

Students' Association of Olds College Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026

Introduction

The SAOC is continually looking for ways to improve and seeks to identify opportunities to better serve its members. Having lacked formal strategic direction in years past, it was determined that the SAOC would benefit from the creation of a strategic plan to guide its improvement. To this end, an ad-hoc committee of the board was established in November 2022 consisting of Directors, the President, and the Executive Director.

The process of developing the strategic plan was a multifaceted approach which incorporated research, analytics, and above all, collaboration among committee members. The project began by determining the position of the SAOC at the time of its formation by identifying its strengths and weaknesses via a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis. This was accomplished in a standard manner which involved the identification of key stakeholders, the dispersal of questionnaires or surveys, the gathering of responses, and the consideration of that data by committee. Once responses were gathered, the committee documented trends within them, and referenced those trends during the development of the strategic plan proper.

The committee additionally developed a *mission, vision, and values statement* to guide the SAOC not only in the creation of this plan, but to define the organization's purpose and values for the future. Following this statement the plan here outlined consists of multiple components, primary among which are *pillars*: broad, encompassing themes under which more specific *goals* may be detailed to guide the organization over the course of the plan's duration. *Goals* are the next level of specificity beneath pillars, and state the intent of the SAOC's actions for the years following the implementation of this plan. Beneath goals come *targets*, which represent actionable, quantifiable results which are tied to the goals under which they are written. These are the items that the board and operations staff will busy themselves with achieving over the plan's duration. The successful meeting of these targets will be assessed through *measurables*: qualitative metrics which will tell the Board of Directors to what degree each target was achieved. Finally, the plan outlines *critical success factors*, which represent key obstacles to overcome, approaches to take, and relationships to reinforce throughout the implementation of the plan in order to ensure its success.

At each level of the organization, the SAOC is excited and proud to have developed their very first strategic plan and present the product of its efforts to the public. This document will serve as a set of guidelines and tangible goals to operations and governance alike. It will stand as a testament to the commitment and dedication of the organization to its members. It will inform, educate, and inspire student leaders to create positive and impactful change for the thousands of individuals whom they were elected to represent - not just until Summer 2026, but into the future.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Vision.....	3
Mission.....	3
Values.....	3
Pillar 1: Advocacy.....	4
Pillar 2: Community.....	5
Pillar 3: Empowerment.....	7
Critical Success Factors.....	8



Vision

Safe spaces, supported students, strong community.

Mission

The SAOC's mission is to empower students by creating a safe environment filled with allies and supporting them through their journeys with community-based services.

Values

Service - Advocacy - Empowerment - Community - Allyship

Pillar 1: Advocacy

The SAOC will partner with community leaders to deliver meaningful external relations across all levels of government to elevate the voices of its members and ensure their key messages are heard.

Target: Three (3) advocacy asks developed in whole or part by the SAOC delivered and advocated for to the government.

Measurable(s):

1. Adoption or incorporation of asks by government.
2. Number of stakeholders in support of given ask(s).

The SAOC will form relationships with industry and community partners and collaborate on initiatives in service of the socio-economic needs of their members.

Target: Three (3) initiatives or projects developed with industry and community partners and delivered or otherwise made available to members.

Measurable(s):

1. Number of members engaged with initiatives or projects post-delivery.

The SAOC will be a passionate, proactive, and empathetic representative of its members while relaying their concerns to administration to improve academic quality and the student experience at Olds College.

Target: The SAOC will facilitate one (1) public awareness campaign related to academics each academic year.

Measurable(s):

1. Number of unique pageviews on campaign website.
2. Number of students spoken with at public engagement events for campaign.

Pillar 2: Community

The SAOC will leverage a high standard of professional conduct to nurture a positive reputation within the community, and to provide opportunities for collaboration between the community and its members.

Target: The SAOC will pursue no less than six (6) opportunities for collaboration between the community and its members per year.

Measurable(s):

1. Number of volunteer opportunities in the Town of Olds provided to members.
2. Number of community sponsors for SAOC events/initiatives.

The SAOC will provide, support, and facilitate physical & intangible spaces for members to gather and bond in order to strengthen fellowship among them.

Target: Two (2) feedback sessions per academic year with club leaders in order to continually monitor and improve the SAOC's oversight duties.

Measurable(s):

1. Number of suggestions gathered.
2. Average rating of training quality collected at feedback sessions.

Target: Two (2) opportunities per year for members to provide feedback on the relevance and quality of SAOC events.

Measurable(s):

1. Number of members providing feedback.
2. Diversity of members providing feedback.

The SAOC will steward & invest member funds responsibly, and member engagement generated and made available to members at close of strategic plan period.

Target: One (1) report on service growth, investiture development, and member engagement generated and made available to members at the close of the strategic plan period.

Measurable(s):

1. Number of unique pageviews/presentation viewers/downloads of report.

Pillar 3: Empowerment

The SAOC will provide and advocate for support services which take into account the individual needs of its diverse members to ensure they are equipped for challenges faced in their unique lived experiences.

Target: One (1) audit of internal & external support services conducted to cross-reference with member demographics and identify gaps in service delivery.

Measurable(s):

1. Number of recommendations outlined in audit.

The SAOC will provide members with opportunities to develop practical, personal, and professional skills beyond their curricular activities to aid in navigating life before and after graduation.

Target: Ten (10) opportunities afforded to students to gain new skills or be educated on practical matters outside of the classroom throughout the strategic plan period.

Measurable(s):

1. Number of attendees to workshops/sessions.
2. Variety of topics covered by workshops/sessions.
3. Number of workshops/sessions held.

The SAOC will take steps to enhance its policy and governance structure to facilitate equitable access to its decision-making processes and ensure marginalized voices are heard at the strategic level.

Target: One (1) qualitative report prepared by external EDI consultant and presented to Board of Directors on issues and improvements to be made to SAOC procedures, policies, and governance structures.

Measurable(s):

1. Number of recommendations from the report implemented.
2. Adherence to timeline set by the Board to implement recommendations from the report.

Critical Success Factors

In order to achieve the goals laid out in this plan, the SAOC needs to keep the following key factors in mind.

Member Engagement

The SAOC must continually consult with its members to determine their priorities and needs from the association in order to develop and maintain service offerings that are relevant and useful, and incentivize a deepening of their involvement within the community.

Community Relations

The SAOC must prioritize the creation and maintenance of strong relationships with local and industry leaders both within and outside the student movement and spearheaded by courteous and professional delegations.

Political Climate

The SAOC must be aware of movements in the political and civic climate, and take adequate steps to protect its members from the potential volatility of a changing province.

Operational Capacity

The SAOC must seek to sustainably grow and enhance its capacity to deliver strong services relevant to the needs of its members by prioritizing the professional development, transition, and retention of its staff, student leaders, and institutional memory.