

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2027

UBC MIDWIFERY

INTRODUCTION

UBC Midwifery strives to be a global leader in creating excellence and innovations in care for women and childbearing families through midwifery education. This is realized by building strong foundations and continued growth for new undergraduate, professional and continuing education programs, research, clinical and patient care services, faculty development, as well as contribution and leadership in the establishment of international education and training programs.

Although Midwifery has long been established world-wide, it is a relatively new profession in Canada and was first established as an academic discipline in British Columbia in 2002. UBC Midwifery is the sole midwifery education program in British Columbia and is charged with the education of new midwives, the orientation of internationally educated midwives to practice in BC, and developing continuing competency materials for practicing midwives. To build an academic program, UBC Midwifery has the responsibility to lead in faculty development, midwifery research and knowledge translation, provision of evidence-based theory, and evaluation and application of evidence to midwifery clinical. Through these contributions, the program meets future projections and planning for maternity health care and appropriate health human resource allocation in British Columbia. As an established academic leader in midwifery, the Division of Midwifery collaborates with universities nationally and globally to ensure the advancement and credibility of this discipline.

Midwifery is unique within the UBC Faculty of Medicine as it is the only undergraduate program which prepares graduates for direct entry to practice. It has the responsibilities as of a university school and is directly funded by the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills and the Ministry of Health. The Midwifery undergraduate education program is in a primary foundational and leadership position requiring complex coordination and negotiation with the Ministries of Post-Secondary Education and Health, the British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives (BCCNM), the Canadian Midwifery Regulators Council (the national regulatory body for midwives), and the Canadian Association of Midwives.

UBC Midwifery unites behind the mission of

Strengthening respectful and responsive care for diverse families and communities by advancing the art and science of midwifery education, research, and practice.

UBC Midwifery embraces a vision of ***leadership, excellence and innovation in midwifery.***

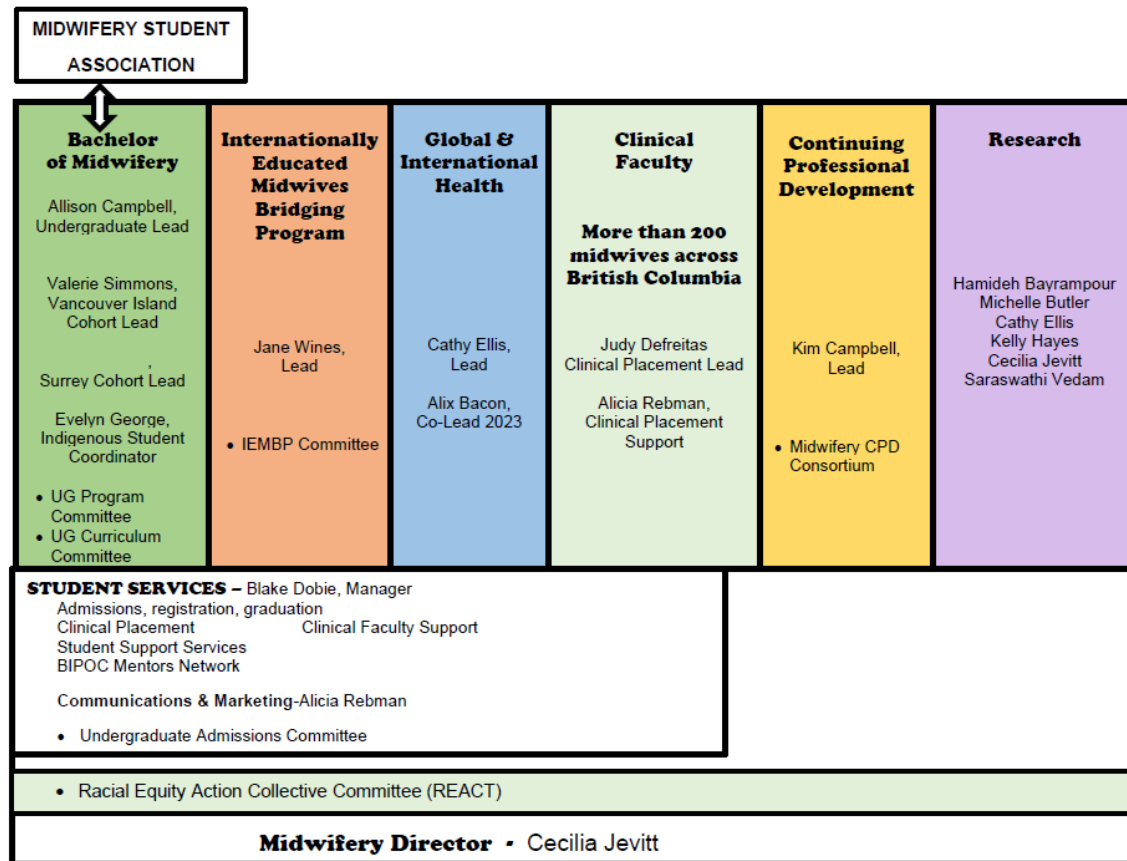
HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

UBC Midwifery, as a division within the Department of Family Practice, began a process of renewal and strategic planning in September 2022. The quest for excellence has fueled two decades of leadership and innovation in the art and science of midwifery. The Division was formed in 2002 when its first Bachelor of Midwifery (BMw) class was admitted. In 2010 to 2011, following a curriculum review and faculty workload assessment, five new courses were added, and the schedule for course delivery was revised, in anticipation of provincial funding for expansion of the program. Class size doubled from 10 to 20 in 2012 as graduates proved the safety of the midwifery model of care and consumer demand for midwifery care grew.

An advanced admissions options for registered nurses was developed in 2021 and piloted in with admissions in 2022. There is large overlap between the theoretical preparation for nursing and midwifery in anatomy, physiology, basic health sciences, research, and ethics that nurses are not required to repeat in when studying midwifery. Registered nurses receive individual assessment of reproductive health clinical skills after program admission. Generally, registered nurses avoid 35-40 credit hours of redundant study, enabling them to complete the BMw in three years instead of four.

Following some years (2010-2014) of leading a federally funded pan-Canadian Multi-jurisdictional Bridging program, the current orientation model for internationally educated midwives, the Internationally Educated Midwives Bridging Program (IEMBP) was formed in 2015. Since then UBC Midwifery has admitted 8 students per year from around the world. The IEMBP received funding in 2021 to double its annual enrollment to 16. This was accomplished with the addition of a second permanently funded teaching position for the IEMBP and by dividing the cohort into two groups. One group begins study in January and the second in October.

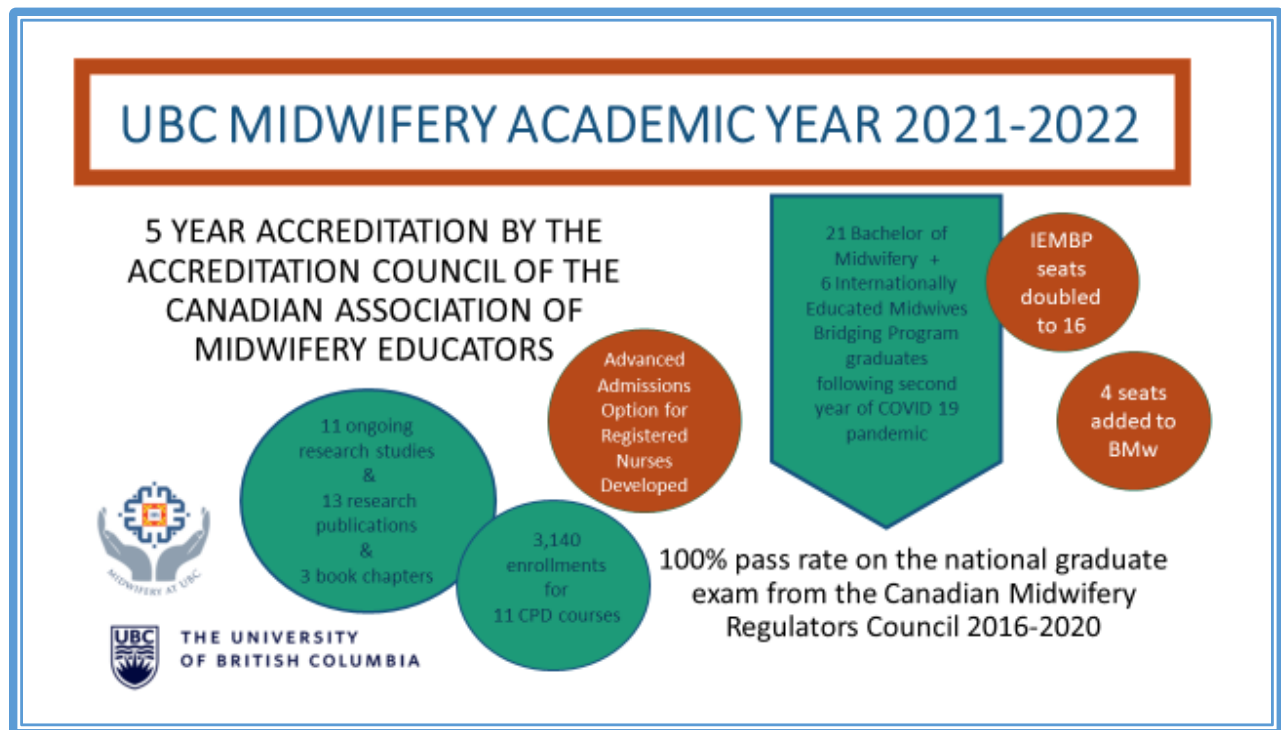
UBC MIDWIFERY ORGANIZATION 2022-2023



In 2017, with graduates and other community midwives needing continuing education and skills updates, the Division assigned a faculty member to work with the Faculty of Medicine's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) office to develop educational modules and program. This unique model is sustainable as CPD modules are used without charge in the BMW and IEMBP programs. In addition, a new permanently funded professorship with dedicated research responsibilities was filled in 2015, with other salary awards, such as the Stollery Fund, the Canadian Institutes for Health Research and the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research, providing support for faculty research. Two midwifery researchers have current Tri-Council funding with several faculty averaging a half dozen ongoing research projects each year. The faculty publishes an average of 12 manuscripts, policy reports, knowledge translation websites, and innovative knowledge mobilization products a year. Midwifery is unique among the UBC health professions programs in having a Global Health program that enables students to choose an extra term of study in Nepal or Uganda.

This internationally influential work was accomplished with only 8 permanent faculty appointments, the support of more than 30 adjunct faculty, and almost 200 clinical faculty preceptors distributed across British Columbia. UBC has three appointment streams: the academic professoriate, educational leadership, and the clinical faculty. Three midwifery faculty currently are appointed to the academic professoriate and the remaining six positions have scholarship of education appointment.

Community preceptors are appointed to the Faculty of Medicine clinical faculty and can be promoted from clinical instructor to professor.



The faculty and staff met under the direction of a new program director in September 2018 and developed a strategic plan that was largely organizational, increasing Midwifery's integration within the University and planning for more efficient operations. Following the revision of the UBC Faculty of [Medicine Strategic Plan](#), the development of an [Indigenous Strategic Plan](#) for the University, and the development of a strategic plan for the Department of Family Practice, the Midwifery faculty and staff initiated an update to its strategic plan. The strategic planning process included four stages: written ideas by faculty and staff at the division's annual retreat on September 1, 2022, two rounds of idea refinement using a Delphi survey technique using the Qualtrics platform, and a faculty and staff review of the draft strategic plan. The original ideas were organized around the pillars used in the [UBC Faculty of Medicine Strategic Plan](#): education, research, organization, and partnership. The strategic growth ideas reviewed below are the top scoring 50% of ideas within each pillar. Strategic ideas are divided into two categories: scheduled growth that has already been financed and planned, and strategic visionary growth.

SCHEDULED GROWTH

[Fraser Health Cohort](#)

At the urging of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training in early 2022, the Midwifery Division developed and submitted a proposal to expand into the Fraser Health Authority. This growth accompanies expansion by the UBC Departments of Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy

with office space at the Lark Building in Surrey and classroom and clinical lab space at Surrey Memorial Hospital. The Fraser Health Authority has the highest number of reproductive age families in all of BC with Surrey soon to become the largest city in British Columbia. Although the Fraser Health Authority has more than 30 registered midwives who are the primary providers for 30% of the region's births, there is a waiting list for enrollment in midwifery practices. An additional shortage of family practice physicians, obstetricians, and pediatricians is acute. Waiting often exceeds 6 months. To meet this demand and growing demand in the future, UBC Midwifery received permanent funding for 5 additional faculty lines and 6 additional staff positions. These additional faculty and staff provide support for prior expansion work when there was no increase in faculty or staff. Eight students will be admitted to the Fraser Health Cohort for fall 2023. This will bring the total BMW admissions to 32 per year, culminating in a BMW student body of at least 128 in 2026.

A World Health Organization report published in a *Lancet* 2015 [special issue on Midwifery](#) advised that 85% of the world's births could be managed autonomously by midwives. At that rate, BC midwives would staff more than 37,000 births per year. In 2021, BC's 320 midwives were the primary providers for 25% of the province's births. Growth in BC's population and midwifery retirement creates a continuous need for new midwives.

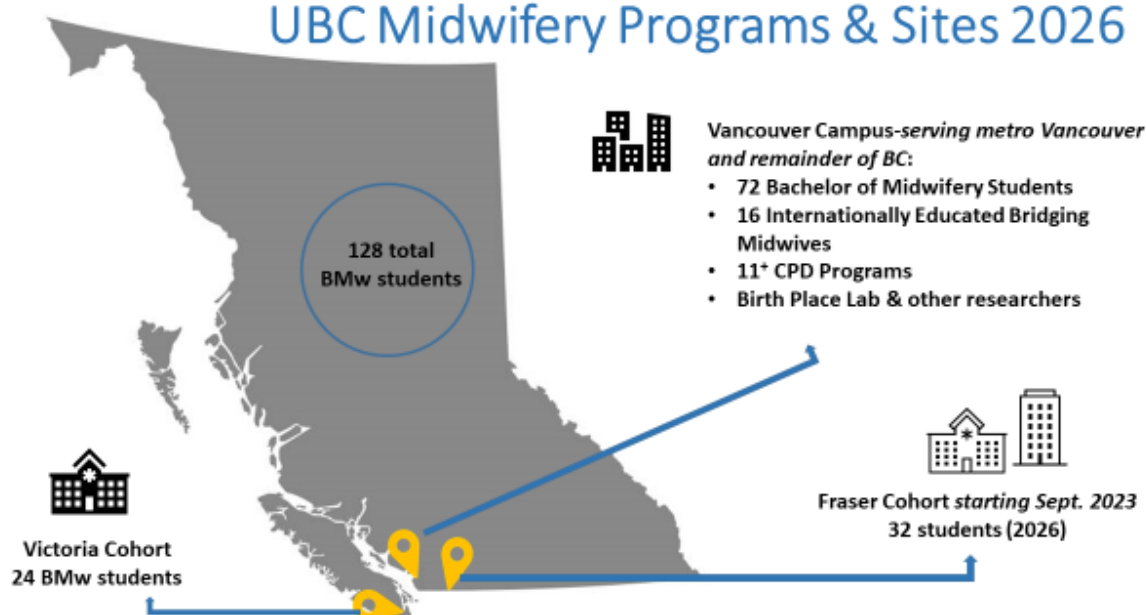
[Gateway Team-Based Care Clinic](#)

A new UBC health professions building, the Gateway Building, is under construction at the corner of University Avenue and Wesbrook Mall. The Gateway Building will include a ground floor primary care clinic. The primary care clinic will model team-based care and be an interdisciplinary education site for UBC health professions. Availability of a faculty practice will enable faculty to maintain their clinical skills, develop practice-based midwifery research, and teach midwifery philosophy across health disciplines. Midwifery will staff a clinic at Gateway with the interdisciplinary model to be developed through UBC Health. Planned opening for the Gateway Building is fall 2024.

[Leadership Update](#)

UBC Midwifery is recruiting a new Program Director. The current director ends a 5-year contract in June 2023. The current director will see the Fraser Health expansion through its first term and be available to the incoming director for questions and support. As the faculty and staff size doubles with the Fraser Expansion, leadership will need to re-organize and update decision-making models and communications. Midwifery is hiring a Senior Administrative Program Manager in 2023, who will manage projects, oversee the budget, and supervise other staff. Having a Program Manager will enable the Midwifery Director to focus time on curriculum oversight, research growth, faculty development, and partnerships with people and organizations external to Midwifery.

UBC Midwifery Programs & Sites 2026



STRATEGIC VISIONARY GROWTH IDEAS

Education

Four ideas in the education pillar had top priority during the strategic planning process: 1) improve the use of simulation in clinical skills teaching, 2) continue the annual Elaine Carty Visiting Scholars Program, 3) adjust the IEMBP curriculum to provide a return to practice option for midwives following a leave from practice, and 4) develop a midwifery to nurse practitioner educational program.

Simulation in Clinical Teaching

UBC Midwifery plans to increase the use of high fidelity manikins, session recording, and post-session feedback along with improved clinical scenarios. Midwifery will work with new initiatives in development by the Faculty of Medicine's Digital Solutions group (formerly MedIT) to assure that equitable clinical skills experiences are available to students across cohorts (Vancouver, Vancouver Island, and Fraser Health). Midwifery aims to recruit a midwife who will study simulation as a teaching specialty, and become internationally certified to teach simulation.

Visiting Scholars Programs

The [Carty Visiting Scholars Program](#) has provided educational updates for faculty, students and community midwives since 2015. In addition to public lectures, the scholars provide consultation on academics and research mentoring for faculty. There were no visiting scholars in 2021 during the COVID pandemic; however, three visiting scholars did presentations during the November 2022 twentieth anniversary celebration. The Carty Visiting Scholars Program is funded through external donations.

Midwifery will host more visiting international scholars funded by their universities or governments as the number of doctorally prepared faculty members grow. These scholars may continue doctoral research and writing at UBC or be sabbaticants who work with midwifery faculty. UBC

Midwifery hosted two sabbaticants and two international doctoral students in 2021 and 2022. The visiting international scholars not only increase the educational reach of UBC Midwifery but also develop relationships that are foundational for the Partnership Pillar.

Return to Practice

The demands of work that happen 24/7 and in varied locations can become so stressful for midwives that they take a leave from practice. Some temporarily leave practice to raise children or care for other family members. These midwives need to meet quality assurance criteria from the BC College of Nurses and Midwives before re-registration. The IEMBP curriculum could be adapted to meet the needs of midwives returning to practice.

Midwifery to Nurse Practitioner Program

With the development of the Advanced Admissions Process for Registered Nurses, midwifery faculty proposed an educational program for midwives to become nurse practitioners. This would be a long-term project that could be funded through a UBC internal grant. Midwifery would need a champion for this program who would work with the UBC School of Nursing to estimate the contents, length and cost of the program. A needs assessment would then determine if there were sufficient interest in this educational pathway to continue development.

Graduate Education in Midwifery

Although not prioritized during the 2022 strategic planning process, growing toward graduate education in midwifery has been a priority for UBC Midwifery for the last decade, with previous directors exploring co-development of a masters program with the School of Nursing, the School of Population and Public Health, and the Department of Family Practice. McMaster University developed the first Canadian midwifery master in science degree and enrolled students in 2022. If leadership, scholarship, and the development of basic midwifery theory is to grow in British Columbia, there must be graduate study that focuses on midwifery. Currently, in Canada midwives desiring graduate preparation, must do so through other disciplines (e.g. public health, women's studies, medicine, social sciences masters or doctoral programs, a generic health education masters degree) or leave the province for study. UBC Midwifery will develop a path for graduate education that includes specific coursework in advanced midwifery. This might be accomplished through cooperation with the School of Public Health, the School of Nursing, or departments within the Faculty of Medicine. A model will need to be developed that hires master prepared midwives to teach undergraduate coursework currently taught by doctorally prepared midwifery faculty, so that doctorally prepared faculty can teach and supervise midwifery graduate students. Because of the scarcity of graduate prepared midwifery faculty, recruitment of doctorally prepared interdisciplinary faculty may be a pragmatic strategy to establish a graduate education stream for midwives. Notably, the Midwifery program is the only primary care health profession in BC where graduates go direct to practice without advanced education. Within the UBC Faculty of Medicine, medical students are generally admitted with a bachelors qualification and then have to complete a residency that includes research preparation. Physiotherapy and Audiology are masters prepared for entry to practice.

One strategic proposal listed under Partnerships Pillar was for a global, post-graduate fellowship that focuses on human rights in childbirth. The Research Pillar additionally supports this idea, as post-graduate fellowships are most likely to be funded through new research grants.

Research

One of the hallmarks of a profession is its ability to test knowledge and to generate new knowledge. As the only midwifery faculty in British Columbia, UBC Midwifery must be a site of knowledge testing and innovation. Additionally, faculty experienced in research are key to teaching students critical appraisal of the literature. UBC Midwifery must continue to develop new midwifery researchers and expand the reach of its research portfolios. This growth will require development internal to Midwifery and strategic relationships with research groups external to Midwifery and UBC.

The Midwifery faculty currently has three professors with research programs. Two midwives, Dr. Saraswathi Vedam and Dr. Hamideh Bayrampour, are externally funded to pursue research fulltime. Their programs of research include place of birth, development of patient-experience measures, respectful and anti-racist perinatal health services, perinatal mood disorders and cannabis use during pregnancy. Dr. Vedam's knowledge translation site, the [Birth Place Lab](#), is internationally known. Dr. Cecilia Jevitt does research and knowledge translation related to weight gain, weight stigma and obesity in pregnancy. Dr. Jevitt's site [AdvantageMidwifery.org](#), provides educators and clinicians with resources for teaching about weight gain and care for those with obesity in pregnancy. Midwifery research areas have broad applicability across reproductive health care with all three researchers cited regularly in peer-reviewed journals.

Internal research growth will require sustainable funding for these researchers along with continuation of the Elaine and Ken Carty Visiting Scholars Program. The Visiting Scholars Program brings international researchers to UBC to mentor faculty and students and to update community midwives on midwifery knowledge innovation. Presentations from the Visiting Scholars Program are not currently recorded or distributed virtually. Distribution through live-streaming or recording should be a short-term goal of the Visiting Speakers Program to increase dissemination of UBC Midwifery research.

Expansion funding in 2022 opened a fourth position for a faculty member in the traditional academic research track. Midwifery faculty will prioritize recruiting a midwife for this position who has a strong history of external research funding and publication.

External support for research growth in midwifery will require partnerships with other researchers in the Department of Family Practice and UBC. Dr. Patti Janssen's [Science of Birth Cluster](#) is an example of research networking internal to UBC with the [Quality Maternal and Newborn Research Network](#) an example of international research participation external to UBC. International doctoral students receiving supervision from UBC Midwifery faculty, post-doctoral students, and researchers spending sabbatical time with UBC Midwifery also develop research faculty and student expertise.

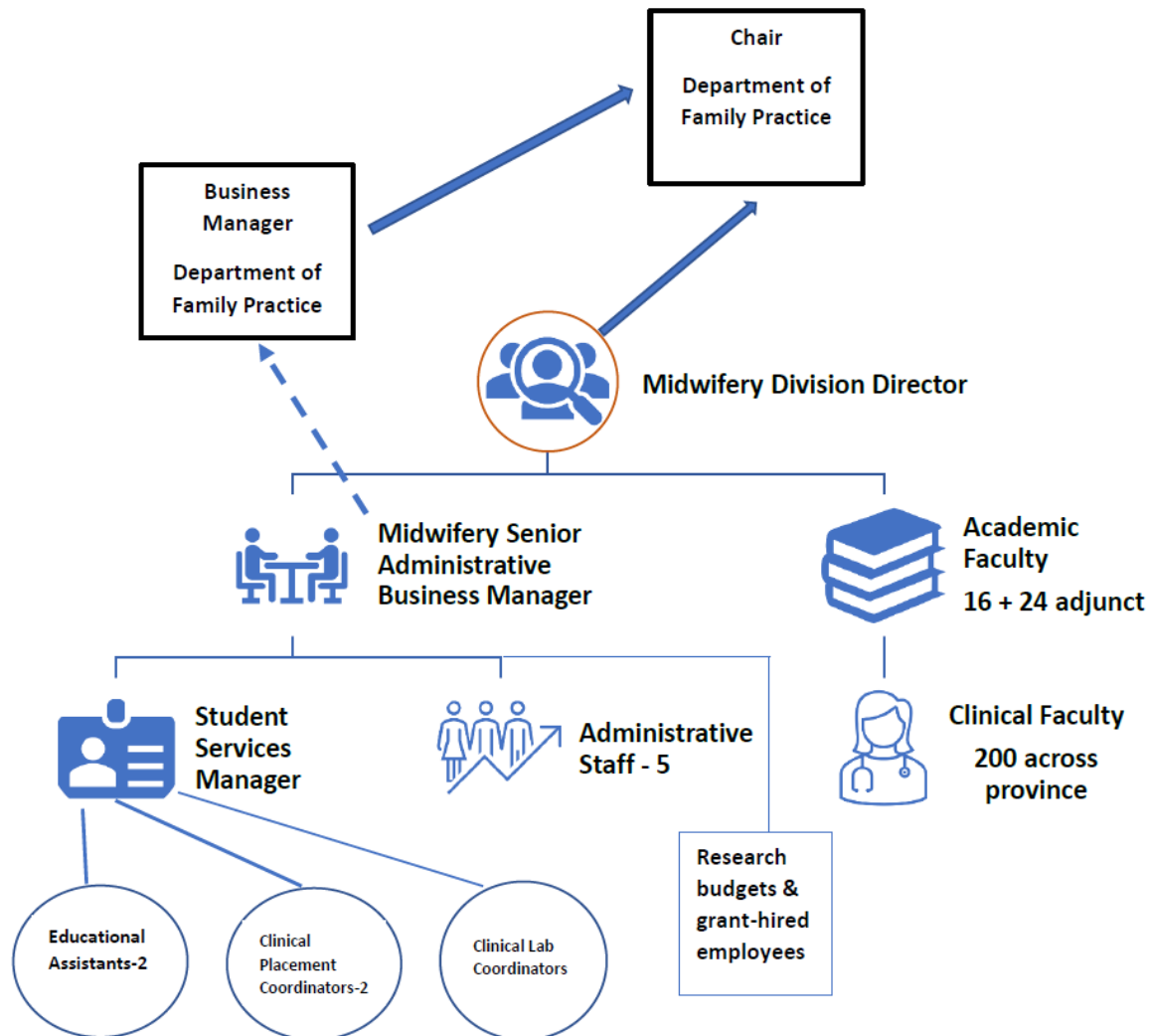
Having research faculty is necessary for the development of graduate education in midwifery and graduate students are necessary to support faculty research work. The research pillar supports the education pillar.

Organization

Organizational ideas proposed during strategic planning were short-term projects that would improve organizational performance such as auditing faculty and staff tech knowledge followed by targeted learning to cover knowledge gaps, new clinical placement software, videos about midwifery for the website and a midwifery-specific clinical skills tracking and evaluation program.

With the almost doubling of faculty and staff between 2022 and 2024, Midwifery will need to re-organize its internal governance structure and design new communication and reporting patterns. A Communications and Marketing Manager hired in 2023 will assist the division in developing efficient communications between faculty, staff, student cohorts and students around the province. The Communications and Marketing Manager will also assist the faculty in determining the most strategic marketing and promotion activities and support faculty and staff in maintaining program fidelity and quality across cohorts and between programs. A Senior Administrative Business Manager will supervise staff within the division and be responsible for program and financial management. This will enable the Midwifery Director to devote more time to curriculum, faculty, and research development. The development and promotion of clinical faculty will be key to the growth clinical education.

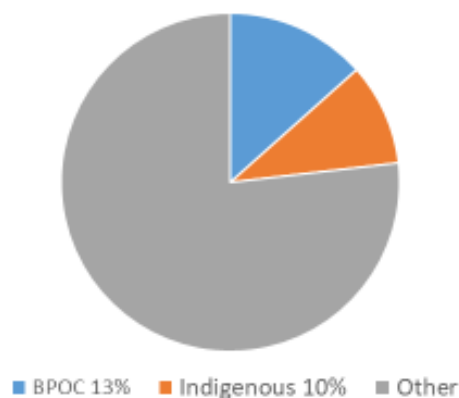
MIDWIFERY ORGANIZATIONAL DIAGRAM 2022
FOLLOWING ADDITION OF FRASER EXPANSION FACULTY & STAFF



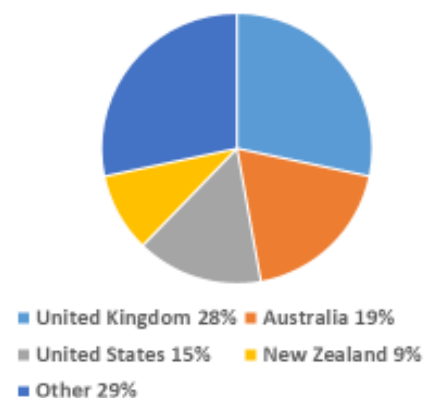
Increased efforts in recruiting faculty, staff and students from diverse backgrounds was not mentioned in the strategic planning process, probably because improvements in equity, diversity and inclusion across the division have been targeted for the last 5 years. As diversity within the province grows, UBC Midwifery must continue to recruit midwifery students from diverse backgrounds who represent the cultural richness of BC and who will provide culturally congruent reproductive health care. Bringing faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds into position vacancies is a priority.

Diversity in Midwifery Admissions

Diversity in Midwifery BMw Admissions
2015-2022



Country of Original Midwifery Studies
Internationally Educated Midwives 2015-2022



Partnership

Partnerships crucial to UBC Midwifery's growth begin within UBC. Positioned within the Faculty of Medicine, Midwifery has wide access to the latest innovations in health care and health care education. As a part of UBC Health, Midwifery is involved in the development of team-based care models and planning for the Gateway Clinic. Midwifery students participate in the [Integrated Curriculum](#), essential interdisciplinary learning across UBC health professions.

As the only midwifery educator in British Columbia, UBC Midwifery has close partnerships with the BC College of Nurses and Midwives and the Midwives Association of British Columbia. These partnerships advance midwifery professional organization and legislation. Midwifery faculty represent the University on the [Perinatal Services BC](#) Advisory Board and often participate as content experts for PSBC research and education projects. The Midwives Association of BC has proposed lifting restrictions on midwifery practice so that midwives would provide reproductive health care across the lifespan. This scope expansion would require additional undergraduate coursework and extended clinical placements and continuing education courses from UBC Continuing Professional Development.

During the initial phase of the strategic planning process, 13 of 15 participants named development of an out of hospital birth center as the highest strategic priority in operations. This birth center would be a normal birth teaching site for midwifery and could include offices and classroom space. While development and management of an out of hospital birth center is beyond the mission of UBC Midwifery, Midwifery will support external organizations in birth center development particularly Indigenous groups planning local Indigenous birth centers. Having birth centers placed strategically in

urban and rural areas would decrease crowding in urban maternity units and improve access to care in rural areas.

UBC Midwifery currently has partnerships around the world. Research partners come from the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, and China. These countries are also represented along with others in Africa, South America, and Australasia in educational outreach and teaching. The Global Health Program located in the undergraduate program has strong partnerships with health care organizations and midwifery associations in Nepal and Uganda.

Sustainably balancing internal program needs with external relationships will be a challenge for UBC Midwifery, but one required for strategic growth.

STRATEGIES SUMMARY

UBC Midwifery has successfully built and refined infrastructure over two decades. This stable operations base is the foundation for strategic growth. Strategic innovations most likely to grow midwifery over the next five years include:

- **Reorganization of governance to accommodate the expansion of teaching and clinical placement in the Fraser Health Authority**
- **A return to practice program developed within the bridging program for internationally educated midwives**
- **Development of a midwifery practice as part of team-based care at the Gateway Clinic**
- **Development of graduate studies in midwifery**
- **Support for additional research faculty**
- **Re-organization of Midwifery as a department or school within the Faculty of Medicine**