



# SUPERNOVA

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY | HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA

**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
2025-2028





## Our Story

SuperNOVA is a not-for-profit initiative at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia that provides youth across Atlantic Canada with educational opportunities to explore science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), regardless of geographic location, socio-economic situation, ability, gender or lived experience.

SuperNOVA's programming aims to engage youth in STEM through hands-on, engaging programs and projects, as well as through mentorship and site visits with industry professionals. In highlighting the real-world applications of STEM, SuperNOVA inspires youth to pursue STEM post-secondary education and career paths.

SuperNOVA reaches youth through high quality camps, clubs, workshops, and community events, seeking to provide inclusive education with particular focus on underserved groups, including all-girls programming, programs for Indigenous youth and Black youth, and youth from rural and remote communities.

## Our Vision & Process

To realize our vision of empowering youth through educational experiences in STEM, SuperNOVA requires a comprehensive understanding of the current and evolving needs of the communities that we serve as well as understanding the efficiency and impacts of our diverse organizational operations.

In seeking this information we invited feedback from a wide variety of participants, educators and leaders through online surveys, in-person surveys, and direct engagements. In order to ensure that SuperNOVA's future efforts are informed by collaboration, individual meetings were held with several public libraries, community centres, and First Nation communities with whom we have ongoing partnerships.

These conversations enabled us to explore the unique ways in which the relationships can continue to grow and benefit communities. Educators and members of the public provided insight surrounding program subjects of interest, overall experience and impressions of SuperNOVA as well as opportunities for development. Former SuperNOVA employees elaborated on their employment experiences and the influence this carried to help us inform our employment and retention strategies.





## Our Four Strategic Priorities

Our extensive research process led us to define four strategic priorities that, moving forward, will guide us in our well-established work of empowering youth through STEM education.

Each priority and the associated goals both compliment our current efforts and prompt new actions to fulfil our commitment to:

- **Partnerships**
- **Educational Excellence**
- **Internal Efficacy**
- **Identity and Communications**





## **PRIORITY 1 | PARTNERSHIPS**

*Hold supportive, responsive and trusting relationships with communities and partners.*

### **GOALS**

- Establish consistency and recurring engagements for community partners
- Be responsive to individual community needs and requests
- Establish new partnerships and program growth
- Build additional business and industry partnerships

### **ACTIONS**

- Investigate increasing spring delivery capacity for community partners and the introduction of long term projects facilitated in part by the hosting partner.
- Continue regular meetings with outreach community partners to shape future program planning so that curriculum is community informed, culturally appropriate, and inclusive.
- Investigate ways to create partnerships with communities or groups that are underserved.
- Develop partnerships and seek funding that will support community focused programming.





## PRIORITY 2 | EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

*Provide comprehensive STEM education through novel experiences that complement provincial curriculum standards and inspire life-long learning.*

### GOALS

- Ensure program and workshop curriculum reflects exciting, novel, hands-on activities
- Better quantify classroom workshop delivery, staff preparedness, and knowledge
- Provide inspiring, self-empowering learning opportunities through deep engagement
- Reflect emerging and important topics through our activities

### ACTIONS

- Routinely audit program content and technology to identify components that can be upgraded or more specialized and implement those changes.
- Revise the content of teacher surveys, and standardize the administration and response evaluation process.
- Continue to focus on land-based programming in addition to the implementation of excursions, field trips and long term experiments in all programming.
- Continue to consult partners and educators on subjects of interest to inform program curriculum development.





## **PRIORITY 3 | INTERNAL EFFICACY**

*Create a work environment that fosters employee satisfaction through information sharing and support so our employees are knowledgeable and effective in their roles.*

### **GOALS**

- Maintain an established standard of work quality with all our employees
- Increase employee satisfaction across all job classifications
- Ensure staff are knowledgeable of policies and work expectations and know how to easily access this information

### **ACTIONS**

- Establish a process to encourage employee self-evaluation and accountability of work expectations to enable regular positive reinforcement.
- Provide professional development opportunities focused on best practices in youth education and provide training and education focused on equity, diversity and inclusion to challenge biases and systematic barriers.
- Ensure policy manuals are easily accessed and reviewed on a regular basis by employees and where suitable, changes to policies involve a staff meeting.





## **PRIORITY 4 | IDENTITY AND COMMUNICATIONS**

*To be widely recognized for our mandate and distinct facets of our work.*

### **GOALS**

- Increase awareness of our mandate and year round programs and initiatives
- Provide high quality, responsive external communications
- Understand the impact, gaps and relevance of our programs and can track these measurements over time
- Ensure both internal and external communications adhere to consistent branding

### **ACTIONS**

- Research the most effective approaches to increasing our voice in public and online platforms and implement a corresponding communications plan.
- Ensure our website is consistently up-to-date and specific external parties receive relevant communications.
- Develop standard practices to collect community and participant feedback and utilize this information where appropriate.
- Revise vision and mandate statements to clarify our identity and aligning values. Standardize SuperNOVA's language and values among employees.






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Actua is a leading Canadian science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) youth outreach organization. Each year, the Actua network engages over 500,000 youth in 600 communities across Canada in transformative STEM learning experiences that build critical skills and confidence. Please visit [www.actua.ca](http://www.actua.ca).

