



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

UNIVERSITY CASE STUDY

IDEASCALE



The University of Calgary

Community Building While Problem Solving

The University of Calgary is a public research university located in Canada. Founded in 1966, the University of Calgary is composed of 14 faculties and more than 85 research institutes that serve 30,000+ students and 155,000 alumni (among whom, the University of Calgary is proud to count Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada). **It is one of Canada's top research universities** whose work has historically been supported by numerous sources, including government grants.

When the Government of Alberta announced in March 2013 that nearly \$32 million would be cut from the University of Calgary's Campus Alberta grant, university leadership responded by **introducing a novel approach to gather feedback from the campus community about how to balance the budget: crowdsourcing.**

The project was split into three phases:

Phase 1: Idea gathering from the public in both in-person town hall sessions and online ideation within the IdeaScale environment.

Phase 2: Idea sorting and routing to the appropriate experts. The suggested ideas were grouped into short, medium and long-term impacts and researched for potential budget effect.

Phase 3: Reporting back to the community on the new strategies and beginning implementation of both cost-savings and revenue-generating ideas.

In just over a month, the community completed phase one - identifying cost-saving and revenue-generating ideas to address the **7.3% budget reduction.**

- The community shared more than **200 ideas from hundreds of student and staff participants** who also cast more than 12,000 votes.
- **Thousands of people followed the campaign last spring including the media.**
- The university was able to reach more of the campus community using the IdeaScale solution than they could have otherwise using more traditional data collection approaches (i.e., surveys, focus groups, etc.). They also learned that participants had some truly great ideas.
- **Numerous changes were flagged for further research**, including eliminating low-enrollment programs and hiring new postdoctoral scholars.
- Finally, **the university learned that the more thoughtful, engaging IdeaScale process, the more well-received the campaign** was by media, government, and peer institutions.

“We completed a high level analysis of the potential cost savings and revenue generation from the ideas provided through the IdeaScale solution and the total is in the millions of dollars,” said Bruce Evelyn Vice-Provost (Planning and Resource Allocation) at the University of Calgary, “Additionally, the high-level and responsive support team at IdeaScale helped ensure our success throughout the engagement.”

Since launching the budget planning session for the University of Calgary, the IdeaScale community has been leveraged for various other initiatives, including campus sustainability and mental health & addiction services among others.