationally and that a clear and proper understanding of the organization's unique place in the Canadian sport system must include our sport partners advice and leadership.

One of the objectives of this Strategic Plan is to produce a practical document that can provide a key reference when difficult choices need to be made. The Plan outlines strategic priorities and desired outcomes that were identified, developed and honed during the consultation process. It is however, the guiding statements of Vision, Mission, Values, and Operating Principles that provide the foundational reference point when opportunities and challenges inevitably arise.

Thank you for your interest, investment and support of University Sport in Canada. University sport in Canada is seeing an exciting resurgence and we are more confident than ever that, together, we can continue to put student-athletes first, and provide the types of environments and opportunities that allow everyone involved in Canadian university sport to achieve their full potential and become tomorrow's leaders.



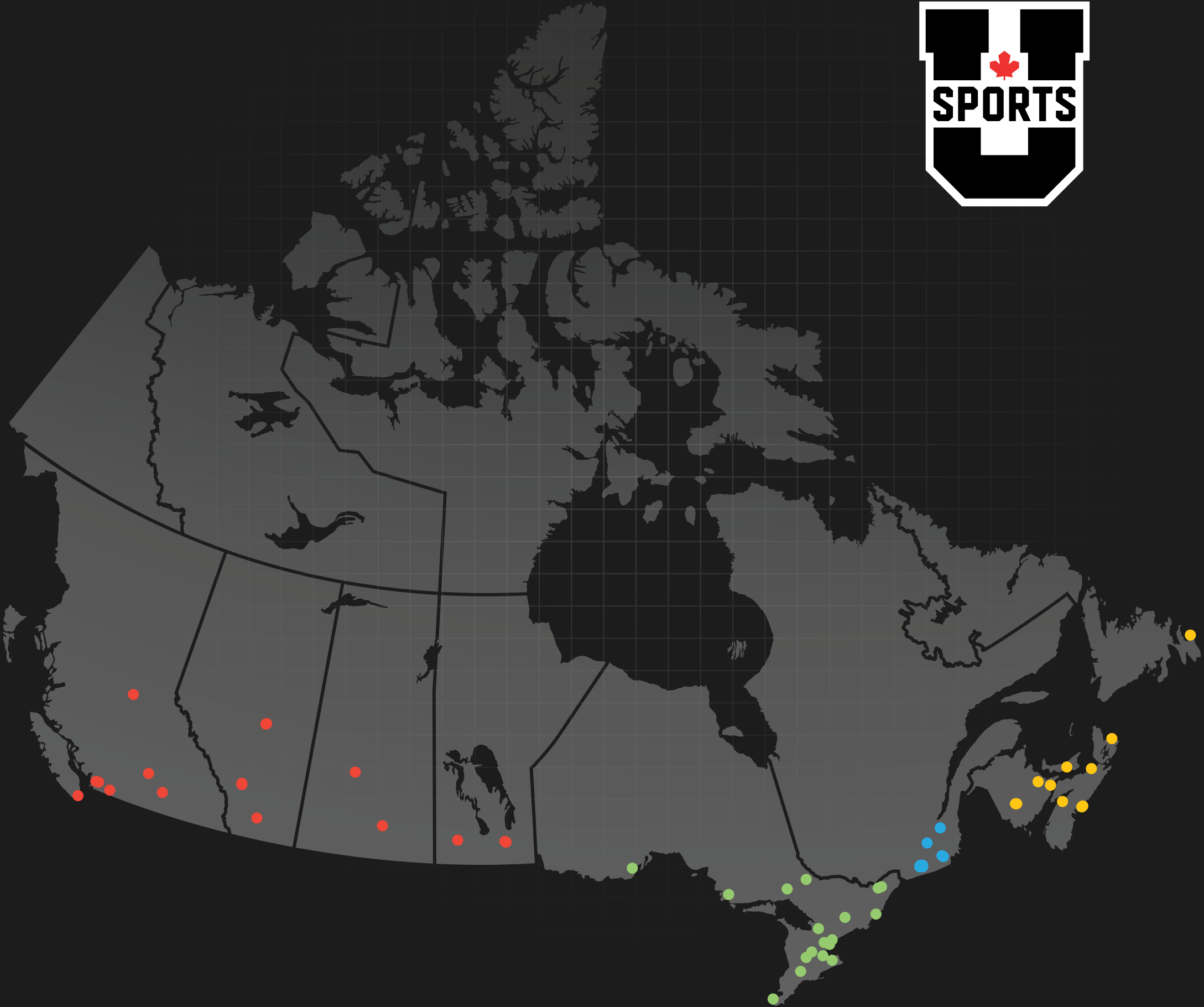
DR. ANNETTE TRIMBEE PhD
Chair of the Board of Directors



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U SPORTS by The Numbers

4	Conferences	21	National Championships	56	Member Institutions	3,900+	Academic All-Canadians
12	Sports	43	Cities	900	Head Coaches	20,000+	Student-Athletes

ABOUT U SPORTS

U SPORTS is the national brand for university sports in Canada. Every year, over 20,000 student-athletes and 900 coaches from 56 universities vie for 21 national championships in 12 different sports. U SPORTS also provides higher performance international opportunities for Canadian student-athletes at Winter and Summer Universiades, as well as numerous World University Championships.

- University of Alberta
- Brandon University
- University of British Columbia
- University of British Columbia Okanagan
- University of Calgary
- University of the Fraser Valley
- University of Lethbridge
- University of Manitoba
- MacEwan University
- Mount Royal University
- University of Northern British Columbia
- University of Regina
- University of Saskatchewan
- Thompson Rivers University
- Trinity Western University
- University of Victoria
- University of Winnipeg

- Algoma University
- Brock University
- Carleton University
- University of Guelph
- Lakehead University
- Laurentian University
- McMaster University
- Nipissing University
- Ontario Tech University
- University of Ottawa
- Queen's University
- Royal Military College of Canada
- Ryerson University
- University of Toronto
- Trent University
- University of Waterloo
- University of Western Ontario
- Wilfrid Laurier University
- University of Windsor
- York University

- Bishop's University
- Concordia University
- Université Laval
- McGill University
- Université de Montréal
- Université du Québec à Montréal
- Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières
- Université de Sherbrooke

- Acadia University
- Cape Breton University
- Dalhousie University
- Memorial University of Newfoundland
- Mount Allison University
- Université de Moncton
- University of New Brunswick
- University of Prince Edward Island
- Saint Mary's University
- St. Francis Xavier University
- St. Thomas University



WHY THIS STRATEGY NOW?

U SPORTS, through the leadership of the Presidents and Athletic Directors of the 56 Member Universities, has undergone significant transformative change in recent years.

Leadership has repositioned university sport in Canada at the top of the Canadian sport ecosystem and empowered the organization through a strategic governance restructuring and new vision to see university sport and U SPORTS elevate the leadership and custodian role it plays in sport across Canada.

Our name changed from Canadian Interuniversity Sport/Sport Interuniversitaire Canadien to U SPORTS, helping solve many brand challenges. Among them, U SPORTS is a stronger bilingual name; it's a short and easier reference; a contemporary and professional mark with improved integration to partner and digital formats; and finally, U SPORTS elevates the brand from a simple administrative body to a legitimate sports property, effectively matching the organization's evolution as a relevant player in both domestic and international sports markets.

With a desire for university sports to be more professionally and efficiently managed, and spurred on by changes to Canada's Not-for-Profit Act, University Presidents joined Athletic Directors in changing to a smaller nine-person Board of Directors reflective of the four Conferences. Effective decision-making authority transferred to the new Board creating a nimbler operational National Office without forgoing the required collaboration and consultation process with its Conferences and Members.

U SPORTS aspires to partner and align with every National Sport Organization, professional sport and sport leadership group in Canada that delivers high performance sport and whom has any involvement in the athletic journey of our current and future U SPORTS student-athletes.

U SPORTS moved from Ottawa to Toronto in order to drive more awareness and commercial engagement opportunities across sponsorship, broadcast and new partnerships for university sport.

Finally, the organization continues to live in an ever-changing, fast-paced, competitive sports world of instant, digital connectivity and global influences. While the organization focuses and strives to provide core services to its member institutions, conferences and student-athletes, it must look forward and be in a position to be a progressive facilitator and advocate for university sport.

These recent transformative changes have accelerated and shaped the discussion resulting in this Strategic Plan, a document which will now allow U SPORTS to align, focus, navigate and successfully advance future opportunities while overcoming challenges in a defined and disciplined manner.



GUIDING STATEMENTS

Vision

To provide exceptional experiences which empower today's student-athletes to be tomorrow's leaders.

Mission

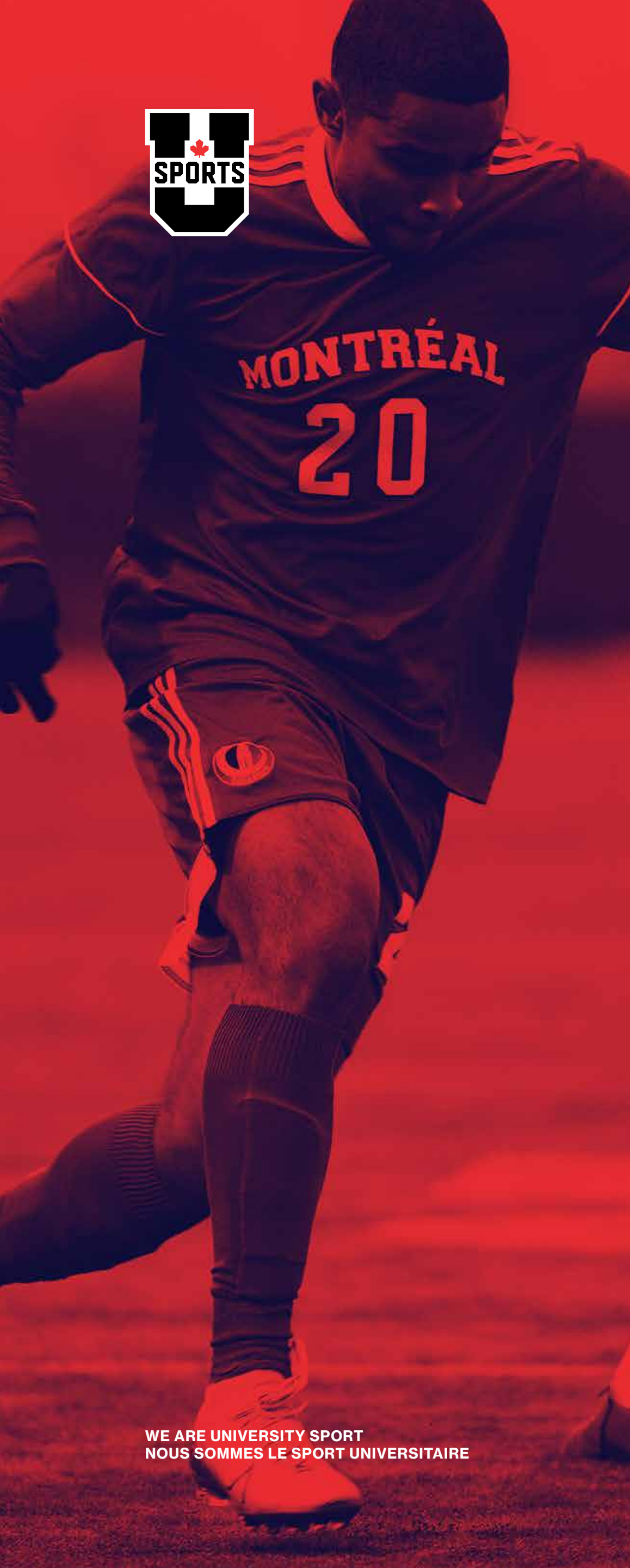
Through governing, delivering, celebrating and advocating for national university sport, U SPORTS aims to support the provision of outstanding environments and opportunities for student-athletes to achieve their full academic and athletic potential.

Values

- Students First
- Excellence
- Equity
- Competitive Balance
- Integrity and Transparency

Operating Principles

1. Institutional Autonomy
2. Collaboration and consultation
3. Service excellence
4. Collegiality
5. Innovation and evidence-based decision-making



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES SUMMARY

We have established four strategic priorities which represent our collective organizational focus in order to achieve our mission and make our vision a reality. Through the implementation of these strategies, we strive to achieve the measurable outcomes identified in each priority section which follows.

Priority 1

Competitions and Recognitions

Elevate U SPORTS' delivery of national championships, international competitions, recognitions and special events both on and off the field of play.

Priority 1.1

National Championships

Priority 1.2

International

Priority 1.3

Special On-Field Sport Events

Priority 1.4

Special Off-Field Events and Recognitions

Priority 2

National Advocacy

Play a leadership role in promoting student-athlete health and safety, enhancing U SPORTS' significant place in the infrastructure of the Canadian sport community, improving diversity and inclusion in university sports, and promoting U SPORTS' unique benefits to prospective student-athletes and the broader public.

Priority 2.1

Student-athlete Health and Safety

Priority 2.2

Partnerships within the National Sport Community

Priority 2.3

Diversity

Priority 2.4

Awareness

Priority 3

Operational Excellence

Ensure that U SPORTS acts with integrity and transparency, operates on the basis of an efficient and effective governance model, and delivers a healthy university sport system that fosters competitive balance and boasts strong compliance with its rules and regulations.

Priority 3.1

Governance

Priority 3.2

Compliance

Priority 3.3

Service

Priority 4

Organizational Sustainability

Utilize solid management practices to maintain good financial health and protect the long-term sustainability and viability of U SPORTS, its staff, its programs, and the participation of member institutions in those programs.

Priority 4.1

Fiscal Health & Culture Strong

Priority 4.2

Commercial Growth

PRIORITY 1



Competitions & Recognitions

Elevate U SPORTS' delivery of national championships, international competitions, recognitions and special events both on and off the field of play.

Priority 1.1 National Championships

STRATEGY

Professionalize the execution, delivery and promotion of the U SPORTS national championships.

OUTCOMES

- All national championships are consistent with and strive to exceed U SPORTS standards around operational, technical and commercial requirements
- Improve quality of national championships across the entire spectrum of the event experience
- Quality, diverse and innovative host championship bids and executions
- Prioritization and process for addition and reclassification of sports within the championship stream

Priority 1.2 International

STRATEGY

Enhance the quality and profile of U SPORTS' participation in International Competition.

OUTCOMES

- Improve level of organization of U SPORTS teams
- Improve level of involvement of NSO's
- Improve awareness in Canada of FISU and U SPORTS participation
- A sustainable domestic hosting strategy
- Increased student-athlete participation

Priority 1.3 Special On-Field Sport Events

STRATEGY

Raise visibility of unique U SPORTS opportunities, from All-Star competitions to NCAA exhibition series.

OUTCOMES

- Generate new revenue
- Increase U SPORTS profile
- Provide new national and international competition opportunities for student-athletes
- Event hosting opportunities for institutions
- Alignment with Conferences and key sport partners

Priority 1.4 Special Off-Field Events & Recognition

STRATEGY

Enhance and elevate U SPORTS National Awards and Recognition Programs to increase exposure of and interest in Canadian university sport including but not limited to the Top 8 Academic All-Canadians, Athletes of the Year (Lieutenant Governor Athletic Awards) and Annual Meeting & Conference.

OUTCOMES

- Increase number of national awards
- Continue to enhance and professionalize the delivery of special events
- Clarity of process for the Awards and Recognition programs
- Launch U SPORTS Hall of Fame
- Positive feedback reflecting premium standards

PRIORITY 2

National Advocacy

Play a leadership role in promoting student-athlete health and safety, enhancing U SPORTS' significant place in the infrastructure of the Canadian sport community, improving diversity and inclusion in university sports, and promoting U SPORTS' unique benefits to prospective student-athletes and the broader public.



Priority 2.1 Student-Athlete Health & Safety

STRATEGY

Advance student-athlete health and safety.

OUTCOMES

- Harmonize, facilitate and support our members and Conferences in student-athlete health and wellness at a national level
- Establish best practice plans to support core relevant issues of abuse, mental health and concussion awareness, driven by expert recommendations and guidance
- Policies and procedures updated, compatible and communicated with all stakeholders

Priority 2.2 Partnerships

STRATEGY

Develop and strengthen U SPORTS' position and relevancy within the Canadian Sport System.

OUTCOMES

- Working collaboratively with all Conferences while providing reciprocal support to service our members effectively
- U SPORTS becomes a more integral part of the domestic sports conversation
- Formal agreements signed with NSO's participating within U SPORTS and FISU sports
- More organizations have university sports, athletes, coaches and officials included within their long-term development pathways

Priority 2.3 Diversity

STRATEGY

Advance awareness of the diversity within Canadian university sport.

OUTCOMES

- More inclusive representation
- A report with findings and recommendations to address gaps within university sport
- Conferences and Members are involved in proactively identifying and implementing initiatives together

Priority 2.4 Awareness

STRATEGY

Promote and share the unique and inspiring story of U SPORTS both internally and externally.

OUTCOMES

- Increase visibility and understanding of U SPORTS vision, mission and values
- Increase reach and affinity for U SPORTS content
- Harmonize Conferences and Members in complementary marcom initiatives
- Educate future student-athletes about U SPORTS potential

PRIORITY 3

Operational Excellence

Ensure that U SPORTS acts with integrity and transparency, operates on the basis of an efficient and effective governance model, and delivers a healthy university sport system that fosters competitive balance and boasts strong compliance with its rules and regulations.



Priority 3.1 Governance

STRATEGY

Enhance the compatibility and effectiveness of U SPORTS by-laws and policies.

OUTCOMES

- Clear, compatible, sound and widely understood policies related to U SPORTS' governance and decision-making process
- Improve level of Committee on-boarding and engagement followed by consistency and optimization of U SPORTS staff and members in managing Committee processes
- Healthy and legitimate championship structure respectful of competitive balance

Priority 3.2 Compliance

STRATEGY

Pursue enhancements to U SPORTS' compliance mechanisms.

OUTCOMES

- Increase level of education, understanding and abide by policies related to U SPORTS rules and regulations (i.e. Recruiting, Eligibility, Athletic Financial Awards, Discipline)
- Improve user experience to facilitate administrative process and effectiveness
- More modules and tools on U SPORTS Central to educate Members and assist them in understanding and interpreting various rules and regulations

Priority 3.3 Service

STRATEGY

Enhance customer service in support of U SPORTS' Membership and Conferences.

OUTCOMES

- U SPORTS office is a reliable and trusted partner providing exceptional core service
- Elevate professionalism
- Elevate bilingualism efforts
- Progress efficiencies around 'consult and collaborate' process

PRIORITY 4

Organizational Sustainability

Utilize solid management practices to maintain good financial health and protect the long-term sustainability and viability of the national office, its staff, its programs, and the participation of member institutions in those programs.



Priority 4.1 Fiscal Health & Culture Strong

STRATEGY

Improve internal operations to enhance long-term success.

OUTCOMES

- Eliminate deficit and establish reserve funds
- Improve financial and core operating fundamentals
- Stable, strong structure featuring inspired and talented staff
- Financial constraints do not impede the achievement of the strategic plan or our member's ability to achieve their varsity sport objectives

Priority 4.2 Commercial Growth

STRATEGY

Undertake a leadership role in collaboration with Members and Conferences to implement effective partnerships that elevate U SPORTS in the areas of sponsorship, broadcast, licensing and marketing.

OUTCOMES

- Increase revenues
- Increase level of partner engagement and satisfaction with U SPORTS
- Realize strategic benefit from commercial efforts



MEASURING PROGRESS

We will develop an annual scorecard to monitor our progress against the desired outcomes. The CEO and senior leadership team assume overall accountability for the successful implementation of the Strategic Plan, with specific responsibilities assigned to relevant national office staff. The leadership team will report to the Board on a quarterly basis and annual budgets will be set to align and support those key actions that directly contribute to our long-term success. U SPORTS will conduct a comprehensive review of progress at the three-year milestone of the Plan.



CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS

NATIONAL SPORT ORGANIZATIONS



Canada



CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS

MULTI-SPORT ORGANIZATIONS / PARTNER LEAGUES



COMMERCIAL PARTNERS





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