In the Spring of 2005, the Dean’s Advisory Committee developed some principles of Initial Teacher Education to reflect the unique aspects of our programs. The principles were discussed at the Dean’s Advisory Committee retreat, June 2005, and at the Faculty Fall Seminar, August 2005. Feedback was incorporated into a draft and shared with the Planning and Priorities Committee (PPC) meetings in October. As well, the principles were shared with undergraduate program groups during the Fall semester. Feedback from programs was incorporated into the draft document and a revised draft was brought to Dean’s Forum for discussion in January 2006. At that meeting, some suggestions for further revisions were raised and a small subcommittee agreed to work on the next iteration of this document. This revised draft was brought to PPC for discussion. At our March 20, 2006 meeting, PPC approved a motion to bring this document forward to Faculty Council and recommended that faculty and staff have the opportunity to provide feedback before this meeting. There was a drop-in session in April for this purpose.

Emerging from Faculty dialogue, these principles are meant to embody the values held for undergraduate teacher education in the Faculty rather than to simply describe lofty abstract ideals. They are statements that encompass and guide the Faculty’s work in teacher education through the different programs and subject areas. They provide a lens through which the Faculty can reflect on its programs, identify shortcomings and engage in change and renewal.

These principles can also be used to showcase the Faculty’s work in teacher education on the web site through appropriate visual or textual examples, in effect, celebrating them as “living principles” that permeate Faculty programs, initiatives and work. Prospective students and faculty members will find these examples useful in considering studying or working in the Faculty of Education.

Finally, the principles of teacher education highlight the important work of the professional school. They help to frame a purpose that is much larger than learning a discipline and how to teach that discipline. The principles portray a professional Faculty that is responsive to a changing world through programs that are professionally engaging, academically challenging and personally transforming.
Our Undergraduate Teacher Education programs:

1. ensure that our students interact with and thereby come to understand children, youth and adult learners and the nature of learning from critical, philosophical, psychological, socio-cultural, environmental and other perspectives.

2. view becoming and being a teacher as a process involving the ongoing construction of pedagogical competence, the development of content knowledge, and the formation of professional identity, including a critical awareness of the nature and structure of public education and of the legal rights and responsibilities of members of all educational constituencies.

3. engage our students and faculty in the power of education to improve the human condition.

4. engage in intentional, critical self-inquiry in dialogue with communities to promote diversity, inclusion, understanding and respect.

5. prepare our students to understand how social differences are constructed and valued, and to use pedagogical strategies that are respectful of students.

6. assist our students to understand their work within the context of their students’ homes and communities and the broader changing society. We are committed to the principles of SchoolPLUS.

7. view of teachers as critically reflective professionals responsive to the educational community.

8. value a research culture that informs and is informed by current research in teacher education and other related fields.

9. enhance partnerships between and among the university, schools and other organizations to further the interdependence of research and practice.

10. provide opportunities for our students to continuously construct, explore, assess and revise their practice, and to critically reflect upon the values they enact through it.

11. provide experiences through which our students develop empathy, and positive human relations attitudes, knowledge and skills.

12. honour teaching, and students and faculty who actively work to improve the quality of teaching and learning.