

EXCELLENCE AND ENGAGEMENT

Royal Society of Canada
Strategic Plan 2026-2030





Studiis eodem diversis nitimur



*We strive towards the same thing,
although having different pursuits*



In a time of widespread scientific and technological change, demographic transformation, political reconfiguration, and cultural diversification, how can leading artists and thinkers come together to help make a better future?

When this question was posed in the industrializing and urbanizing 1870s, a concerned group of highly respected Canadians under the leadership of the Governor General began imagining a collective effort to help society benefit from enhanced knowledge of the past and present.

The Royal Society of Canada was created by a Special Act of Parliament in 1883 and, from the outset, sought to become “a working body, not a purely honorary institution” to give life to its mandate, at home and around the world through specific initiatives to advance Canada.

In recent years, abrupt and profound changes have rapidly undermined the resilience of knowledge systems within Canada and around the world, posing grave challenges to our collective capacity to maximize freedom, democracy and human rights for the common good.

Today perhaps more than ever it is essential for the RSC to strengthen the foundations of societal trust and to help lead the world in scholarly, artistic and scientific excellence and engagement for a better future.

| Who we are

The RSC is a Canadian not-for-profit organization with English and French as its two official languages. The RSC includes 3,000 multigenerational scholars, artists and scientists across all major fields, elected after rigorous merit review. The RSC is defined by its engaged members who work strategically in diverse ways to connect their expertise and talent to Canada's and the world's greatest challenges.

| Where we are

From its headquarters at Walter House in Ottawa, the RSC invests in member-driven initiatives throughout Canada. Walter House is on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin nation. From coast to coast to coast, we are grateful to acknowledge the ancestral and unceded territory of the Inuit and First Nation and Métis peoples and the dozens of languages and cultures that enrich what many call Turtle Island. The RSC is fully committed to truth and reconciliation.

| Our Mission

To recognize and promote excellence and engagement to enhance policy, advance public understanding, and strengthen civil society.

■ Our Vision

A Canadian society that leverages excellence in all its forms in order to strengthen democracy, promote peace and prosperity, and make a better future for all.

■ Our Values

In pursuing our mission and vision, we are guided by a commitment to:

- Excellence
- Independence
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Democracy
- Transparency and Accountability

■ Foundational Goals

We hold ourselves accountable for advancing three foundational goals in keeping with our mission, vision and values: (a) Recognizing inclusive excellence, (b) Strengthening Canadian society through the democratization of knowledge; and (c) Engaging our membership in communities locally, nationally and globally.



The crest of the Royal Society of Canada from the Office of the Governor General

Foundational Goal #1:

Recognizing inclusive excellence



Since 1883, RSC has recognized excellence in order to contribute to public discussion and debate about the most urgent issues of the day. Building on this tradition, the RSC has in recent years:

- Published *Royally Wronged: The Royal Society of Canada and Indigenous Peoples* in order to better understand the past as a requisite to a better future, and has established the RSC Prize for Indigenous Engagement to recognize First Nations, Inuit and Métis experts whose contributions have advanced The Right to Participate as outlined in Article 18 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).
- Further enhanced its community of Institutional Members primarily due to increased engagement with Francophone universities, resulting in an increase of successful nominations for Francophone scholars and scientists.
- Created the RSC College in 2014 for exceptionally talented new and mid-career professionals who collectively reflect the larger societal and gender diversity of Canada.
- Established the Eric Jackman Prize in recognition of path-breaking and sustained scientific contributions to preventing harm, strengthening resilience, or otherwise benefiting humankind through research in one or more behavioural and social science fields.

These and other efforts have enabled the RSC to imagine next steps in recognizing inclusive excellence including:

- A continual reassessment and analysis of the methods and programs used by the RSC in the recognition of scientific and scholarly excellence.
- Launching the first program by an Academy in support of multiple generations of At-Risk and Displaced Academics and Artists, which will recognize and support researchers displaced to Canada who have made outstanding intellectual contributions in the arts, humanities, social sciences, or sciences.
- Expanding efforts in support of an Indigenous-led research agenda in keeping with Article 18 of UNDRIP.
- Establishing new awards and prizes in recognition of emerging disciplines and new generations.

Foundational Goal #2:

Strengthening
Canadian society
through the
democratization of
knowledge



In order to thrive, Canada urgently needs to accelerate knowledge production and innovation. We need to strengthen the foundation of societal trust by building on successful multiyear initiatives such as the RSC Task Force on COVID-19, continuing rapid-response workshops to H5N1, and fostering a better understanding of the impacts of societal disruption on learning loss and social cohesion.

Toward this end, the RSC intends to:

- Strengthen its capacity to provide governments at all levels – federal, provincial and territorial, as well as municipal – with independent scientific and scholarly expertise;
- Help all Canadians gain free and open access to the most recent and unbiased insights and evidence on current and emerging societal challenges;
- Foster civility through the organization of 160 town halls in 2027 to celebrate 160 years since Confederation where citizens and subject-matter experts engage respectfully with shared goals for collective benefit;
- Significantly expand the calendar of activities at Walter House including the RSC Dialogues as well as activities aimed at enhancing trust with senior elected officials and the public service;
- Establish Canada's first mentoring network that links four generations of Canadians in mutual learning and discovery.

Foundational Goal #3:

Engaging our
membership in
communities locally,
nationally and globally



Election as a Member of the RSC is an invitation to help make a positive societal difference both within Canada and around the world. While the RSC has and will always benefit from expertise wherever it resides, it will be through the effective mobilization of 3,000 outstanding scholars, artists and scientists who are RSC members that our goals will be achieved.

In complementary ways, Institutional Members of the RSC are an integral component of our strategy and impact. Their involvement enhances the scale and scope of RSC activities and ensures that the RSC is closely connected to everyday life on Canada's campuses. As of 2025, the RSC has 66 Institutional Members.

Toward this end, the RSC intends to:

- Establish the Task Force on Knowledge System Resilience, an international effort founded in the Ottawa Declaration, aimed at understanding recent, abrupt and profound changes that are rapidly undermining the resilience of knowledge systems within Canada and around the world.
- Mobilize RSC Members from across disciplines and across generations and from throughout Canada to deepen engagement with Canadians on all aspects of curiosity and concern in the communities they call home.
- Expand the convening opportunities of Institutional Members at Walter House that now offers ideal facilities to share updates on research excellence at their campuses and to engage with Ottawa policymakers, the diplomatic community, and many others.
- Develop and implement an international strategy for the College.
- Deepen engagement in programs such as the International Human Rights Network, La Francophonie, as well as the Science Academies of the G7 and the G20 with a view to promoting democracy and human rights at home and around the world.

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