

A RISING TIDE

Dalhousie's Promise to Nova Scotia and the World

Dalhousie University strategic framework



DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY



NOVA SCOTIA
CANADA



Purpose

Place and People



Place shapes purpose—and people bring it to life.

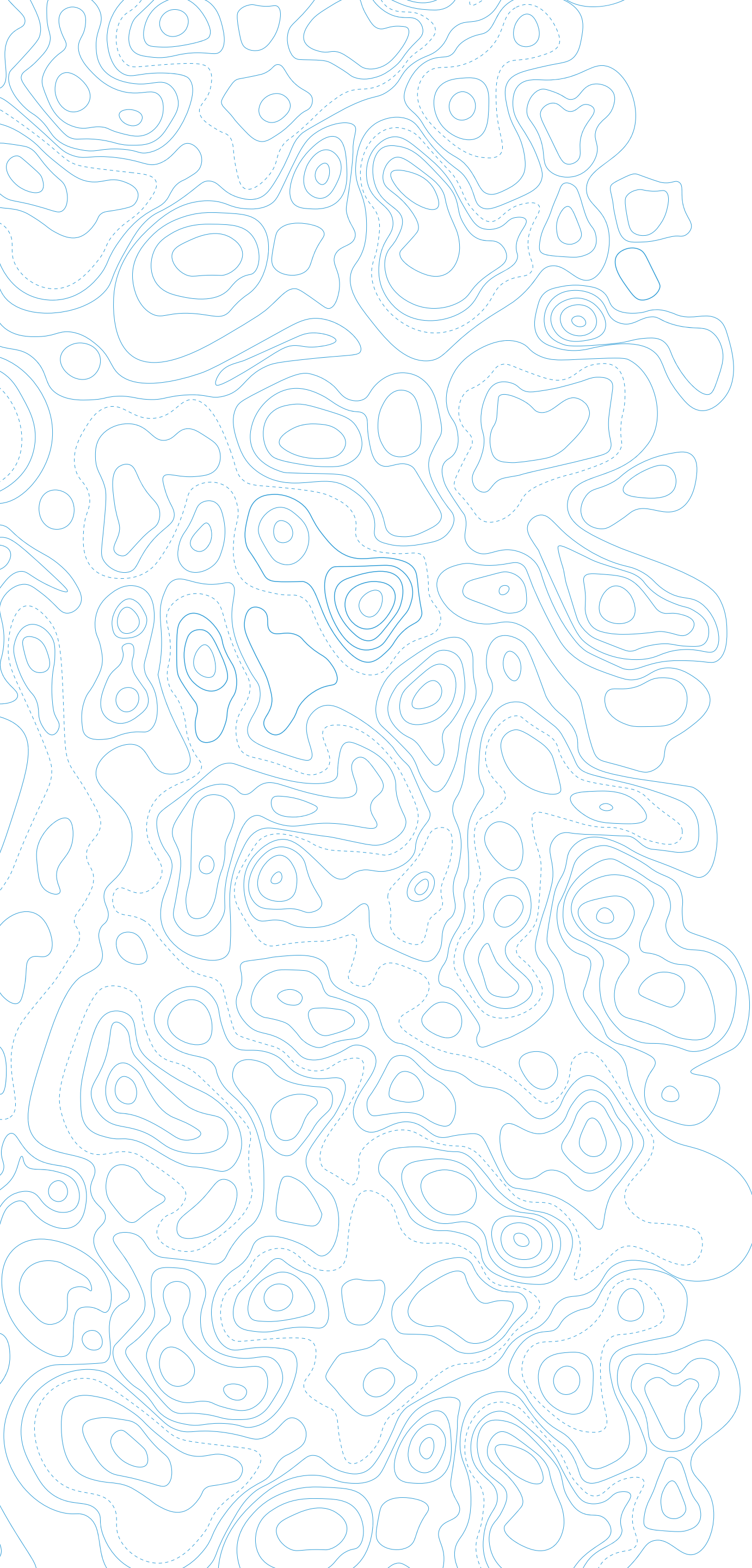
We live and work on Canada's East Coast. These are the lands of the First Nations who constitute the Wabanaki—the People of the Dawn, first on the continent to greet each new day and who, for centuries, have made this a place of welcome. Here, people of shared and distinct histories and identities make their home, the highest tides in the world shape our shores, and the vast horizon calls us to think bigger and reach further.

A rising tide lifts; so, too, does a university.

We are teachers, builders, thinkers, and doers—working together to lift people, ideas, and communities. That we do this work here, in our home on the edge of the Atlantic, matters. Our place in Nova Scotia connects us by land to Canada and all its peoples and by water to the world.

For more than two centuries, Dalhousie's story has been woven into the story of Nova Scotia. Our ambition and impact grow in concert with this place and its people. Changemakers and caretakers, trailblazers and torchbearers, newcomers and neighbours—hundreds of thousands of Nova Scotians have found a place at Dalhousie, and we've helped people from around the world find belonging in Nova Scotia.

Dalhousie wouldn't be here after 200 years if we weren't persistent, resilient, creative, and ready to take on a good challenge. Like the East Coast communities we serve, we have endured rough seas and hard times. Our size, scale, and collaborative spirit allow us to bring people together across disciplines, sectors, and communities to tackle the complex issues that define our time. We know our potential grows when we listen, learn, and act together to serve as a beacon that welcomes the world to Nova Scotia and launches the best of Nova Scotia into the world. That is how we fulfil higher education's promise: a better quality of life for our students and graduates, and a more prosperous, productive, and inspired society.



Our two piers of purpose: **Place and People**

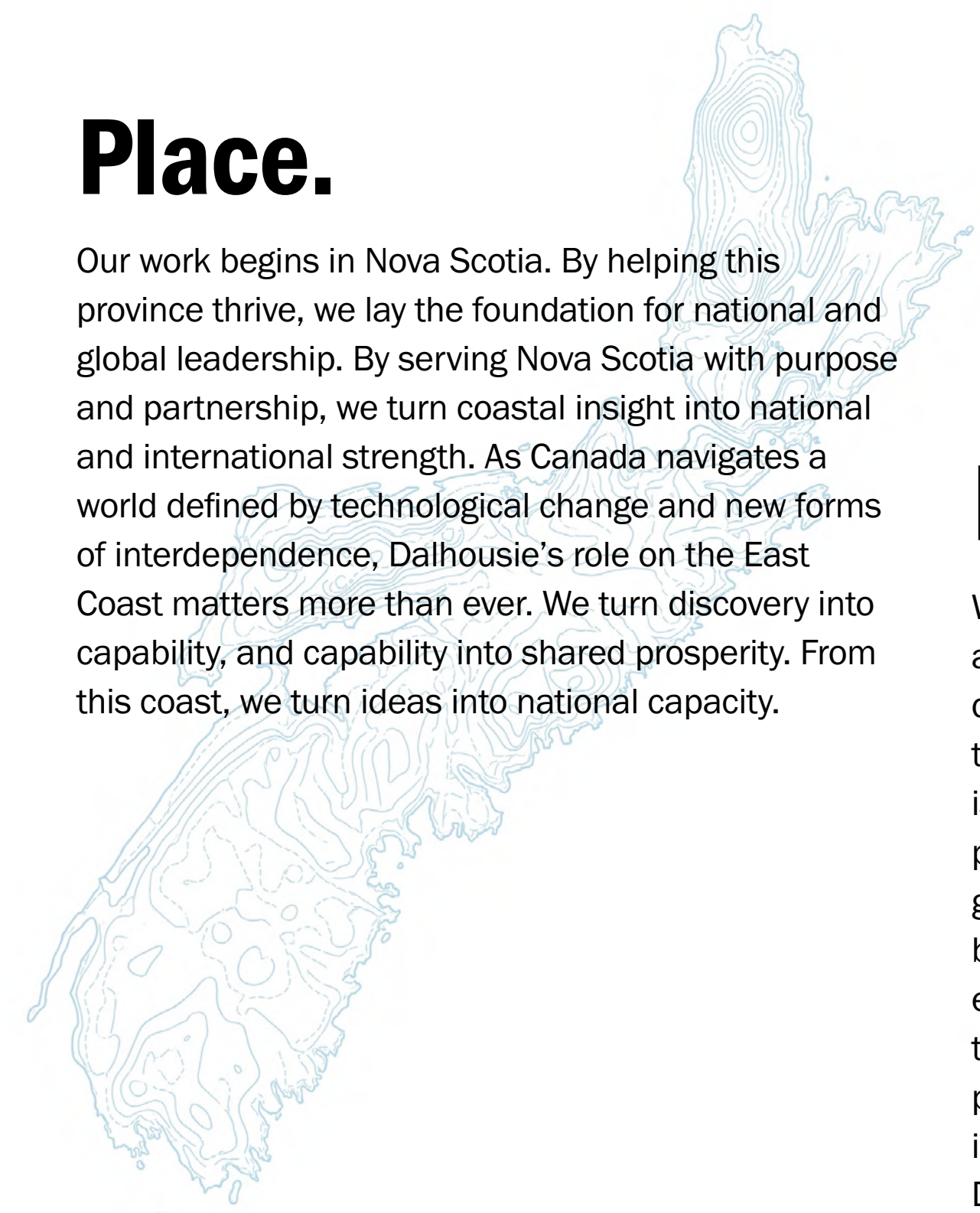
Dalhousie exists to lift people, ideas, and communities. We do this by cultivating the ability to imagine better futures and act to bring them within reach.

Strategy turns purpose into action. Inspired by the docks and wharves that have long served to connect Nova Scotia to the wider world, we tie our strategic intent to two “piers” of purpose.

These piers offer launch points for bold ambition, steady ports in shifting currents, and gathering places for shared potential. We take inspiration from Halifax’s historic Pier 21—a landing place of possibility for so many newcomers—and the spirit with which the Mi’kmaq, the Wolastoqiyik and the Passamaquoddy have long cared for this region as a gateway to new horizons. Dalhousie strives to continue this legacy as a place of welcome, belonging, and opportunity.

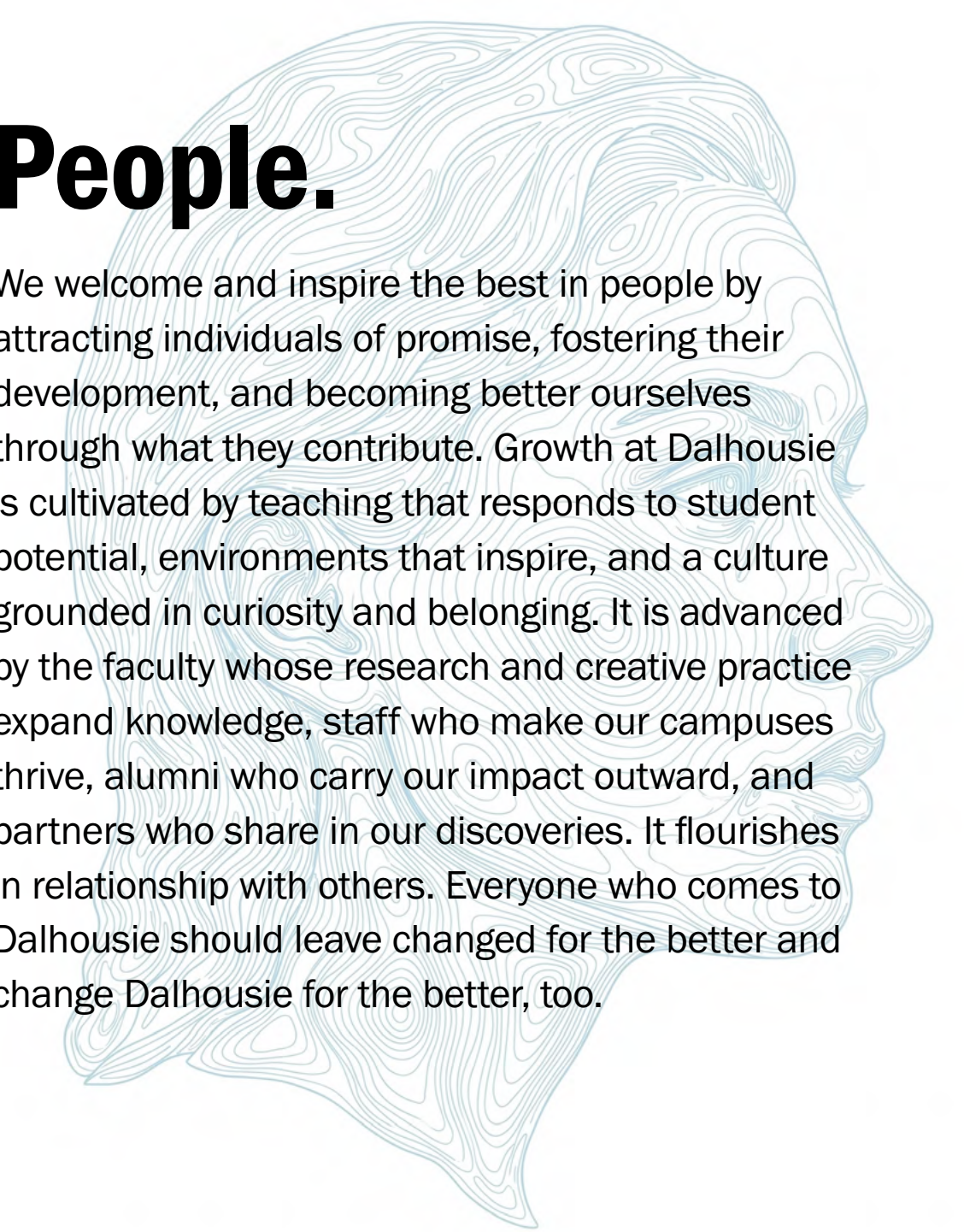
Place.

Our work begins in Nova Scotia. By helping this province thrive, we lay the foundation for national and global leadership. By serving Nova Scotia with purpose and partnership, we turn coastal insight into national and international strength. As Canada navigates a world defined by technological change and new forms of interdependence, Dalhousie’s role on the East Coast matters more than ever. We turn discovery into capability, and capability into shared prosperity. From this coast, we turn ideas into national capacity.



People.

We welcome and inspire the best in people by attracting individuals of promise, fostering their development, and becoming better ourselves through what they contribute. Growth at Dalhousie is cultivated by teaching that responds to student potential, environments that inspire, and a culture grounded in curiosity and belonging. It is advanced by the faculty whose research and creative practice expand knowledge, staff who make our campuses thrive, alumni who carry our impact outward, and partners who share in our discoveries. It flourishes in relationship with others. Everyone who comes to Dalhousie should leave changed for the better and change Dalhousie for the better, too.





Our Compass Bearings

Beliefs that guide us

As we seek to centre **Place** and **People**, we hold true to **eight core beliefs**. These set the direction for our purpose and keep us on course.

We grow from strong roots.

Our foundation is here in Mi'kma'ki and the people and communities who have shaped this place. We learn from Indigenous knowledges. We honour the culture and legacy of African Nova Scotian communities who have been here for more than 400 years. We recognize and celebrate the diverse contributions of all who make Nova Scotia home. These roots keep us humble, grounded, and responsible to our place and its future.

When we focus our efforts, we maximize our impact.

We can't do everything. By aligning our resources and energy with our mission, we build the capacity to deliver lasting change. Focusing on what matters most allows us to be bold, strategic, and sustainable in how we serve.

Excellence breaks barriers.

We believe excellence thrives when ideas are diverse, opportunities are open, and everyone can contribute fully. Removing barriers to education and advancement changes lives and strengthens our collective impact. Inclusive excellence is our path to purposeful change locally and globally.

Inspired individuals forge stronger communities.

Dalhousie is a place where individuals grow and develop. It is where they are challenged, learn self-reliance and creativity, and discover what they can achieve with drive and determination. They also learn about their accountabilities and responsibilities to one another and to their communities because the solutions of the future can only be forged together.

Ideas live in action and application.

We believe knowledge matters most when it's put to work. From labs and classrooms to communities and coastlines, we bring ideas to life through partnership and practice. Our talent is in the discipline and hard work of making things happen. Our region's long-term prosperity depends on Dalhousie's excellence.

Students are the heart of our purpose.

Students arrive with potential; they leave as leaders, creators, and problem-solvers. Their diverse journeys and perspectives enrich our university, shaping how we teach, learn, and grow. Our most vital role is to equip them to imagine better futures and act to bring those futures within reach.

Curiosity is our superpower.

We generate knowledge by asking bold questions, embracing complexity, and engaging across differences. We value both discovery and application, and we steward innovation with care and integrity. Academic freedom is essential to our curiosity—not as an abstract ideal, but as a public good that allows universities to pursue truth, challenge assumptions, and serve society with independence, integrity, and courage.

Leadership is an act of service.

At Dalhousie, leadership is rooted in care for people, communities, and the public good. We foster a culture where students, staff, and faculty grow into leaders whose actions reflect strong values and our collective mission. In doing so, we strengthen democracy, advance dialogue, and honour our role as a civic university.





Aspiration

Our Shared Horizons

At Dalhousie, we believe a great university is measured not only by the quality of its research and teaching, but also by its willingness to meet the needs of its time with courage, creativity, and care.

We are proud of our roots in Nova Scotia and inspired by the opportunities that lie ahead. We haven't always gotten it right, but we have listened, learned, and grown through challenge and change. Our strength has always been greater than the sum of our parts: a community of thinkers, creators, and partners whose collective effort fuels our excellence.

Into our third century, our aspiration is clear: to be excellent and relevant, grounded and global.

To realize our aspirations, we are charting a bold and deliberate course defined by six shared horizons. Some focus on what we do as learners or researchers, others on how we live, lead, and work together. All horizons offer an invitation for everyone who sees themselves as part of Dalhousie and who supports our mission and purpose.

Together, these horizons reflect the future we're striving to create: one that lifts people and communities, expands opportunity, strengthens democracy, and sustains the planet we share.

Rooted in Place

HEALTH

Healthier lives, stronger communities

What if the solutions to the world's health challenges could begin here, in Nova Scotia, with care, research, and community working as one?

Dalhousie trains more health-care professionals than any other university in Atlantic Canada, many in programs unavailable elsewhere in the region. But health at Dalhousie reaches beyond hospitals and clinics. Our researchers are advancing breakthrough health solutions in aging, food security, climate resilience, vaccinology, mental health, and AI-driven care. And we recognize that healthy people depend on healthy communities, environments, and ecosystems.

In a province facing rising health needs and constrained public budgets, our leadership in health and social systems will help deliver more value where it is needed most. We do this through collaboration, efficiency, and community-based care that reflects Nova Scotia's realities. From agriculture to ocean science, from veterinary health to environmental data analytics and design, Dalhousie's interdisciplinary

strengths are transforming how we understand and sustain well-being.

We will expand and evolve health and wellness education, research, and partnerships so that more people in the region will receive excellent care close to home. Rural and underserved communities will see real progress in reducing health disparities. Our graduates will shape the future of care—drawing on Indigenous and African Nova Scotian knowledges, social innovation, AI, and interdisciplinary collaboration to meet complex needs. Nova Scotia's demographic realities make it a powerful living laboratory for improving care systems everywhere.

By connecting strengths across the university, we will champion upstream, inclusive approaches that promote dignity, address social and structural drivers of health, and strengthen well-being across the lifespan. From tackling child poverty and domestic violence to advancing mental health and seniors' care, Dalhousie will help create the conditions for individuals, families, and communities, as well as the environments they depend on, to flourish.



DISCOVERY

Discovery that powers progress

What if discovery made Canada's East Coast a global force for a stronger, more sustainable world?

Dalhousie performs more funded research and development than all other organizations in Nova Scotia combined. We lead in ocean science, clean tech, and agri-food innovation, with deepening expertise in AI, engineering, and environmental science.

Dalhousie will lead mission-driven research that unites disciplines, partners, and public purpose around the challenges that matter most, from climate resilience and sustainable energy to health innovation, digital sovereignty, and security. We are advancing ocean-based carbon removal, smart agricultural systems, clean energy, and digitally enabled systems that harness advances in data, computation, and AI. This way, we turn discovery into the capacity to withstand and adapt to global uncertainty. Our edge of the

Atlantic is more than a source of power. It's a proving ground for resourcefulness. Here is where sustainable energy, digital innovation, and marine technology converge with culture, ethics, and enterprise to shape the next economy.

To realize this potential, we must also excel at translation: building the skills, pathways, and partnerships to move ideas into action. We will help close Nova Scotia's productivity gap by strengthening technology adoption, innovation, entrepreneurship, and the capacity of organizations to transform and grow. Our applied science, management expertise, policy leadership, and community and industry collaborations will enable us to move from discovery to action.

In a time when innovation and security are intertwined, Dalhousie's expertise will bolster Canada's sovereign capacity to respond to international challenges. We will help Canada not only participate in the next global economy but also shape it.

CIVIC STRENGTH

Strengthening justice and trust with creativity and understanding

What if people were inspired to create more just and connected future?

Dalhousie's identity has long been rooted in public purpose. Since our earliest days, we have nurtured professional programs designed to serve society and outreach initiatives that put student and faculty expertise to work in communities. Our partnerships with Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian communities, and our century-old relationship with the University of King's College, have shaped Nova Scotia's civic and cultural life.

In a time of polarization and misinformation, Dalhousie will help renew confidence in evidence-based research and the democratic values that sustain us. Across every discipline—from health to law, engineering to business, science to the arts—we will model confidence in knowledge and science, and humility about their limits, recognizing that trust in knowledge grows when it remains open, self-reflective, and responsive to new perspectives. We will uphold the value of curiosity-driven inquiry while ensuring that new knowledge is connected to the systems that allow societies to flourish, be they democratic, cultural, social, or environmental.

We will strengthen the civic fabric that binds communities together by fostering imagination, advancing equity and justice, and supporting the next generation of leaders to think critically, act creatively, and serve with integrity. Conversation and exploration will be central to this work. We will create spaces on campus, online, and in communities where people can test ideas across difference; where disagreement can lead to greater understanding; and where scholarship informs public life and public life enriches scholarship.

Culture, creativity, and the arts will play a defining role in telling the stories of this place and its people. The creative arts offer us strategies and language to express ourselves and to understand the world in its infinite complexity and they nurture the empathy, curiosity, and courage that democracy demands. The humanities and artistic practices will be elevated as engines of dialogue and discovery, connecting past to future and inspiring creativity to action.

By deepening public discourse, ensuring room for diverse voices and lived experiences, and modeling transparency and accountability in our own governance, Dalhousie will help renew our shared capacity to lead thoughtfully, engage justly, and act in the public good here in Nova Scotia and beyond.



Powered by People

BELONGING

Belonging that inspires purpose

What if belonging sparked confidence and purpose?

Dalhousie is built in classrooms and clinics, workshops and research stations, theatres and greenhouses. These are places where insight becomes action and purpose takes root. From our founding commitment to be “open to all,” to modern initiatives expanding access and inclusion, we are evolving into a more welcoming and supportive university.

Belonging grows in programs, work units, offices, and teams where people feel respected, valued, and connected. It is nurtured in the relationships

that sustain our daily lives: mentorships that guide, colleagues who celebrate our successes, and communities that invite us in and make us feel seen.

When students, faculty, and staff feel a genuine sense of shared purpose and connection, they thrive professionally, socially, and emotionally. We cultivate wellness and engagement as we champion a supportive, high-performing university community. Learners will graduate with a sense of identity shaped by inclusive classrooms, diverse peers, and supportive mentorship. Faculty and staff will feel valued and recognized in their own spaces and they will bring their full creativity and purpose to Dalhousie’s shared mission.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership that inspires action

What if leadership was cultivated in everyone?

At Dalhousie, impact is cumulative. It is built through generations of influence, contribution, and care for the communities we serve. Our students have gone on to lead in government, industry, non-profits, and research, and they’ve been responsible for social change and economic growth. Our staff and faculty strive to model leadership in research labs and registrar’s offices, clinics and classrooms, residence halls and planning teams. Some shape new fields of discovery; others strengthen existing programs and communities.

Our students will graduate ready to take initiative, solve problems, and lead with integrity in every sector—from public service and social innovation to entrepreneurship and global enterprise. Faculty and staff will embrace this same spirit, bringing curiosity, creativity, courage, and civic purpose to their work, and inspiring others to do the same.

We will continue our work to ensure leadership is broadly defined and widely encouraged. At Dalhousie, leadership is not only about holding authority, but about the capacity to find potential in people and ideas and to inspire and bring to life the realization of that potential for the better. It’s also about understanding the responsibility that comes with that capability.

CHALLENGE

Challenge that inspires excellence

What if everyone was challenged and supported to do their best work?

Dalhousie is home to learners, creators, builders, shapers, and scholars whose talents shape disciplines, professions, and communities. We are known for world-leading research and discovery, transformative teaching, dedicated staff expertise, creative practice, and programs that prepare students for lives of purpose and impact. Dalhousie’s long-standing Killam legacy continues to elevate our research environment, enabling us to attract exceptional scholars, support graduate student talent, and inspire the pursuit of discovery that strengthens Canada’s future. Our breadth across fields, professions, and ways of knowing is one of our strengths.


Here, challenge is the engine of growth. We can ask hard questions, embrace complexity, and stretch beyond what’s comfortable. Across Dalhousie, we challenge each other to think deeply, act boldly, and refine our craft.

Whether through teaching, learning, research, professional practice, or service, we will grow a community that stretches and strengthens people and that equips them to lead, adapt, and make meaningful contributions in a fast-changing world. We will push the boundaries of our own limitations as individuals, as a community, and as an institution to expand our collective capacity for excellence and impact.

An aerial photograph of ocean waves with a topographic map overlay. The map lines are white and blue, showing contour lines over the dark blue water. The waves are white and foamy, contrasting with the deep blue of the sea.

Advancing the public good

A rising tide by design



Universities exist because societies choose to invest in knowledge, talent, and independent inquiry for the long term. That trust carries obligations. Dalhousie's autonomy, resources, and influence must always be earned through responsible stewardship and demonstrable impact for the communities we serve.

Purposeful impact does not happen by chance; it is achieved through design and by people, by builders and changemakers who turn vision into action. Our promise to lift people, ideas, and communities depends on how we act and on the choices we make, the priorities we set, and the discipline with which we align our efforts.

By investing in the strength of Nova Scotia, Dalhousie strengthens our country. We will align our teaching, research, and innovation with the needs of our province and the priorities of our nation—turning local insight into national capacity and global leadership. Our global networks and partnerships will extend this

impact outward, advancing transnational education and research that both benefits the world and strengthens our home province. In health, discovery, and civic impact, Dalhousie will lead from the East Coast, showing how excellence rooted in place can ripple outward to shape systems, improve lives, and inspire confidence in Canada's future.

Our ambitions will be reflected from our campuses to our global networks. We will design our spaces with intention, creating environments that model sustainability, creativity, and care. From Halifax to Truro, Yarmouth to Sydney, Dalhousie is part of the civic and cultural fabric of Nova Scotia. We welcome

the world in and launch people and ideas out into the world. Through our clinics, theatres, research centres, athletic fields, and green spaces, we will connect local vitality with global purpose making Nova Scotia a destination for talent, creativity, and discovery.

Purposeful impact also depends on strong foundations. We will be responsible stewards of the investment placed in us, aligning our systems, scale, resources, and governance with our mission. We will ensure that our decisions strengthen learning, discovery, and service in ways that make Dalhousie stronger tomorrow than it is today. Our actions will be guided by fairness, transparency, and accountability,

and our success will be measured by the good we enable within our university, across our province, and throughout the country we serve.

Every tide begins with a pull. Ours begins in Nova Scotia, with people who believe that the true measure of a university is the difference it makes. By investing in people and place, by designing with purpose, and by leading with courage and care, Dalhousie will continue to be a rising tide for Nova Scotia, for Canada, and for the world.



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