Strategic Plan
Canadian Poverty Institute
2016-18
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Executive Summary

The Canadian Poverty Institute is an inter-disciplinary Institute housed within Ambrose University that seeks to heal poverty through teaching, research public education. Established in 2014, it is the only national academic institute dedicated to the elimination of poverty in Canada. The Institute works with non-profit organizations, churches and government to provide opportunities for scholars, non-profit organizations and students to learn and research areas of community concern and to seek solutions.

The vision of the Canadian Poverty Institute is “A compassionate and just society where the material, social and spiritual gifts and needs of all people are realized.” The mission of the Canadian Poverty Institute is to contribute to the eradication of poverty in Canada through teaching, research and public education that informs policy and enhances practice. The Canadian Poverty Institute contributes to the mission of Ambrose University as a vehicle for redemptive engagement in the church, society and created order.

The mandate of the Canadian Poverty Institute is to provide students, faculty, non-profit organizations, government, churches and the community with opportunities to learn about and research poverty and to discern and share solutions for the betterment of all Canadians. The Canadian Poverty Institute is grounded in the Christian tradition of extending compassion while seeking justice and reconciliation for the marginalized and oppressed.

The Canadian Poverty Institute fulfills its mission and mandate through research, education and praxis where research informs teaching and both contribute to influence policy and practice in working to prevent, alleviate and reduce poverty.

The Canadian Poverty Institute understands poverty to be multi-dimensional, involving material, social and spiritual poverty.

- **Material poverty** exists where people lack access to, or the skills to acquire, sufficient material and financial resources to thrive.
- **Social poverty** exists where people are isolated and lack the formal and informal supports necessary to be resilient in times of crisis and change.
- **Spiritual poverty** exists where people lack meaning in their lives and connection to a faith community that sustains them.

The Canadian Poverty Institute will draw on the university’s existing strengths to further a research and teaching agenda focused on these dimensions of poverty as they relate to business and the economy, service and faith.

1. **Business and Economy.** Drawing on the resources and strengths of the Business program, the Business and Economy domain will focus on income and economic development approaches that reduce inequality, build assets and increase financial resilience. This includes research and support of the new economy which encompasses social enterprise, corporate social responsibility, cooperatives and the sharing economy.

2. **Service.** Drawing on the resources and strengths of the Behavioural Sciences and Education programs, the Service domain will focus on formal and informal supports, services and interventions that build resilience. This includes programs and services design for individuals, families and communities, as well as community development approaches that seek to build social capital.

3. **Faith.** Drawing on the resources and strengths of the Faculty of Theology, the Faith domain will focus on deepening the theological understanding of poverty and exploring approaches that nurture spiritual growth to build individual and collective resilience. This includes the advancement of alternatives to the cultural forces that reduce our spiritual resilience, such as the promotion of inter- rather than in-dependence, and alternatives to the culture of consumerism. This domain will also focus on inter-faith dialogue and the role of the church and other faith communities in building community and addressing poverty.
1. OVERVIEW

1.1 Background
The Canadian Poverty Institute is an inter-disciplinary Institute housed within Ambrose University that seeks to heal poverty through teaching, research and public education. Established in 2014, it is the only national academic institute dedicated to the elimination of poverty in Canada. The Institute works with government, non-profit organizations and churches to provide opportunities for scholars, non-profit organizations and students to deepen their knowledge and understanding of poverty and seek solutions.

1.2 Vision
A compassionate and just society where the material, social and spiritual gifts and needs of all people are realized.

1.3 Mission and Mandate
The mission of the Canadian Poverty Institute is to contribute to the healing of poverty in Canada through teaching, research and public education that informs policy and enhances practice. The Canadian Poverty Institute contributes to the mission of Ambrose University as a vehicle for redemptive engagement in the church, society and created order. The mandate of the Canadian Poverty Institute is to provide students, faculty, non-profit organizations, government, churches and the community with opportunities to learn about and research poverty and to discern and share solutions for the betterment of all Canadians.

1.4 Objectives
The objectives of the Canadian Poverty Institute are:
- To advance our collective understanding of poverty by providing thought leadership around the meaning, root causes and impacts of poverty in Canada.
- To support the development of curriculum and evidence-based policy and practice through relevant research that leads to solutions.
- To enhance our collective capacity to address poverty by training leaders and practitioners through relevant teaching and professional development.
- To facilitate the sharing and mobilization of knowledge among policy-makers, practitioners and academics.
- To raise awareness of the meaning, causes and impacts of poverty in Canada among the general public.

1.5 Guiding Philosophy
The Canadian Poverty Institute believes that poverty must be addressed first through the restoration of trust relationships whereby the bonds of community are strengthened and resilience is achieved. It is in the resilience of community that the gifts of all people can be valued and brought into being. We believe that by actively seeking, nurturing and sharing the gifts people hold poverty in all its forms will be eradicated. The Canadian Poverty Institute is grounded in the Christian tradition of extending compassion while seeking justice and reconciliation for the marginalized and oppressed.

1.6 Governance
The Canadian Poverty Institute is an inter-disciplinary Institute within Ambrose University. In accordance with the Ambrose Institutes Operating Principles, the Canadian Poverty Institute is governed by the Ambrose Board of Governors and reports to The President through the Vice President of Academic Affairs. The CPI is a member of the Behavioural Sciences Advisory Council of Ambrose University which provides advice to the Institute. The CPI also engages with the broader community through the Research and Curriculum Advisory Committee that provides external guidance for the ongoing development of research and curricula.

The Canadian Poverty Institute serves to enable cross-disciplinary collaboration for the achievement of shared outcomes with respect to poverty research, teaching and practice. The Institute functions within Ambrose University as the backbone organization of an internal collective impact initiative. The Institute is led by a small staff team and engages Faculty across the university as Associates. Associates of the CPI conduct and supervise research and provide training in courses relevant to the mission of the CPI. Associates also provide ongoing direction to the Institute in research and teaching. Faculty Associates will meet three times per year to share research progress and interests.

The Institute serves to enable cross-disciplinary collaboration for the achievement of shared outcomes with respect to poverty research, teaching and practice. To that end, the Institute will draw on and coordinate the resources of the Business and Behavioural Sciences programs, the Faculty of Theology and the Faculty of Education to establish an integrated poverty research and teaching agenda that will effectively influence policy and practice.
In accordance with the Ambrose Institutes Operating Principles, the Canadian Poverty Institute will provide quarterly reports to the VP of Academic Affairs. An annual report which references the priorities, outcomes, timelines and funding sources, along with a short narrative indicating key accomplishments will be presented annually to The President and the Board of Governors. The CPI will also report annually to the General Faculty Council to summarize accomplishments during the year and set out the agenda for the upcoming year.

1.7 Environment and Policy Context

Poverty affects millions of Canadians. While there is no official definition of poverty in Canada, Statistics Canada’s most recent estimates indicated that over 14% of Canadians suffer from low income. Income inequality is also a serious concern. Homeless statistics estimate that over 150,000 Canadians are homeless on any given day. Child poverty rates are not declining and food insecurity is an issue for too many. Government interventions have largely proved ineffective in reducing poverty.

As a signatory of the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Canada is committed to ensuring the right of all citizens to work, food, housing, health, education, security, access to justice and civil and political rights. In response to criticism by the United Nations regarding Canada’s performance with respect to meeting its human rights obligations, the federal government announced in 2016 the development of a Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy to set targets to reduce poverty and measure and report on progress.

Federal leadership on poverty reduction complements provincial strategies that have been developed over the past decade. Currently all provinces, with the exception of B.C., have poverty reduction strategies approved or in development. Many local governments have also taken leadership in developing municipal poverty reduction strategies.

In Alberta, the development of a provincial poverty reduction strategy was announced in 2013 with a target of eliminating child poverty within five years. In June 2013, the provincial government released a discussion paper entitled Together We Raise Tomorrow: Alberta’s Poverty Reduction Strategy. Priority areas included reducing inequality, protecting vulnerable people, creating a person-centred system of high-quality services, and enabling collaboration and partnerships. This strategy remains under development.

Poverty reduction efforts in Alberta are also informed by the cross-Ministry Social Policy Framework that seeks to enable multi-sector partnerships to address complex social issues. The Alberta Research and Innovation Plan (2012) also provides a framework for poverty reduction efforts through its one of its three key outcomes, Resilient Healthy Communities. Within this strategic theme, the following key opportunities are identified:

(2) A greater link is needed between economic development and improved health, social and community resiliency outcomes:

- Design more resilient communities through a proactive analysis of related issues, including mapping the key economic, environmental and social factors and strengths of resilient communities in the face of challenges such as boom/bust cycles...
- Identify effective uses of our competitive advantages to achieve economic strengths which will benefit the social health of communities.

(3) There is a need to achieve new efficiencies and a greater effectiveness for a sustainable health care system:

- Address health inequities and inefficiencies through a focus on the social determinants of health.

In Calgary, the local government has provided leadership on poverty reduction for many years. In 2002, The City initiated the process to develop the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness which resulted in the establishment of the Calgary Homeless Foundation. Building on the success of this initiative, in 2012 The City launched the Calgary Poverty Reduction Initiative to establish a municipal strategy to significantly reduce poverty in the city. The resulting strategy Enough for All was approved in 2013 and established a target of cutting the city’s poverty rate in half within 10 years. This strategy is currently being implemented through Vibrant Communities Calgary. This poverty reduction strategy has also been integrated into the City’s Economic Development Strategy being implemented by Calgary Economic Development.
Within this context, Ambrose University has a unique role to play. Ambrose University is committed to strengthen teaching, research and policy analysis that directly engages large-scale problems of the 21st century. As a Christian post-secondary educational institution it pursues the study of arts, sciences and theology alongside the study of professional disciplines such as education, business, and Christian ministry in the quest for knowledge, wisdom, virtue and service. Ambrose University seeks to understand the principles of goodness, truth, and justice while acting as exemplars of them in our city, our nation and the world. To that end, the Canadian Poverty Institute was established in 2014 to focus energy and research on the alleviation of poverty.

The direction of the Canadian Poverty Institute is articulated in the Comprehensive Institutional Plan (2015-2018) as follows:

“The Canadian Poverty Institute is a response to the need for an academic venue to study the issues of poverty. The CPI is designed to fill that need. The development of the Institute will be staged. The first stage was the consolidation of current Ambrose University courses into a minor in poverty. The second stage has been the establishment of the Institute, including the Terms of Reference, the support of fund development, and the appointment of a Director. As the Institute develops, the potential of a master’s degree in poverty research may be explored. Within the CPI there will be opportunities for academics and poverty experts to visit the Institute and to share their expertise with Ambrose and the community at large.”

This strategic plan provides the framework and direction for the further development of the Canadian Poverty Institute at Ambrose University.
2.0 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

2.1 Strategic Approach
The CPI is focused primarily on praxis based on the principle of redemptive engagement. This involves engagement with practitioners actively involved in poverty reduction work to inform the research agenda of the CPI. The research of the Institute subsequently informs educational activities that can in turn influence practice. The approach thus is one of research informing education informing praxis (policy and practice). Through this process, the CPI seeks to provide foundational research and training to increase our understanding of poverty that can influence our practice in working to prevent and reduce poverty.

Accordingly, the Canadian Poverty Institute will draw on the university’s existing strengths to further a research and teaching agenda in each of these three areas focused on service, the economy and faith.

1. Service. Drawing on the resources and strengths of the Behavioural Sciences and Education programs, the Service domain will focus on formal and informal supports, services and interventions that build resilience. This includes programs and services designed for individuals, families and communities, as well as community development approaches that seek to build social capital.

2. Business and Economy. Drawing on the resources and strengths of the Business program, the Business and Economy domain will focus on income and economic development approaches that reduce inequality, build assets and increase financial resilience. This includes research and support of the new economy which encompasses corporate social responsibility, inclusive business practices, social enterprise, corporate social responsibility, cooperatives and the sharing economy.

3. Faith. Drawing on the resources and strengths of the Faculty of Theology, the Faith domain will focus on deepening the theological understanding of poverty and exploring approaches that nurture spiritual growth to build individual and collective resilience. This includes the advancement of alternatives to the cultural forces that reduce our spiritual resilience, such as the promotion of inter- rather than in-dependence, and alternatives to the culture of consumerism. This domain will also focus on inter-faith dialogue and the role of faith communities in building community and spiritual resilience to address poverty.
2.2 Phased Development

This strategic plan provides a roadmap for the ongoing growth of the Canadian Poverty Institute over the next three years (2016-18). This planned growth will occur in three overlapping phases.

1. Institutional Development (2016)

The institutional development phase will work to build the necessary organizational foundations to support the ongoing sustainable development of the Institute. This phase will be completed within 2016. Key activities in the institutional development phase include:

- **Strategic Plan Development:** The development of this strategic plan is foundational for the institutional development phase. It serves to establish key objectives, priorities and strategic actions. This includes the development of a long-term funding strategy leading to financial sustainability and a communications strategy.

- **Communications Planning and Resource Development:** This includes development of an Institute website and related social media channels. This will also include planning for a periodic newsletter and other stakeholder communications. Key resources will also be developed during this phase including a new logo (brand), brochure and related promotional materials. See the Communications Strategy (Sec 5.0)

- **Governance:** The key governance structures of the Institute will be established including the formation of an Advisory Committee, a clear articulation of the relationship between the Canadian Poverty Institute and Ambrose University, and a collaborative structure that engages Ambrose University faculty as Associates of the Institute.

2. Capacity Building (2016-17)

The capacity building phase will strengthen the capacity of the Institute to undertake its mission. This phase will principally occur during 2016 and the early part of 2017. Key activities in the capacity building phase include:

- **Research agenda:** In consultation with Institute Associates, the Advisory Committee and key stakeholders, a detailed research agenda will be developed to identify research priorities and areas of focus.

- **Curriculum Review and Development:** Current curriculum in the Poverty Studies minor program will be reviewed, and curriculum for a Poverty Studies concentration in the MALM program will be developed.

- **Partnership Development:** Key national and local strategic partnerships will be developed.

- **Resource Development:** Key institutional resources will be developed including the research repository and data resources through membership in the Community Data Program.

3. Performance (2017-18)

The performance phase will involve the active delivery of strategies that advance the mission of the Institute. While this phase is expected to principally commence in 2017, certain aspects will be undertaken in 2016. Key performance strategies in this phase include:

- **Research Projects.** Based on the direction provided in the research agenda, proposals for research initiatives will be developed, funding secured, and research effectively conducted.

- **Seminars and Public Education.** Regular seminars and public education activities pertinent to the Institute’s areas of focus will be organized and delivered.

- **Courses:** Academic courses will be developed and delivered based on the curriculum review undertaken in phase 2. This includes curriculum in in the Poverty Studies minor program and the Poverty Studies concentration in the MALM program. A cooperative studies program will be developed within the School of Business. Students will also have the opportunity for service learning through the implementation of the Service Learning Calgary program. Professional development activities will also be organized including the launch of the Summer Institute.

- **Knowledge Mobilization:** Knowledge mobilization will ensure that research is disseminated effectively to inform policy and practice. Key knowledge mobilization strategies will include the establishment of a national online Research Hub, the organization of a national Poverty Studies Conference, and the establishment of the New Economy Roundtable.

The strategic initiatives here described are detailed in the following section.
3.0 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

3.1 Research

Mandate

The Ambrose Research Mandate affirms that “research and scholarly activity complement the primary instructional role of faculty, enriching classroom teaching and creating a scholarly atmosphere on campus.” The Research Mandate of the Canadian Poverty Institute is:

“To provide research opportunities for scholars, non-profit organizations and students in all areas affected by poverty in Canada. The Institute works with non-profit organizations, churches and government to research areas of community concern and seek solutions.”

Objectives

- To advance our collective understanding of poverty by providing thought leadership around the meaning, root causes and impacts of poverty in Canada.
- Provide relevant and timely data and analysis to:
  - Inform curriculum and professional development of Faculty.
  - Inform public policy and professional practice.
- Understand the root causes of poverty and its impacts on individuals, families and communities.
- Identify and explore promising strategies for building individual and community resilience.
- Identify, understand and critically evaluate best and promising practices in the delivery of programs, services and interventions designed to prevent and reduce poverty.
- Identify, understand and critically evaluate best and promising business practices designed to prevent and reduce poverty including CSR and shared value approaches, Social Enterprise, Cooperatives and emerging models of the new economy.
- Deepen knowledge of biblical understandings of poverty and the past, current and emerging roles of faith communities and church leadership in addressing poverty.
- Identify, understand and critically evaluate policy interventions designed to prevent and reduce poverty.

Priorities:

Priorities for research will be established through the development and ongoing review of a research agenda for the Canadian Poverty Institute. The research agenda will be developed by CPI staff in consultation with Faculty Associates and advised by the Research and Curriculum Advisory Committee. The criteria for establishing research priorities are:

- Relevance to current practice
- Alignment with CPI and Ambrose guiding principles and philosophy
- Alignment with areas of focus

Resources:

- **Faculty Research.** Faculty Associates will undertake their own independent research that is aligned with the overall objectives of the Canadian Poverty Institute and contributes to the collective knowledge of the Institute.
- **Student Research:** Students may undertake research of relevance to the Canadian Poverty Institute through self-directed study courses under the supervision of faculty.
- **Funded Research:** The Canadian Poverty Institute will pursue opportunities for funding for research to be conducted by the Institute independently or in collaboration with partner organizations.
- **Affiliated Research:** The Canadian Poverty Institute will participate on research advisory committees or otherwise support research led by affiliated networks or organizations.

**Strategic Initiatives**

**Research Plan**

The Canadian Poverty Institute will complete an annual Research Plan in consultation with the Ambrose Research Committee, Faculty Associates and the CPI Research and Curriculum Advisory Committee. This research plan will articulate research priorities and initiatives related to material, social and spiritual poverty and based on the three areas of focus: Service, Economy and Faith. Research activities will include a combination of Faculty research, student research, funded research and affiliated research.
Community Data Program Membership

The Canadian Poverty Institute will participate as a member of the Community Data Program. The Community Data Program is a unique partnership between Statistics Canada and the Canadian Council and Social Development that provides a gateway to data for municipalities and community sector organizations. Members access customized tables from Statistics Canada and other sources to get the evidence that supports sound decisions and social development programs. Participation in the Community Data Program provides Ambrose Faculty and Students access to a significant repository of standard and custom data from Statistics Canada and other providers that would support research and teaching in a range of disciplines at significant cost savings. For the Canadian Poverty Institute, the CDP specifically provides custom poverty data that could support CPI research and training initiatives.

Poverty Resources

The Canadian Poverty Institute will conduct timely analysis of data and reports to generate information products of relevance to local and national poverty reduction practitioners. This will include fact sheets, short reports on current issues, and policy briefs and submissions.

Poverty Studies Journal

The Canadian Poverty Institute will establish a periodic Poverty Studies Journal to facilitate the transfer of knowledge among researchers and between the academy and poverty reduction practitioners.

3.2 Education

Teaching at Ambrose is intended to relate theory to praxis, have relevance to society and church, integrate faith and learning, and incorporate reflective instructional design. The educational mandate of the Canadian Poverty Institute consists of 1) academic training; 2) professional development; and 3) public education. Educational priorities and activities will be established by CPI staff in consultation with Faculty Associates and advised by a Research and Curriculum Advisory Committee.

3.2.1 Academic Training

Mandate

To provide courses through the Ambrose University curriculum on poverty and appropriate solutions.

Objectives

- Integrate an understanding of poverty issues into professional disciplines so that students understand the relationship between their professional practice and poverty. Professional disciplines include Behavioural Science, Business, Education, Ministry.
- Provide solid theoretical and practical knowledge of the causes, impacts and current issues of poverty, as well as skills to prepare students interested in pursuing professional practice in poverty reduction work.
- Provide learners with knowledge of effective policy interventions designed to prevent and reduce poverty, and build policy development and evaluation capacity among students.
- Provide a solid theoretical and practical understanding of the role of business and the economy in poverty reduction.
- Increase critical awareness of biblical understandings of poverty and the past, current and emerging roles of faith communities and church leadership in addressing poverty.

Strategic Initiatives

- **Poverty Studies.** Ambrose currently provides an undergraduate Minor in Poverty Studies in the following disciplines: Psychology, Sociology, Business, and Biblical / Theological Studies. The CPI will also work to develop a graduate level Poverty Studies certificate program within the MA in Leadership and Ministry degree in the Faculty of Theology. Partnerships for reciprocal recognition of course work leading to degrees with affiliated universities in Canada and internationally will be pursued.
- **Integrated Course Work.** As an inter-disciplinary Institute, the CPI will work with various disciplines within Ambrose to design courses and / or course content that relates poverty to the respective disciplines. In addition to those programs already included in the Poverty Studies curriculum, the Institute will also seek to develop relevant course content for disciplines such as Education, Music and the natural sciences.
• **Inclusive Business Studies.** Recognizing the unique role of business in the reduction of poverty, the CPI will work closely with the Business program to continue to develop new course content that reflects the unique business approach of Ambrose. This includes a strong emphasis on corporate social responsibility, social enterprise and shared value approaches to business.

• **Cooperative Studies.** Co-operatives represent an important business model with significant potential for poverty reduction. Currently there is little training in Alberta that prepares students to develop and lead cooperative ventures. This lack of a trained cadre of cooperative developers and leaders is hindering the long-term growth of the cooperative sector in Calgary and Alberta. Accordingly, the CPI will endeavor to develop a focused curriculum on cooperative development and management in collaboration with key stakeholders in the cooperative sector.

• **Service Learning.** Service learning is “a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility and strengthen communities.” The CPI will work with the Behavioural Sciences program to develop meaningful service learning opportunities that deepen students’ understanding of poverty. This will include opportunities for embedded service learning wherein students live and work in marginalized communities. The embedded service learning program will be undertaken in partnership with housing providers whose residents would benefit from community mobilization and support.

### 3.2.2 Professional Development

**Mandate**

To provide practical learning opportunities for students, governments, non-profit organizations, churches and the community to discover community-based solutions based on best practices in order to eradicate poverty.

**Objectives**

- Increase knowledge and skills of those engaged in poverty reduction work in order to enhance their capacity and effectiveness.
- Provide training opportunities that mobilize current and emerging knowledge on effective programs, services and interventions designed to prevent and reduce poverty.
- Mobilize current and emerging knowledge on effective business practices designed to prevent and reduce poverty including CSR and shared value approaches, Social Enterprise, Cooperatives and emerging models of the new economy.
- Increase knowledge of effective policy interventions designed to prevent and reduce poverty, and build policy development and evaluation capacity among practitioners.

**Strategic Initiatives**

- **Poverty Studies Summer Institute.** Working in partnership with other stakeholders, such as the Tamarack Institute, The Canadian Poverty Institute will offer a summer institute in poverty studies to respond to the professional development needs of local and national poverty practitioners. Courses provided through the summer institute will be accredited by the Alberta College of Social Workers (ACSW) and may be applied to a certificate and / or degree at Ambrose and other affiliated institutions.

- **Specialized Training.** In partnership with other stakeholders, the Canadian Poverty Institute will provide short specialized training / workshops in strategic areas as identified by the Research and Curriculum Advisory Committee. This may include training in human rights approaches to poverty reduction, inclusive business / CSR practices, or cooperative development studies.
• **Custom Workshops.** The Canadian Poverty Institute will provide fee-based custom workshops to organizations interested in deepening their understanding of poverty. This may include government organizations (such as The City of Calgary), businesses or churches.

• **Poverty Studies Conference.** The Canadian Poverty Institute will explore the feasibility and demand for a provincial or national poverty studies conference to convene academics and practitioners to learn and share emerging knowledge and strategies concerning the causes, impacts and strategies for the prevention and eradication of poverty.

### 3.2.3 Public Education

**Objectives**

- Increase public awareness and understanding of poverty, its root causes and impacts.

**Strategic Initiatives**

- **Communications Strategy.** The Canadian Poverty Institute will develop a comprehensive communications strategy that incorporates print communications, such as a brochure and periodic newsletter; a media strategy to promote the work of the Institute and to advocate for issues of priority to its work; a Social Media Strategy to broaden the reach of the Institute; and the development of a robust website that provides information on the Institute and its work, as well as serving as a repository and portal of poverty related information.

- **Seminar / Speaker Series.** The Canadian Poverty Institute will develop a speakers series to provide interested academics, practitioners, politicians, faith leaders and the general public an opportunity to engage with thought leaders about poverty, its causes, impacts and strategies for reduction.

- **Congregational Education.** The Canadian Poverty Institute will engage with local churches to provide speakers, educational materials and learning opportunities for local congregations and / or regional or national church bodies and organizations. This may include sermons, workshops or the development of learning materials.

### 3.3 Praxis (Policy and Practice)

The work of the Canadian Poverty Institute is intended to inform and be informed by current and emerging policies and practices that support the goal of poverty prevention and reduction.

Praxis includes:

- Professional Services and Interventions
- Community Development
- Business and Economic Development
- Public Policy
- Missions

The CPI will engage with public, private and non-profit stakeholders to identify current and emerging issues that will direct the research and teaching agenda of the CPI.

**Mandate**

- To provide solution-based forums to engage students and the public in discussions about poverty and to advocate for systemic and enlightened change.

- Provide a national clearinghouse for research on poverty.

**Objectives**

- Engage stakeholders to identify current and emerging issues, best and promising practices, and research and training / educational needs

- Promote public dialogue about the causes and impacts of poverty in order to discern solutions for the betterment of all Canadians.

- Provide opportunities for practitioners to learn from current research and share knowledge and experience to enhance practice.

- Raise public awareness about effective business practices designed to prevent and reduce poverty including CSR and shared value approaches, Social Enterprise, Cooperatives and emerging models of the new economy.

- Raise public awareness within faith communities of biblical understandings of poverty and the past, current and emerging roles of faith communities and church leadership in addressing poverty.

- Inform and influence the development of effective public policies aimed at the prevention and reduction of poverty.
Strategic Initiatives

- **Poverty Hub.** The Canadian Poverty Institute will establish an online repository of relevant research with respect to the causes, impacts, policies and best practices in poverty prevention and reduction. The poverty hub will be integrated with the Ambrose institutional repository for institutional research (under development) which will be administered through the library.

- **Policy Collaboration.** The Canadian Poverty Institute will contribute to the development of key federal, provincial and municipal policies that impact poverty prevention and reduction, including:
  - Development of the Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy.
  - Development of the Alberta Poverty Reduction Strategy.
  - Ongoing implementation of the Alberta Civil and Family Justice Reform Initiative.

The Canadian Poverty Institute will also strive to be a key stakeholder providing input and/or comment on key policy matters including the development of federal and provincial budgets.

- **Communities of Practice.** The Canadian Poverty Institute will be an active member of key national, regional and local communities of practice, and will collaborate as appropriate. Key communities of practice with whom the Institute will engage include:
  - *Vibrant Communities* - Led by the Tamarack Institute, the Vibrant Communities network brings together leaders and practitioners from across Canada who are engaged in local poverty reduction work.
  - *Canadian Council of Churches - Commission on Justice and Peace.*** The Commission on Justice and Peace provides a forum for sharing information and concerns among those involved in ecumenical work on peace and social justice in Canada and the world. It facilitates biblical and theological reflection on peace and social justice and cooperation of the churches on related concerns. The current focus of the Commission on Justice and Peace is on contributing to a theological dialogue on *Faith and a Sustainable Economy*. Elements of this program focus include theological reflection, a focus on poverty in Canada, human trafficking, and participating in the G8 G20 Interfaith Partnership.
  - *Canada Without Poverty - Canada Without Poverty* is a federally incorporated, non-partisan, not-for-profit and charitable organization dedicated to the elimination of poverty in Canada. Acting from the belief that *poverty is a violation of human rights and that poverty elimination is a human rights obligation*, CWP’s work includes raising awareness about poverty, participating in research to generate new knowledge about poverty, and striving to demonstrate the connection between poverty and human rights.
  - *Metro Alliance for the Common Good (MACG) - MACG* is a coalition of faith, labour and civic organizations engaged in community mobilization for the common good. MACG was a key partner in the development of the Enough for All poverty reduction strategy and continues to partner with Vibrant Communities Calgary on implementation. Ambrose University is pursuing membership with MACG and the Director of the Canadian Poverty Institute currently serves on the MACG Board of Directors.
  - *Calgary Interfaith Council –* The Interfaith Council was established by MACG in 2013 to provide a forum within which leaders from Calgary’s various faith communities could collaborate on social justice issues. The Council has an active interest in addressing poverty as an inter-connected faith community.
- **Calgary Social Policy Collaborative** – The Calgary Social Policy Collaborative is a network of organizations in Calgary whose mission is to “create a unified voice for the human services sector and improve social conditions by collaboratively advocating for effective social policy.”

In addition to participating in established national and regional communities of practice, the Canadian Poverty Institute will also endeavor to establish a local network of evangelical congregations, particularly among the CMAC and Nazarene churches, with an interest in poverty reduction and broader issues of social justice.

- **New Economy Roundtable.** The Canadian Poverty Institute will work to establish a New Economy Roundtable in partnership with the Ambrose University Business Program. The New Economy Roundtable will engage business leaders with a commitment to championing shared value approaches to business and the adoption of inclusive business practices. The Canadian Poverty Institute will support the Roundtable through convening leadership as well as through research support to effect knowledge translation to the business community. Research will be guided by the priorities of the participating members of the Roundtable. The Roundtable will support the ongoing development of the Soul of the Next Economy Forum.

### 3.4 Institutional Leadership

Review Ambrose internal policies and procedures to ensure institutional practices are aligned with principles and values and to realize opportunities to leverage assets that can support poverty reduction work. This may include a review of human resource, procurement and investment practices as well as exploring opportunities to leverage land and capital assets for community benefit initiatives.
### Appendix 1: Canadian Poverty Institute – Strategic Objectives

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<tr>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Practice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mandate:</strong> To provide research opportunities for scholars, non-profit organizations and students in all areas affected by poverty in Canada. The Institute works with non-profit organizations, churches and government to research areas of community concern and seek solutions.</td>
<td><strong>Academic</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>Mandate:</em> To provide courses through the Ambrose University curriculum on poverty and appropriate solutions.</td>
<td><strong>Professional Development</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>Mandate:</em> To provide practical learning opportunities for students, governments, non-profit organizations, churches and the community to discover community-based solutions based on best practices in order to eradicate poverty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foundational</strong>&lt;br&gt;To advance our collective understanding of poverty by providing thought leadership around the meaning, root causes and impacts of poverty in Canada. To support the development of curriculum and evidence-based policy and practice through relevant research that leads to solutions.</td>
<td>Integrate an understanding of poverty issues into professional disciplines so that students understand the relationship between their professional practice and poverty.</td>
<td>Engage stakeholders to identify current and emerging issues, best and promising practices, and research and training / educational needs. Promote public dialogue about the causes and impacts of poverty in order to discern solutions for the betterment of all Canadians.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community</strong>&lt;br&gt;(programs and services)&lt;br&gt;Identify, understand and critically evaluate best and promising practices in the delivery of programs, services and interventions designed to prevent and reduce poverty.</td>
<td>Provide solid theoretical and practical knowledge of the causes, impacts and current issues of poverty, as well as skills to prepare students interested in pursuing professional practice in poverty reduction work.</td>
<td>Provide training opportunities that mobilize current and emerging knowledge on effective programs, services and interventions designed to prevent and reduce poverty. Provide opportunities for practitioners to learn from current research and share knowledge and experience to enhance practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economy</strong> (business)</td>
<td><strong>Academic</strong></td>
<td><strong>Professional Development</strong></td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Identify, understand and critically evaluate best and promising business practices designed to prevent and reduce poverty including CSR and shared value approaches, Social Enterprise, Cooperatives and emerging models of the new economy.</td>
<td>Provide a solid theoretical and practical understanding of the role of business and the economy in poverty reduction.</td>
<td>Mobilize current and emerging knowledge on effective in business practices designed to prevent and reduce poverty including CSR and shared value approaches, Social Enterprise, Cooperatives and emerging models of the new economy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Faith</strong> (church)</th>
<th><strong>Research</strong></th>
<th><strong>Education</strong></th>
<th><strong>Practice</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deepen knowledge of biblical understandings of poverty and the past, current and emerging roles of faith communities and church leadership in addressing poverty.</td>
<td>Increase critical awareness of biblical understandings of poverty and the past, current and emerging roles of faith communities and church leadership in addressing poverty.</td>
<td>Increase knowledge and skills of those engaged in poverty reduction work in order to enhance their capacity and effectiveness.</td>
<td>Raise public awareness within faith communities of biblical understandings of poverty and the past, current and emerging roles of faith communities and church leadership in addressing poverty.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Policy</strong> (government)</th>
<th><strong>Research</strong></th>
<th><strong>Education</strong></th>
<th><strong>Practice</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify, understand and critically evaluate policy interventions designed to prevent and reduce poverty.</td>
<td>Provide learners with knowledge of effective policy interventions designed to prevent and reduce poverty, and build policy development and evaluation capacity among students.</td>
<td>Increase knowledge of effective policy interventions designed to prevent and reduce poverty, and build policy development and evaluation capacity among practitioners.</td>
<td>Inform and influence the development of effective public policies aimed at the prevention and reduction of poverty.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notes