



**BUSINESS  
+ HIGHER  
EDUCATION  
ROUNDTABLE**

# Strategic Plan

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2020-2021

# About BHER

## Who We Are

The Business+Higher Education Roundtable (BHER) is a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization bringing together Canada's largest companies and leading post-secondary institutions. Since 2015, BHER has worked to harness the strengths of Canada's business and post-secondary education sectors to build opportunities for young Canadians, boost innovation and drive collaboration.

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## Our Vision

Canada's business and post-secondary leaders face many challenges. Working together to solve these challenges is more critical than ever and will strengthen Canada's economy along the way. BHER's role is as a convenor and connector, bringing people together to create:

**A thriving Canada where everyone has an opportunity to reach their potential.**

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## Our Mission

**Creating opportunity through collaboration.**

# Our Values

## We Take Action

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- **We act on evidence.** Information and data are the basis for what we do.
  - We act with confidence. **We are bold** in our opinions and output.
  - **We drive transformation**, we don't do things the old way. We stay ahead of the curve.
  - We act in partnership. **Relationship builders are who we are.**
  - **We connect people**, collaborate with groups, and develop partnerships between everyone in our ecosystem.
  - **We act for all.** The outcome of our work is for the benefit of everyone in Canada.
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# Our Strategic Pillars

*There are three major challenges in the country that drive BHER's priorities and actions:*

## 1. Human Capital

Develop initiatives and products, and bring together stakeholders to help Canada's people, industries and institutions navigate the future of work.

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## 2. Innovation

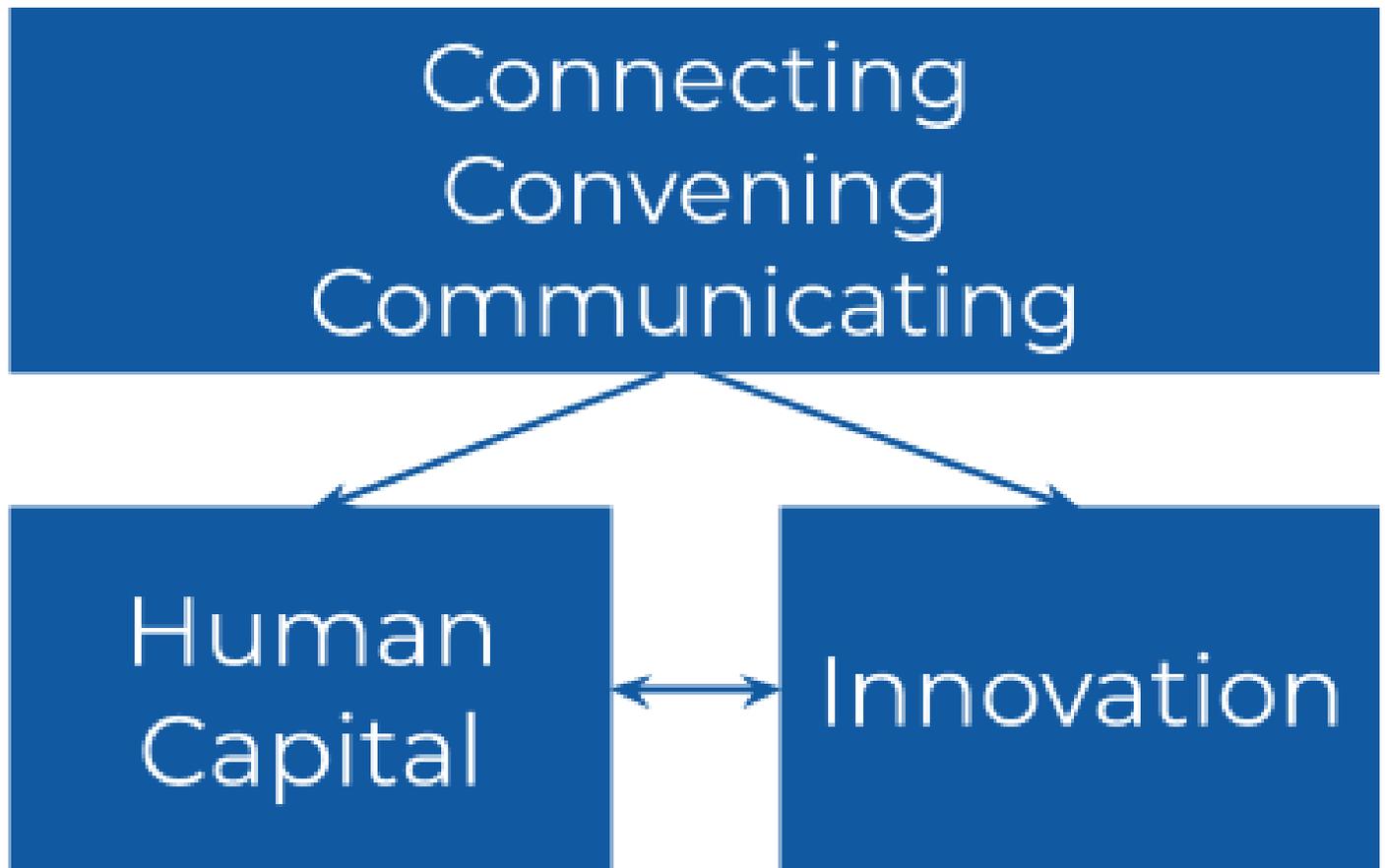
Boost Canada's culture of innovation and drive productivity by facilitating collaboration between post-secondary institutions and businesses on shared challenges and opportunities.

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## 3. Connecting, convening, and communicating

Be the leading voice and national hub for cultivating conversation and driving action on innovation and human capital with leaders from diverse sectors across the country. This is the central tenet of how we work.

# Our Strategic Pillars



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In addition to these three pillars, in 2020/2021 BHER will also continue to build its organizational capacity.

# Our 2020/2021 Priorities

BHER has identified six priorities that will drive action in 2020/21 that relate directly to its three strategic pillars:

**1.**

## **Expand Canada's work-integrated learning capacity**

Establish infrastructure to enable employers to execute WIL in a sustainable way.

Respond to the immediate needs of employers and students resulting from COVID-19.

**2.**

## **Prepare Canadians for the changing world of work**

Partner with leaders in Canada's skills ecosystem on research and pilot programs to support employers, workers, and educators succeed in the changing world of work.

**3.**

## **Increase the relevance and impact of Canada's research partnerships**

Bring business+higher education research partnerships to the forefront and fill gaps in the market with new products.

**4.**

## **Create a stronger culture of innovation in Canada**

Work with key partners to improve our understanding of Canada's innovation landscape, and work to create a culture of innovation.

**5.**

## **Strengthen member and stakeholder engagement**

Define and bring value to membership and stakeholders in a consistent and tangible way through strategic engagement.

**6.**

## **Build a strong financial and operational foundation on which to grow BHER**

Build, grow, and strengthen the overall footprint of the organization through foundational activities.

# Our 2020/2021 Action Items

## Human Capital

### 1. Expand Canada's work-integrated learning capacity

#### Key Results:

- A. Raise awareness and demonstrate the value of WIL for employers
  - a. Craft and test key messages for each target audience (e.g., SMEs, students)
  - b. Design and pilot campaigns across multiple channels
  - c. Organize and participate in WIL-related events
- B. Develop tools to make WIL accessible
  - a. Conduct focus groups and market research to understand user pain-points
  - b. Develop and test minimal viable products and tools (e.g., WIL-in-a-box, National WIL resource hub)
- C. Engage with operators and catalysts to drive creation of WIL placements
  - a. Given uncertainty over which types of partnerships will be most successful, we have identified 6 archetypes to test prior to scaling
  - b. After 6 months, make go/no-go decision based on partner performance
- D. Respond to the immediate needs of employers and students resulting from COVID-19 through the creation of a National Student Challenge.

# Our 2020/2021 Action Items

## Human Capital

### **2. Prepare Canadians for the changing world of work**

#### **Key Results:**

- A. Improve the understanding of the skills landscape in Canada for post-secondaries, employers and individuals.
    - a. Conduct research to assess the current state of skills training in Canada (e.g. micro-credentialing research project with HEQCO).
    - b. Promote work of partners to share resources and best practices that help development and strengthen the skills of Canadians.
  - B. Develop programs and projects that help BHER members and partners prepare for the changing nature of work.
    - a. Help members and partners scale valuable programs by connecting them with key players across the country (e.g. D2L and Microsoft)
    - b. Advise, consult and engage in program and project development with members and external partners focused on filling gaps in the national landscape.
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# Our 2020/2021 Action Items

## Innovation

### 3. Increase the relevance and impact of Canada's research partnerships

#### Key Results:

- A. Develop new research partnership products and services
    - a. Expand development and promote BHER's research partnership guides
    - b. Develop operational plan for potential new product launch(es) (e.g., Cognit)
  - B. Facilitate and expand knowledge exchange between industry to academia
    - a. Environmental scanning and research on the innovation ecosystem and stakeholder needs (e.g., assess value of Public Good Initiative work)
    - b. Bridge existing gaps to build capacity in member organizations and beyond
    - c. Highlight research funding opportunities, curate business-higher education partnerships, and cultivate new ones
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# Our 2020/2021 Action Items

## Innovation

### 4. Create a stronger culture of innovation in Canada

#### Key Results:

- A. Promote and improve Canada's current state of innovation
  - a. Help partners extend the impact of valuable research into Canada's Culture of Innovation (e.g. Rideau Hall Foundation)
  - b. Partner on innovation research projects to get answers to questions relevant to our members
  - c. Amplify examples of positively-impactful innovation from across Canada

## Organizational Capacity Building

### 5. Strengthen member and stakeholder engagement

#### Key Results:

- A. Expand membership engagement
    - a. Finalize engagement strategy (e.g. meeting/event strategy)
    - b. Develop new member community and recruitment approach
    - c. Build internal member network
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# Our 2020/2021 Action Items

## Organizational Capacity Building

- B. Strengthen membership management infrastructure
  - a. Define value proposition and member ROI
  - b. Establish framework, goals and growth strategy
  - c. Integrate BHER's Student Advisory Board into strategic and operational decision-making processes
- C. Formalize Board management infrastructure
  - a. Develop Board management materials (e.g. financial reporting protocols, etc.) and communications cadence

## **6. Build a strong financial and operational foundation on which to grow**

### **Key Results:**

- A. Grow organizational capacity, including HR capacity
  - a. Establish support service and set up business start-up infrastructure
  - b. Develop external relationship management policies
  - c. Develop internal HR policy: staff onboarding, leave policies, professional development, etc.
  - d. Create hiring strategy and internship planning

# Our 2020/2021 Action Items

## Organizational Capacity Building

B. Launch communications strategy and establish government relations approach

- a. Create brand narrative and content: website, graphics, etc.
- b. Communications planning: strategic planning, tactical planning, agency management, social media training, etc.
- c. Build relationships with various departments at all three levels of government: strategy, materials, etc.



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