The PLLC is grateful for Peter MacKinnon’s support for the College’s vision, and appreciates his thoughtful input. This synthesis document is a response to the strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities laid out in the MacKinnon Report.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF PLLC

Strengths

_Strategic Plan Alignment:_ There are explicit references to PLLC and also many references to “leadership” in the U of A Strategic Plan. PLLC is ready and poised to contribute to _For the Public Good_ as the plan unfolds.

_Leadership as a possible signature area:_ There are interesting opportunities here. Leadership encompasses a broad set of soft skills that employers have identified as needed and sometimes lacking in the typical accomplished graduate. It is important to recognize that the need for these soft skills in graduating students has been studied and illuminated by academic studies and is supported by evidence.

_Recruitment of exceptional students:_ We have seen progress in this area with the recruitment of a Loran scholar for the 2017-19 cohort and PLLC’s contribution in preparing a student from the Faculty of Science to be elected a Rhodes Scholar. Other excellent results include PLLC scholars being admitted to prestigious, very competitive professional programs such as in medicine, law and rehabilitation medicine. PLLC scholars who applied for QE2 scholarships in 2016 had a very high success rate and their skills at interview were particularly commended.

Weaknesses and Challenges

_Financial sustainability:_ Throughout the development of PLLC we have been careful to plan for financial sustainability and enable growth to reach an intake of about 125 students per year, with sufficient funds to complete the 10-year GOA grant period (2024-25). We have included in our planning projected inflation costs that were not accounted for in the original fixed-cost funding model.

_Need for new sources of revenue:_ New revenue sources will need to be identified from 2025 onwards, and we recommend consideration be given to opportunities to raise revenue in the interest of PLLC’s long-term sustainability.

_Managing a full course load:_ It is true that if more programs could accept PLLC courses as elective this would reduce the workload of PLLC students. We tend to hear this concern in the first semester of the first year. Discussions with second year students indicate that the skills they learn provide
numerous systemic benefits that lead to less pressure in the winter term of year one and the second year.

PLLC, through the teaching fellows and forum structure, work closely with any students needing support. Lead Instructors, teaching fellow and the Director of Instruction hold regular office hours and refer students to support services if necessary. This early intervention approach is beneficial not only to the student’s academic performance in PLLC, but also to academic performance in their primary degree subjects.

Stretch Experience: We agree that the first year stretch program needs further development. Changes have already been put in place for the 2016-18 cohort; and we will continue to closely monitor the program.

We would like to emphasize that one of the signature features of the PLLC stretch experience is the opportunity to tailor the experience to each student’s personal strategy, gaps in experiences and personal passions while requiring all stretch experiences to include 200+ hours of voluntary work for the social benefit of the community in which the stretch experience is conducted. The underlying pedagogy is to create a personal strategic challenge that some students are ill-equipped to handle without the support provided by the PLLC team during the planning stages. The students learn and mature through this process, an important skill for life. The mentors also play an active role in connecting scholars to opportunities and supporting them through the stretch experience. The process of creating the stretch experience by the scholar is as important as the experience itself. Opportunities to assume the responsibility of designing a learning experience, to reflect on personal priorities and ambitions, and to be creative in meeting the specifications of the program are a rare experience for the typical, highly regulated North American undergraduate. The stretch experience is therefore an important opportunity for scholars to examine their values and personal narrative.

With regard to the stretch experience student funding, we respectfully disagree that the $5,000 award should be reallocated to create residence bursaries. To reallocate these funds would create access issues and inequities for students who do not have the means to lose 200 hours of otherwise paid work during the summer. The $5,000 is closely benchmarked to funding provided for undergraduate research experiences by U of A, NSERC, AIHS, CIHR.

Relationship with other U of A leadership initiatives: When PLLC was first being developed, the Lougheed Academic Consultative Committee (LACC) was formed to ensure that broad university-wide perspectives were included in the planning process. LACC included faculty members, undergraduate student representative, graduate student representatives and deans of interested faculties and units (Arts, Science, Engineering, Augustana, Dean of Students, UAI, PER). A subcommittee was subsequently formed to undertake a horizon scan of leadership programs at U of A so that there was awareness of other programs by the PLLC leadership.

Close links were formed with Alberta Students Leadership Summit (PLLC has participated in the Summit and provided significant funding to support it from January 2015). The Emerging Leaders program, and SU initiative has similarly been supported by PLLC as sponsors, participants and facilitators. PLLC has also worked closely with the U of A Ambassadors program and more recently with Gold College. PLLC participated fully in the SU and Provost sponsored Interdisciplinary Learning conference on February 4, 2017. PLLC has also funded 10 students each year from the Alberta School of Business Certificate in Leadership to attend the residential Banff Retreat PLLC holds for its scholars. The Lougheed Lectures held every two weeks during term time are open to all
on campus and beyond. We are in discussions with Campus St. Jean to consider how a version of the Foundations of Leadership course could be provided in French. We have worked closely with Faculty of Extension to share experiences with their leadership programming. Without doubt there are other further opportunities to extend PLLC’s collaborative activities, but these are naturally limited by resources and the capacity of the lean PLLC administrative team.

Council of Deans: PLLC feels that that an advisory group of deans with a focus on strategic development of PLLC rather than operational oversight process would be beneficial to the further development of the College. Academic guidance can always be offered in this context.

Peter Lougheed Hall: At this point, given feedback from current students in PLLC, it is unlikely that the original goal of two cohorts of PLLC scholars living throughout their PLLC experience in residence will be realized in the short to medium term. However, the public spaces of PLH will be of great value in providing PLLC with a physical focal point and a gathering place for PLLC scholars. PLH will accommodate many of PLLC’s activities such as talks and special events. In most cases these opportunities will be extended to other residents in PLH creating a lively setting for leadership-related activities.

The role of the college in the university: We do not understand the skepticism surrounding PLLC and its role in the university, and need more guidance. Like many prestigious programs at U of A, PLLC is selective. The criteria for selection are widely available for review and were the result of 9 focus groups with students facilitated by SU in December 2014. We seek students who have the passion, potential and commitment for an intensive academic and co-curricular experience.

We agree with Dr. MacKinnon’s statement that “Leadership can be taught ...” The concern raised by colleagues with Dr. MacKinnon about this point appears to misunderstand the learning goals of PLLC. PLLC is not intended to generate leaders, but to provide opportunities for undergraduate students to learn leadership skills and practice them through experiential learning opportunities that will serve them in many ways in their careers so that they can live consequential lives, with whatever focus or role in society they may choose. All activities undertaken by PLLC, academic and co-curricular, are respectful of academic values. The content seeks specifically to develop understanding and insights for developing leadership skills. PLLC seeks to create an atmosphere of freedom to discuss issues within the trust of a forum structure. By creating an environment that is conducive to free and open discussion we create an environment that is more open to creative learning and deeper understanding.

Opportunities

Options for the Future: We agree the long-term financial sustainability of PLLC is a concern. PLLC’s current budget approach will allow it to deliver content on the scale and quality originally intended until 2024-25, at which point the University, the Government of Alberta and the community at large will need to make a decision for the long term. There will be 10 years of longitudinal data collected to demonstrate the value proposition of continuing PLLC by that time. We will have the opportunity to make a decision based on solid evidence.

More equitable sharing of expenditures with Banff Centre: The Banff Centre, at least for the short term, has agreed to cover the cost of the Banff Retreat. However, beyond this and several other areas of significant collaboration, we believe it is unlikely that The Banff Centre would cover costs that are explicitly related to the academic costs of PLLC or the costs of Peter Lougheed Hall.
**Student Awards:** We introduced the $2,500 per year award in response to concerns raised by SU and LACC about equitable access to PLLC for students who rely on working (especially in the evenings) to cover their tuition and living costs. This is not an extraordinarily large award and is administered by the Office of the Registrar. We resisted means testing this award. However, with PLLC scaling up it is clear that this element of the funding to students is no longer affordable and we propose and have budgeted for it to be replaced by a bursary fund to be administered by the Office of the Registrar. At present about 10% of PLLC scholars are already receiving a bursary from UofA. We do not share the view that the summer stretch experience funding should be withdrawn and this cost remains in the balanced budget. It is important to recognize that the stretch experience requires a minimum of 200 hours of voluntary work for the social good of the community and that no other bursaries are available to cover off this activity outside the normal academic term.

**Revenue Generating activities:** Extensive analysis has been undertaken to consider the benefits, feasibility and business case for a residential summer school. This could both generate net revenue for PLLC programming and also increase utilization of PLH. We request that the university give serious consideration to conducting a summer school pilot in 2018.

**Lending expertise to other organizations:** There is potential but with caution. At present there is insufficient capacity in PLLC to take on contract work. There may be other groups on campus (Faculty of Extension, School of Business) that might want to take the lead on such initiatives and PLLC could certainly provide expertise in exchange for a revenue share in support of them.