Cultivating Community

A strategic plan for the Faculty of Agriculture

2025 – 2030

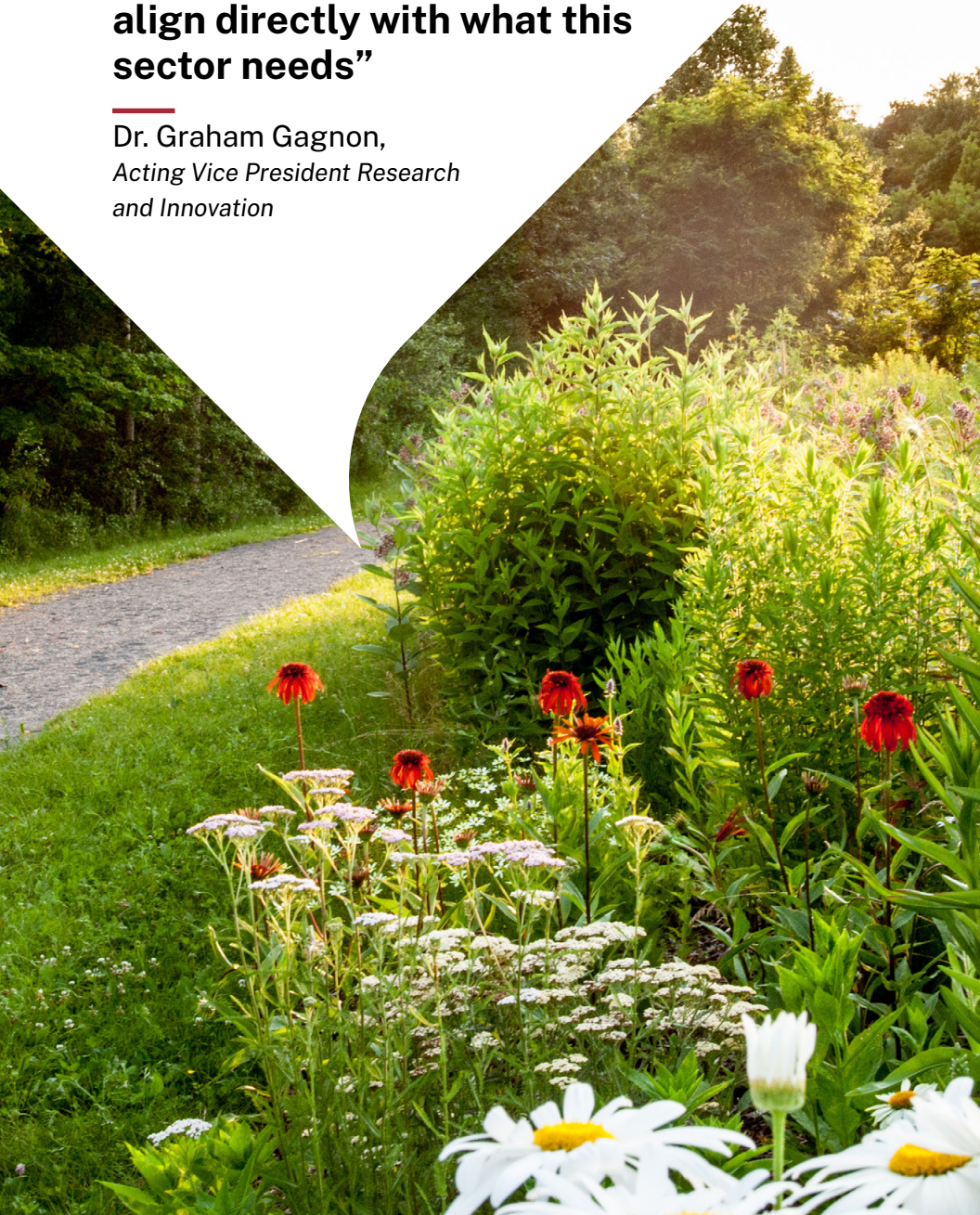


DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE

“Dalhousie’s strengths in sustainable food systems, climate solutions and artificial intelligence align directly with what this sector needs”

Dr. Graham Gagnon,
Acting Vice President Research and Innovation





Message from the Dean

The ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people, Mi'kma'ki, includes the Atlantic provinces, where people are known for their hospitality and close sense of community. I experienced this wonderful sense of closeness while traveling to speak with Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture stakeholders from every Atlantic province as part of our strategic planning process. At every meeting, visit and venue, I experienced firsthand the incredible support and affection for our campus, and how much people care about its success. And I heard we need to reclaim its historic focus of learning by doing while embracing innovation, and to continue to use a global lens for education and research.

I have been incredibly impressed with the innovative research performed within the Faculty of Agriculture which includes precision and digital agriculture, soil science, agricultural sustainability and aquaculture. With our departments ranging from business and social science to engineering and animal and plant sciences, our Faculty is well placed to provide ready and able graduates to industry, government, and academia, and to provide the research and new technologies to keep Nova Scotia, the Atlantic provinces, and Canada leading agriculture globally.

We can do more. Priorities include building and strengthening bridges with our Indigenous and African and Black Nova Scotian communities and investing in campus accessibility. New programs, new facilities and strengthened industry and government partnerships will deepen our connection and relevance to the communities we serve and the learners we educate.

With this plan, we have a united, shared vision for change, engagement and excellence as we pursue greater impact and visibility provincially, nationally and internationally.

Heather L. Bruce
Dean, Faculty of Agriculture
Dalhousie University

Who We Are

Embedded in the larger Dalhousie community are core values and beliefs that drive excellence in education and research. As a proud member of this community, the Faculty of Agriculture upholds these commitments:

- Academic freedom
- Commitment to excellence in teaching, research and service
- Equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility
- Future-ready leaders
- Impactful community engagement
- Social responsibility and sustainability
- Wellness, accessibility, respect and support





In addition to these values that guide our work, the Faculty of Agriculture upholds principles that define how our community shows up in the world.

Service

We are committed to making a difference by going beyond expectations through mentoring, volunteering and providing meaningful support for our broader community.

Collaboration and Inclusion

We value diverse perspectives and prioritize working together across boundaries to achieve shared goals. We welcome new ideas and encourage critical thinking.

Leadership and Initiative

We take initiative, act with purpose, and embrace failure as part of progress—especially when leading change and striving for results.

Innovation

We tackle difficult problems and understand that solutions require bold thinking and new approaches. We have a future-oriented mindset, with a focus on innovation, long-term impact, and continuous improvement.

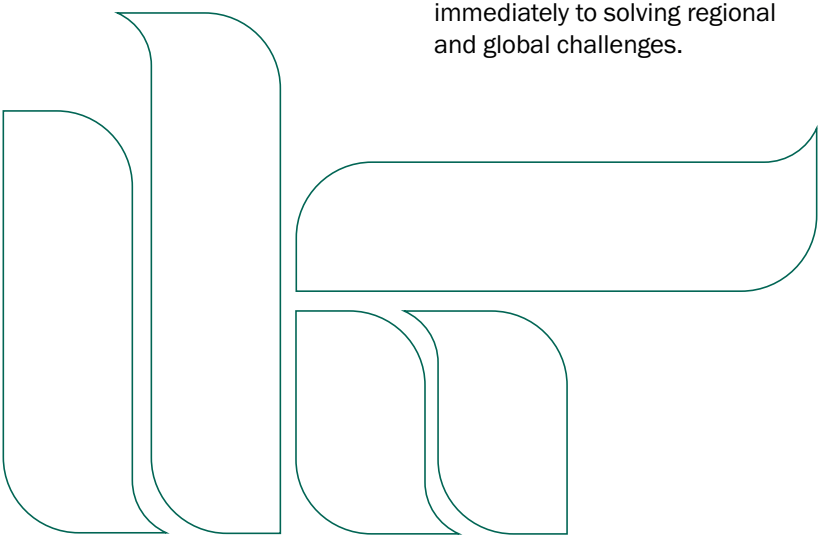
What We Offer

High value education offered in a highly invested community

We foster a strong sense of belonging, where students are seen, supported, and valued. Personalized student-teacher relationships and educational experiences help students thrive academically and personally, building confidence and forming connections they carry throughout their lives.

Work-integrated learning and problem solving

We tackle real-world issues with leading community and industry partners. Our applied labs, campus farm and outdoor classrooms provide inspiring spaces for knowledge and skill development while making our programs highly experiential and relevant. With internship, field experience and international development opportunities to broaden learning across multiple disciplines within the greater Dalhousie community, graduates are well-prepared for diverse careers and can contribute immediately to solving regional and global challenges.



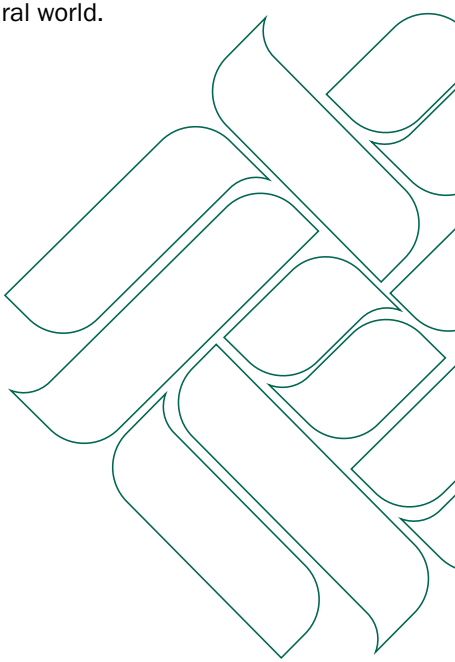
Regional and global leadership in sustainable agriculture, aquaculture and food systems

As one of the dedicated institutions of agricultural education in Canada and the only one in Atlantic Canada, we are a leader in sustainable agriculture, food systems and community well-being. Our emphasis on community-based learning and research gives students a chance to make a real impact. By working to build strong partnerships with agricultural and food stakeholders from Atlantic Canada and around the world, we attract students, partners, and funding aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and social responsibility.

Included in our agriculture and food systems work is teaching and research in the aquaculture space. We acknowledge aquaculture production systems as farming and include it under our agriculture and food themes.

A natural learning environment

More than just spaces for inspiration, our outdoor classrooms and recreational areas offer countless opportunities to connect with nature. With access to multiple gardens, our working campus farm and the Trans Canada Trail system, members of the Dalhousie community can immerse themselves in the outdoors—supporting both personal well-being and a deeper appreciation for the natural world.



Vision: Where We Are Going

We aim to be a leading community of connected changemakers in Canada's agriculture and food system- driven by bold thinking, collaborative spirit, and a deep commitment to research and people development.

Mission: How We Will Get There

Through fostering a vibrant campus culture, developing strong regional and global partnerships and driving change, Dalhousie's Faculty of Agriculture cultivates a diverse community of learners, teachers, and collaborators who are committed to tackling complex challenges with rigour, creativity, and care.



Strategic Priorities

To achieve our mission and vision, we have identified a set of strategic priorities that will guide our decisions, investments, and actions over the coming years.

Program Design

We will revitalize programs through innovative curriculum reform, integrating experiential learning across academic and non-academic initiatives. We will meet the evolving needs of a diverse, global learner population and ensure relevance to workforce and societal demands.

Objectives:

- Work with community partners to align programs to employer needs
- Broaden opportunities for student involvement in internships and co-curricular activities.
- Boost the role of outdoor classrooms and the campus farm to augment applied learning opportunities.
- Continue to engage with learners outside of our campus community and around the globe

Campus Life

We will foster a vibrant and inclusive environment by investing in infrastructure and initiatives that enhance engagement, belonging, and enjoyment for all—ultimately strengthening student experience and campus culture.

Objectives:

- Engage with students to identify and prioritize impactful initiatives
- Update the campus master plan to focus resources on projects that enhance work integrated learning and research capacity- including increasing accessibility.
- Continue upgrades to housing and food offerings including initiatives for students who are food insecure
- Support for campus activities that bring faculty and students together for increased networking and engagement

Community Engagement

We will amplify our story by aligning our messaging and outreach efforts to highlight our unique strengths. By opening our campus to and actively engaging with the broader community and agricultural industry, we will showcase our talent, build authentic relationships, and foster an environment that strengthens both local and global connections.

Objectives:

- Enhance campus-community engagement by expanding conference and meeting services, hosting inclusive public events, and ensuring spaces are safe, accessible, and welcoming for all.
- Strengthen partnerships with Indigenous, African and Black Nova Scotian communities
- Align outreach efforts of partner units including recruitment, marketing, communications and alumni relations to amplify efforts.
- Extend our reach by attending community and industry events and identifying opportunities for collaborative projects

Research Impact

We will foster a vibrant, collaborative, and well-funded research ecosystem by strengthening interdisciplinary teamwork and stakeholder engagement. Through targeting strategic funding, we will create opportunities for cross-disciplinary approaches and collaboration with internal and external partners.

Objectives:

- Explore funding opportunities to bring researchers together for larger initiatives
- Investigate avenues for increasing graduate student numbers
- Develop faculty mentorship program to support early career researchers
- Strengthen relationships with funders, government and industry partners

“There are a lot of things we can do without, but agriculture is certainly not one of them. Food sovereignty has never been as important as it is in 2025, so being in agriculture feels like you’re doing something important.”

Jon Raymond Dykstra,
Class of 2009





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