


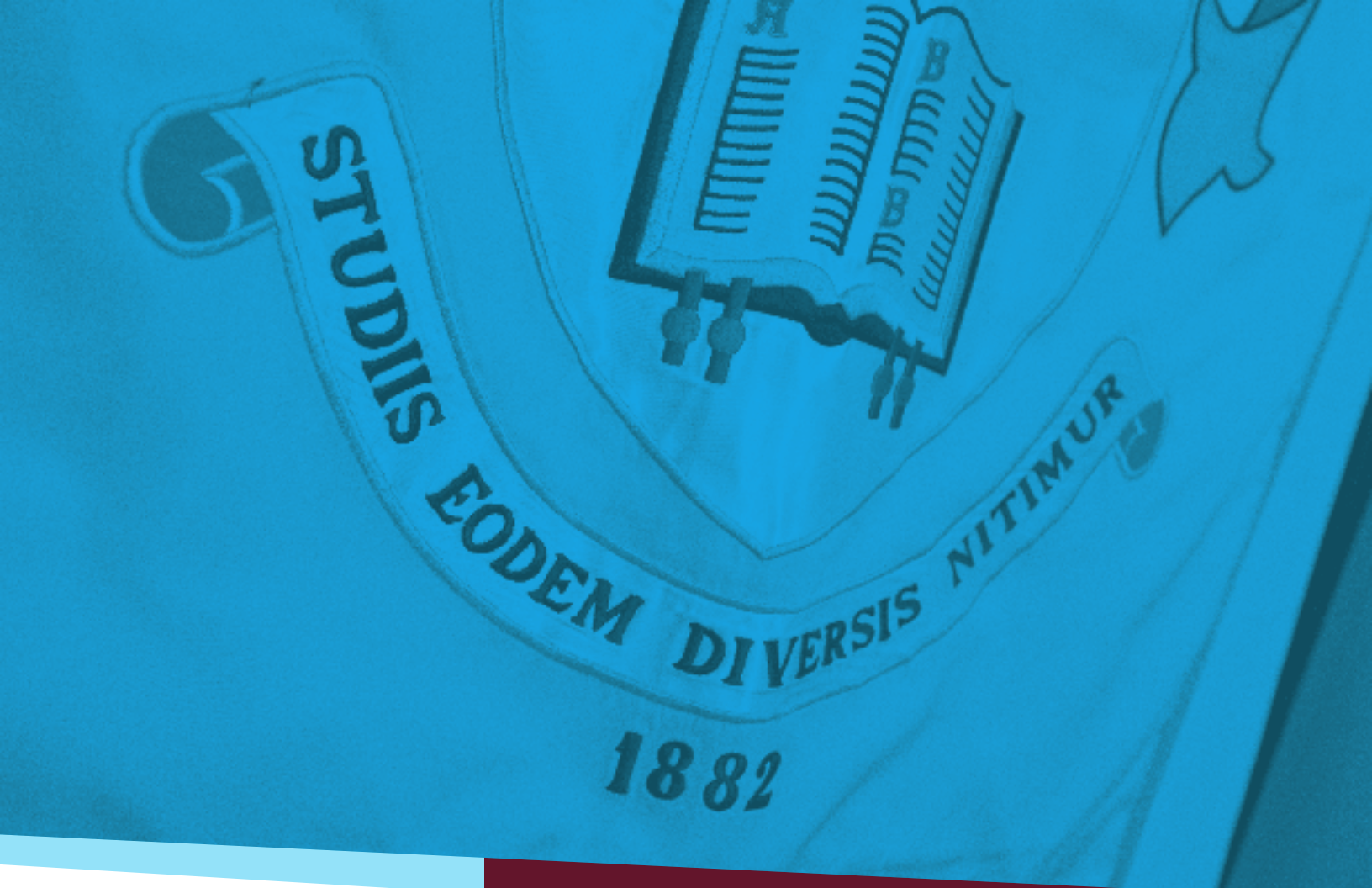


STRATEGIC PLAN  
2018 - 2022

MOBILIZE    
CATALYZE   
SUSTAIN



RSC SRC



Introduction .....3

The Enduring Mission .....4

Inclusive Excellence .....6

Strategic Priorities  
2018-2022 .....8

“The objects and purposes of the RSC are:  
To serve Canada and Canadians by  
recognizing Canada’s leading intellectuals,  
scholars, researchers and artists and, by  
mobilizing them in open discussion and  
debate, to advance knowledge, encourage  
integrated interdisciplinary understandings  
and address issues that are critical to  
Canada and Canadians.”

BY-LAW 2 OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

## In a time of widespread scientific and technological change, demographic transformation, political reconfiguration, and cultural diversification, how can leading 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 of Canada began imagining a collective effort to help society benefit from enhanced knowledge and understanding of the past and present. From its first society meeting in 1882 to the granting of a Royal Charter in 1883 to today, the RSC has increasingly fulfilled the potential of such collective effort drawing upon all fields of study. Along the way, Canada has moved from the colonial margins to a privileged place on the world stage.

At the same time, however, enduring and new questions of change have become even more complex and urgent. How should we reconcile, renew, and innovate in an uncertain world that holds the potential for catastrophe as well as unprecedented quality of life? In the turbulent twenty-first century, the sentiment that motivated the creation of the RSC incites us now to re-commit with increased determination to recognize achievement as a way to enhance connections between the scholarly, artistic and scientific communities and the larger society in order to promote knowledge and understanding for the benefit of all.

From the outset, the RSC sought to create “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. During the early years, the Government of Canada provided support to enable the RSC to publish and promote Canadian contributions to urgent global issues. In addition, the RSC worked during the first decades to support the establishment of national institutions such as those known today as the Canadian Museum of Nature, Libraries and Archives Canada, and the National Research Council.

Throughout the twentieth century, and especially since our centennial in 1967, the RSC has helped move Canada from the margins to centre stage by enhancing the development of robust scholarly, scientific and artistic excellence and engagement. Along the way, the RSC formalized its covenant with the research community at an institutional level, creating an enhanced federation that now includes Institutional Members to further advance the values and goals of the RSC.

To articulate an initial vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the RSC published *Strategy for Renewal and Growth: The Strategic Plan of the Royal Society of Canada 2012-2017*. As part of the implementation of this plan’s renewal and growth objectives, the RSC acquired and renovated a historic building in the heart of Ottawa. Then, in 2014, the RSC established The College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists in order to embrace the full spectrum and richness of Canadian talent among the emerging generation.

Today, Institutional Members, the College and a permanent home in Ottawa enhance the Fellowship of the three Academies of Arts and Humanities (1), Social Sciences (2) and Science (3) by providing a strong foundation for the next phase of the RSC’s development. This foundation now includes a unique pan-Canadian, multi-generational, cross-disciplinary and internationally-connected capacity to address the most challenging questions, to interpret the most complex issues and to propose the most promising steps-forward in the short, medium and long terms.

# THE ENDURING MISSION

In order to establish the foundation for multiple initiatives, the Royal Society of Canada elects Fellows and Members while also making awards to highlight specific exceptional achievements.

After rigorous evaluation and review of their accomplishments, leading individuals may be elected to one of the Society's three Academies – the Academy of Arts and Humanities; the Academy of Social Sciences; and the Academy of Science. There are currently 2,334 RSC Fellows.

As a complement to the Academies, the RSC established The College of New Scholars, Scientists and Artists in 2014. The College recognizes individuals who have begun demonstrating leading scholarly, research or artistic excellence within 15 years of having completed their post-doctoral program or its equivalent. Members of the College are elected for a period of seven years. There are currently 286 Members of the College.

In addition to Fellows and Members of the College, the RSC includes Institutional Members from throughout Canada that play key roles in advancing inclusive excellence for the benefit of Canada and the world.

The RSC administers over 20 prestigious awards, most of which are awarded to those at various career stages in recognition of outstanding achievement.

As emphasized in our by-laws, the RSC recognizes leaders in order to help them build a better future in Canada and around the world. For this reason, the RSC fulfills its mandate successfully to the extent that it recognizes excellence and then mobilizes the membership to make significant and substantial contributions of knowledge, understanding, and insight through engagement with the larger society.

The RSC's core commitment is the focus of the oath recited by Fellows of the three Academies at the time of formal admission following their election:

**“We who have hereunto subscribed, do hereby promise, each for himself/herself, that we will endeavor to promote the good of the Royal Society of Canada and to pursue the ends for which the Society was founded; that we will be present at the meetings of the Society as often as conveniently we can; and that we will observe the by-laws and regulations of the Society.”**

The purpose of this strategic plan is to give shape to the full potential of the RSC by listing ways to re-new our historic commitment to help build a better world in the short and long terms and to sustain them in the years ahead.





# INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE:

## UPDATING THE *SINE QUA NON* OF THE RSC

The concept of excellence has always been at the heart of the RSC. In recent years, scholarly and scientific research has contributed to new ways of defining and pursuing an inclusive excellence that both builds on, and moves well beyond, previous perspectives. In this context, the RSC has embraced continual improvement in recognizing and promoting inclusive excellence by focusing on five areas:

1. In order to ensure that the RSC's nomination and selection protocols for Fellowship benefit from the best available knowledge from across Canada and around the world, the Council created a Working Group on Nominating and Selecting Fellows. Chaired by the RSC President-Elect during the past year, this Working Group is composed of acclaimed specialists on research application and selection processes.
2. With the guidance of those with widely-recognized expertise, the RSC has been updating governance and management structures and practices in light of the latest research findings. Early results of this work include the Council's creation of three standing committees – on Governance & Ethics, Finance & Audit, and Human Resources.
3. Committed to excellence in the provision of expertise, the RSC has continued to play an active governing role for the Council of Canadian Academies in order to provide assessments of the current state of knowledge about key topics identified by the Government of Canada. In order to complement the work of CCA on assessment, and to pursue the RSC's full historic commitment to advice, the Council formed a Working Group mandated to analyze the multiple advisory initiatives undertaken by the RSC in the past and to suggest areas of emphasis for the coming years.
4. In order to optimize the RSC's awarding of prizes and medals, the RSC has begun pursuing opportunities to increase their impact by developing partnerships domestically and internationally.
5. In order to improve operational excellence, the RSC has begun implementing updated job descriptions for those in the secretariat; has begun developing new modes of service provision including outsourcing when appropriate; and has begun adopting new policies to support ongoing professional development for RSC staff as members of a high-performance organization.

The RSC administers over 20 prestigious awards to recognize achievements that have made significant differences in specific fields. These awards complement the selection of Fellows and Members and are periodically announced by the RSC Awards and Recognition Committee.

# ENGAGING TO DEVELOP OUR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2018-2022

In the fall of 2016, the RSC Council committed to the development of a strategic plan in keeping with the latest research findings on consultation and engagement. From late 2016 to late 2017, Fellows, Members of the College, Institutional Member leaders and others from the larger society participated in meetings and gatherings across Canada.

## QUESTIONS TO START THE CONVERSATION

At each gathering, a one-page document was used as a point of departure to summarize the RSC's achievements in implementing the strategic plan for 2012-2017, and to pose three questions as follows:

1. Excellence has always been and will always be the most important value that the RSC embodies and pursues. What is "excellence" today and how are measures of scholarly, scientific and artistic excellence changing? In this context, how might the RSC need to adjust the interpretation of "excellence"?
2. The College now provides the RSC with the opportunity to establish a unique and powerful multigenerational capacity to contribute to the academic community and the larger society both domestically and internationally. What next steps should be taken to seize this opportunity?
3. The changing landscape of Canada's scholarly, scientific and artistic communities now includes multiple institutions, organizations, and participants as well as widespread debates about science and innovation policies and structures. What is, or should be, the role of the RSC in the context of this landscape?

## WHAT WE HEARD

Eleven months of engagement and consultation produced a rich assortment of perspectives and ideas. The input can be broadly grouped as follows:

We heard that impact is the necessary objective of recognition that must be based on a fully updated definition of excellence.

We heard that it is important for the RSC to increase communication within the membership and beyond especially to increase Canada's capacity to address evidence of a growing global disconnect between "science and society."

We heard that, with the arrival of the College, the RSC has a new multigenerational capacity to pursue RSC objectives as well as to cultivate personal development at all career stages through approaches such as mentoring.

We heard that establishing regional networks (along the lines of the RSC Atlantic) would increase ongoing engagement and therefore impact across Canada and beyond.

We heard that the RSC should take advantage of its disciplinary breadth, pan-Canadian presence and multigenerational capacity

to advance knowledge and understanding of complex topics that are the current focus or on the horizon of debate domestically and internationally.

Moreover, we heard that, domestically and internationally, the RSC ought to play a leadership role on specific urgent issues for which our Fellows and Members can contribute significant insights and evidence.

# PRIORITIES 2018-2022

## MOBILIZE, CATALYZE, SUSTAIN

Following the year-long consultation, the RSC has made the following strategic choices for the coming five-year period.



### MOBILIZING THE MEMBERSHIP

The strength of the RSC lies in its membership that spans research fields, generations and Canada together with members and partners around the world. The objective of this priority is to optimize this unique capacity by strategically mobilizing members to engage each other and the larger society on specific issues of concern. For this purpose, the RSC will establish ways to enable and facilitate such mobilization both within and beyond the RSC by:

- a) Developing mentoring networks, both across generations and research fields, for mutual enrichment.
- b) Evolving the annual gathering into a must-attend activity focused on the exchange of insights and evidence.
- c) Developing additional regional networks to increase engagement and contribution across Canada.
- d) Developing partnerships with academies, agencies and associations to share in the presentation of awards, and to increase nominations for international awards in keeping with inclusive excellence.



### CATALYZING NEW CONTRIBUTIONS

The ability of the RSC to have impact in its activities is closely connected both to the means and the ends of such activities. In the changing context of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, the objective of this priority is to create and implement new strategic ways to engage effectively in keeping with our unique cross-disciplinary and multigenerational membership, and the network of Institutional Members. The strategic paths include:

- a) Implementation of a sharpened focus for contributing advice to policy and public discussion as recommended by the Working Group on the Advisory Capacity of the RSC. Such contributions will include supporting the development of the Office of the Chief Science Advisor as well as strengthening collaboration across agencies and institutions both domestically and internationally.
- b) Identification of specific themes for catalyzing RSC contributions to larger initiatives that address complex issues in the larger society.
- c) Pursuit of a focused global engagement strategy that ensures Canadian perspectives are present at the G7, the G20, and in strong ties with selected academies on mutually important issues.
- d) Development of a digital strategy to increase continuous engagement within and beyond the RSC to increase short-term and long-term impact.



### SUSTAINING MOMENTUM

The success of the RSC over the past 135 years has reflected continuing efforts to renew and grow in keeping with the changing times. The objective of this priority is to ensure that near-term goals and activities are informed by a long-term vision to ensure the enduring success of the RSC. These opportunities will include:

- a) Conceiving and implementing a ten-year financial plan to support success through partnership and fundraising.
- b) Developing Walter House into a virtual and physical convening hub with regularly scheduled “must-attend” events.
- c) Continuing improvement of governance, management and the nomination and selection of new RSC members in keeping with our Council committees and Working Groups to enhance transparency, efficiency and effectiveness.





## IMPLEMENTING OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

In light of the strategic objectives, the RSC will develop an annual Action Plan that will specify the planned steps forward for each objective. Each Action Plan will result from continuing engagement within and beyond the RSC and we invite comments and suggestions at any time. We look forward to reporting on the results of our efforts and to learning from them as we continue pursuing the overall strategic objectives. Many thanks to all RSC members and to all our partners across Canada and internationally.

While the RSC does indeed face an uncertain world with the potential for catastrophe as well as for unprecedented quality of life, we feel increasingly confident that, in the decades to come, our descendants will agree that we did all we could to help make a better future through collective effort. With all of you as members, partners and friends, we now have an enhanced opportunity to reconcile, renew and innovate to help Canada and the world thrive in the 21st century.

