

Informal Session of the Senate on January 28, 2010

To provide the opportunity for Senators to ask questions and comment on the Principal's vision document, "Where Next? Toward a University Academic Plan" of January 15, 2010, the Senate Agenda Committee has scheduled an informal session.

Therefore, a motion will be proposed by the Senate Agenda Committee "that 'Where Next? Toward a University Academic Plan' be considered in an informal session chaired by Senator J. Stairs."

The Senate will move into Informal Session under VIII, Other Business.

Proposed Format for Informal Discussion

One hour has been allotted to discuss the following topics:

1. Four Fundamental Principles (page 4 of the report).
2. Ten Proposals for Consideration (page 7)
3. Some Possible Institutional Priorities (page 16)

Where next?

TOWARD A UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC PLAN



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Principal and Vice-Chancellor

Introduction

Throughout the Queen's community, there has been, and continues to be, general agreement on the values we share. These include high academic standards, a rich and personal campus environment, an emphasis on excellence in teaching and research, a welcoming and respectful environment and a culture of service to our multiple communities. But although these values provide a framework, we need more to guide the decisions we will need to make in the next several years.

We need to engage in a discussion process that leads to a set of clear choices on what we will do and what we will not do. My hope is that the Academic Planning exercise, which I am initiating with this document, will guide not only our curriculum, research focus, and teaching and learning goals, but also our decision-making regarding financial strategies, our size, capital development, human resources and fundraising.

Like many of our peers, Queen's is facing fundamental choices. Economic, social and technological revolutions are underway across the globe. We must be alive to this context – and our current financial situation – in our planning and decision-making. We must balance the budget over the next few years and to do so we must become more efficient. We will be undertaking a major governance review and the Vice-Principal (Academic) position will also become that of Provost in May; we are developing a proposal for a University Planning Committee that, if adopted, will bring together members of the Board of Trustees and Senate to ensure that academic and financial planning are better integrated and proceed in parallel. On the administrative side, we are implementing recommendations of the Cost-Reduction Task Force and we are considering bringing in external experts to help us identify any internal inefficiencies that may be costing us money.

the process

This personal vision document represents my own current views and ideas on where we could and/or need to go. It is not written in stone since I have much to learn, but I hope that it may help to jump-start vigorous debate in departments and faculties. Those discussions will culminate, by the end of the winter term, in submissions which specify how our various units see themselves moving forward.

While in some circumstances one might encourage blue-sky thinking, like “given five new tenure-track positions and a new building we would become the top department or faculty of ‘x’ in North America,” these are not such circumstances. Essentially, I am asking every part of the University to take stock of what it does and plan for where it would like to be in five years, assuming for the most part no new university resources and increasing costs. Some of this may be accomplished by creative revenue-generation and strategic investment that will produce administrative efficiencies. This is already happening in some faculties including Education and Business, and I encourage all units to consider innovative ways they may generate revenue to support their programs.

As part of this process, units will be asked to develop responses to a series of questions (see Appendix 1). The goal is to help units think broadly and imaginatively about their future, and capture the specifics of their plans and visions in a framework that will ensure consistency across campus.

In the spring, I will be asking several Queen’s academics to work as a committee to synthesize the submissions from faculties, schools and departments into a draft university plan. This draft plan will then be presented (via the University Planning Committee, should that body be in existence by then) to Senate for discussion and approval in Fall 2010, and to the Board in December 2010 (see Appendix 2).

I suggest that as Queen's moves forward, we need to build on four fundamental principles:

build on four principles

- 1** We must preserve this university as a balanced academy that offers an outstanding undergraduate experience enriched by high-quality graduate and professional programs within a research-intensive environment; we must find ways better to align research and teaching so they are complementary, not competitive;
- 2** We must encourage innovation in teaching, in research and in the ways we go about our daily business, including administrative operations. Some of these innovations will succeed; others will fail, but we should aspire to be known as a university that is not afraid to try new things and explore new paths;
- 3** We must look beyond our traditional disciplinary boundaries to find the constellations of expertise that bring faculty members together across the University and provide students with a rich educational experience that will serve them in their lives beyond Queen's; and
- 4** We must seek to support local and regional economic development and then look beyond our location in Kingston and Canada to seek our place in the world, by providing international educational experiences for our students, research collaborations for faculty, and service beyond our national borders.

In sum, **Innovation**, **Interdisciplinarity** and **Internationalization** should guide us in our academic planning, and **Imagination** should be one of the major intellectual tools we take on this journey.

These principles and tools are obviously not unique to Queen's, but how we use them will determine what our university can be in the 21st century. The tough part of the discussion comes in identifying specific directions, and agreeing on our choices.

Universities have survived longer than most institutions in the world. A major factor in this survival has been the ability to keep pace with society while preserving academic independence. Sometimes we have been a little slow and have followed social and economic changes; other times we have helped engineer change. Yet universities such as Queen's remain deeply conservative institutions, and, in some ways, highly risk-averse. Some of this tendency is understandable: there are elements that are so core to a university, including academic freedom and the interaction of faculty and students engaged in teaching, research and learning, that we must guard them carefully. In Queen's case, there is much, specific to *our* university, that is worth preserving. Our sixth principal, the Rev. William Snodgrass, described this to his successor George Grant as a “potent and mysterious spell.” If we let this go, we lose a critical part of our identity, and the reputational advantage that continually gives us an edge in student recruitment.

But not everything is indispensable, and not everything is core to our values and our identity. In fact, many things that we practice as custom or convenience have not been around as long as we might think. Our current curricular and disciplinary divisions, for instance, are the cumulative creation of the past 100 years. Who in Grant's time had heard of Global Development Studies or Gender Studies (itself an evolution, at Queen's, from Women's Studies), of an MBA, or of Neuroscience? How different is medical education from even 50 years ago? Let us by all means look to the past, but over a longer period than the last four or five decades. Only then will we truly realize how much our predecessors, too, needed to *embrace change*.

Change is not easy, and not always welcome. It is inconvenient, untidy, and raises questions that sometimes we may not want to ask, about things we take for granted. Even at the individual level, change consumes time. As a full-time professor, every time I changed the format or syllabus of a course, it was a draw on my time. Sometimes I wanted to do this—it kept me fresh and excited, using new materials, adding bibliography, trying out new topics. Other changes—for example, a move to half-year courses imposed in the late 1980s—were not something I greeted warmly (although I quickly changed my mind, as I discovered I liked this way of organizing my personal academic year).

But change is both natural and necessary, and so are innovation and experimentation, some of which, frankly, will fail. However, just because some ventures do not succeed, we should not stop trying them. And we should think boldly — transformatively — in “game-changing” ways, not just incrementally or around the margins.

We are in difficult and uncertain times. To move forward, we need to be willing to let go of some things. It is not a matter of “doing more with less” — we have been doing that for a long time — but of doing fewer things, better, with what we have: doing “less with less.”

preserve core values
embrace change think boldly

doing less
with less

We need to ask what knowledge and experiences should fundamentally characterize a student's time here and what areas of research, discovery, dissemination and application are distinctively central to Queen's role, nationally and internationally? I would suggest, from under the many hats I wear—principal, professor, alumnus, parent—they are sortable and distinguishable. They are at the basis of the set of “Vision—Mission—Values” which I offered to the joint Board-Senate selection committee a year ago and which I reproduce here. I hope we can use it to initiate discussions.

vision *To pursue wisdom and knowledge for the greater good of our communities and the world, while inspiring outstanding achievement in learning, personal development and public service.*

mission *Queen's will be Canada's post-secondary leader, internationally recognized for its distinctive integration of teaching and research, for the diversity of its curriculum and the inclusiveness of its community, for the innovative and imaginative outlook of its students and staff, and for its commitment to social responsibility.*

values *Excellence in scholarship and learning; a commitment to the social responsibility of knowledge and public service; a culturally inclusive and collegial environment; transparency in decision-making; pride in our history but a forward-looking and open-minded attitude to change; the alignment of resources and infrastructure to academic priorities, facilitated by a supportive administration and assessed both qualitatively and quantitatively; and an unwavering pursuit of quality across all aspects of our academic, extra-curricular and administrative activities.*

As we move forward with our planning, we must be mindful of the values the Queen's community has adopted over the years, as expressed in Senate policies and reports, speeches, and planning documents, to name a few. Among these planning documents are the *Meeting the Challenges* (1992), *Report on Principles and Priorities* (1996) and *Engaging the World* (2006). Many of the values espoused therein are still true today: a commitment to academic and research excellence, the value of the campus living and learning environment, and an outward-looking point of view which embraces both the local community, the rest of Canada, and the world.

However, since *Engaging the World* was adopted, much has changed. Our financial situation has become more complex, our enrolments continue to rise, and demands on our internal resources are more acute. In this context, the challenge is not to find other values, but rather to recognize that we cannot be all things to all people. This will entail hard choices. There will be some things we will want to emphasize; there will be others we will no longer be able to do. We need, as a community — at the individual, departmental, faculty and University level — to do the hard work of setting realistic goals, along with real measures and timelines. We will also have to avoid the temptation of hoping for a return to some perceived previous “golden age.”

TEN PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION

Here are some thoughts on particular areas of curricula and campus development that I believe we must explore, as we move toward a more nimble, creative and efficient way of operating.

1 Degree structure

We must avoid the trap of assuming that our current program and degree structures are cast in stone and that courses must always be taught in the same fashion, with the same format and duration. This is a counting method and a practice of delivery; it is not a core value. Where this is feasible and permitted by professional accreditation requirements, we should examine whether our academic programs can be offered in an accelerated fashion, with a view to bringing our structures in line with the Bologna Process unfolding in Europe. What if we allowed more students to “stack” credits instead of *accumulating* them in a linear fashion? Moving to a system of unit-counting, as opposed to the aggregation of courses and half courses, will provide an opportunity to facilitate this.

2 Interdisciplinarity

We need to find ways around or through departmental, faculty, and in some cases, university boundaries. There are already examples of this on the research side, such as the Human Mobility Research Centre, the Centre for Neuroscience Studies, the Fuel Cell Research Centre and the GeoEngineering Centre. However, on the teaching side, we are much less successful at interdisciplinary initiatives because budgets are apportioned to departments. There will always be an uneasy balance between new interdisciplinary directions and traditional disciplines and as we evolve, we must be mindful of that tension. It is tough for a department head trying to maintain courses to enable a faculty member to teach or co-teach in another unit. It is hard to synchronize undergraduate and graduate interdisciplinary programs with academic job markets that remain, for the most part, driven by traditional departmental structures. We have some sound successes, like Gender Studies and Global Development Studies and we should encourage more of this interdisciplinary teaching with centrally base-funded multi-year initiatives. We should also be much more open about which courses count in which programs. For instance, there are language courses being counted in Political Science; Classics courses being counted in History; Business courses being counted in Computer Science, and Arts and Social Science courses forming part of Engineering programs.

3 Virtualization, Size and Flexibility

Instead of generally trying to keep classes small—and signally failing—could faculties explore, where feasible, offering more students a variety of class sizes and teaching frameworks? For example: one small (full year) class per year, two larger format classes, one offered virtually (through a combination of real-time and asynchronous discussions and lectures), and one as a research component that could be used to double up a credit?

4 Field Studies

This is one of the most powerful components of the tool-kit at the Bader International Study Centre (BISC) at Herstmonceux Castle in England where students take all their classes from Monday to Thursday and use Friday and sometimes part of the weekend for field study travel. For example, law students spend a full week of their two-month program in continental Europe, where they visit major international law institutions such as the International Criminal Court in The Hague. The benefits include seeing what is being studied in the classroom, and the synthesis provided by putting students and faculty from different disciplines (for example, History, English, Art History) in front of the same materials. Students also use these opportunities to talk to each other and to faculty informally.

Examples closer to home include Applied Science civil engineering week held at the Kennedy Field Station in Tamworth, the extensive field program in Geology and second-year biology students doing a typology of trees on campus.

5 Inquiry

We need to ask ourselves how best to enhance our students' learning experience. This will become increasingly important as class sizes rise and opportunities for interaction shrink. There is no single solution to this problem, but examples already exist on campus. Case-based and problem-based learning are used in a number of faculties including Business, Law, Medicine and Applied Science. Like a some of its peers, Queen's has developed programs involving "inquiry-based" or "discovery-based" learning (see www.iatq.ca). Could we expand these models to ensure that all students have access to these opportunities starting in their first year? This would not be inexpensive, but if we decide to make it a priority, it should drive budgeting decisions around pedagogy and training for faculty members.

We must also seek to foster environments where students can integrate what they have learned and touch the edges of their disciplines. Particularly in the sciences, the undergraduate thesis model allows students to explore a research problem with a faculty supervisor and to experience the joys, and challenges, of research. Are there other models which could achieve the same end?

At the root of all of these initiatives is the notion that learning is a social phenomenon and the goal of a university is to provide, as far as possible, the locales – be they labs, tutorials, or libraries – which help this happen.

6 Areas of Research Excellence

There is an enormous amount of outstanding research underway at Queen's in the Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences. But there are only a limited number of areas in which Queen's can justifiably be called a global leader. It is unwise to suppose that we can be equally excellent at all things, but we need to be committed to supporting and promoting excellence. We will have to decide which areas will get more of our attention. This is tough – we all like to think that our own discipline and our own area are “excellent.” Indeed, we have individual researchers and clusters of excellence in particular areas across all faculties. As we choose institution-wide areas of focus, we must continue to support individual or group activities that do not (at the moment) reflect institution-wide priorities. Because you never know where the next paradigm-shifting discovery will emerge.

But we do have to make some spending decisions and this must involve funding some areas at a higher level than others. This means taking money from some old activities, or even stopping those activities, so we can develop promising new ones. An equal division of money, like an equal division of cuts, may seem “fair,” but in fact it is inequitable, and bad for the institution as a whole.

As part of the Academic Planning process, four or five cross-faculty foci will be identified for consideration as institutional research priorities. Once the plan is adopted, it will become the responsibility of university administration to allocate resources to permit these areas to “get to the next level.” It will also become the task of the Office of the Vice-Principal (Research) and the Office of Advancement to raise additional funds for these activities.

7 Connecting Teaching and Research

Queen's is ideally positioned to be the mid-sized Canadian university that best combines a strong undergraduate education—inside and outside the classroom – with the benefits of a research-intensive environment. But we need to find new and creative ways to link teaching and research in organic ways, in whatever discipline or interdisciplinary program. Undergraduates doing summer internships in labs are an obvious one; undergraduates working on social projects of interest to our communities and to professors in the human sciences are another. Graduate students could play a strong mentoring role here.

Queen's has traditionally identified three major communities or – to use a historical analogy – “estates”: undergraduates, graduate students and faculty. This image misses other key members of the University:

- our general staff, who support what faculty and students do;
- postdoctoral fellows, a key transitional stage from student to professor, especially in the sciences and social sciences but increasingly in the Arts and Humanities (I held such a position here in the mid '80s);
- off-campus alumni, benefactors, government and industry partners, who provide experiential learning opportunities for our students during their time here and often employment afterwards; and,
- life-long learners and those seeking ongoing professional development.

Part of the challenge in balancing what we do lies in connecting all of these groups and making the best use of their talents. As part of this, we should expand our pool of postdoctoral fellows and visiting scholars, perhaps reviving and rethinking programs such as the Queen's National Scholar competition when funding permits. In this way, we can add to our teaching and research complement at a time of constrained recruitment for regular faculty positions. Should we follow this route, fundraising for such initiatives will be a priority for the Advancement Office and the Office of the Vice-Principal (Research).

This might extend to more robust institutional support for visitors - including alumni – from government, industry, and other universities, who could teach courses. These courses might be shorter than 12 weeks and might make use of internet connectivity, but they could provide an agile complement to what we currently do. In addition to strengthening our relationships with the external world, they would provide valuable “real-life” content to our students, as well as building excellent professional connections. Many faculties and departments are already using this strategy to some extent, but we could do much more, perhaps by creating teaching “teams” for particular courses.

Undergraduates can be involved in research, as suggested above, but can we not also involve them more in teaching on the principle that what you can explain to someone else, you will better comprehend yourself?

What if we had more undergraduate TAs working with grad TAs? They could learn from the grads and provide additional teaching power. Credit could be provided either as extra points toward the undergraduate student's degree, or by way of an entry on a co-curricular transcript.

Finally, it will be important for us to reaffirm the fundamental place of graduate students in the life of the University in their roles as teaching assistants and fellows, and research assistants. Among the issues we will need to confront are the proportion of graduate students in our population, the balance of international and domestic graduate students, and the best means of bringing them more fully into the non-academic life of the University.

8 Nothing is Forever

We must be careful that we do not create further silos and build further structures that we, or others, will have a hard time moving in the future, when interests and priorities evolve further, as they surely will do. In particular, we should put sunset clauses on many of our activities — “sell-by” dates after which we should cease doing them unless there is the will and energy to maintain them. I have seen too many programs over the years, founded for noble reasons in one era and by one set of faculty members who have subsequently retired or moved on, become a burden on university resources long after they ceased to attract either students or faculty members. They are tough to get rid of, so just as we put a term on the appointment of academic administrators from department heads to principals, so should we acknowledge that academic structures have a life-cycle. This idea must obviously be reconciled with the centrality of academic freedom to the university environment.

One way to do this would be to create a number of time-limited interdisciplinary areas of specialization, and offer courses or programs dealing with key issues of the day — issues that themselves will change — to four or five annual cohorts of students who would sign up for them before they are closed and new ones created. This would require cooperation, flexibility and a significant degree of logistics management, but I believe it would be worth it.

9 Creating Social Spaces and Having Conversations

Our physical planning and capital needs should reflect our academic aspirations and priorities.

Any academic buildings we construct or renovate in the future need to promote the kind of instruction we plan to practice, and the kinds of interaction we wish to encourage. The era of faculty sitting in their offices while students visit at set hours, is past or passing. For one thing, entering someone's office has always required courage: it is another person's space. For another, many faculty and students now work more from home or are collaborating in research laboratories (a venue in which significant teaching and self-directed learning occur). Students do not approach their interactions with faculty under constraints of time of day or physical presence, as indicated by the use of email and other electronic forms of communication. If we all share a commitment to ensuring the best possible learning experience for our students at a university that is much much more than a "degree-mill," we need to continually address the impact of technological change on what was once "common intellectual space."

North America on the whole doesn't do shared public places very well, compared with parts of Europe like Italy or Spain with their *piazza* cultures. But there are some such spaces here already. The Learning Commons at the Library is one, and the Residences at Queen's have done good work in bridging the community/learning gap, including the introduction of a program to encourage faculty and staff to eat in the residence cafeterias. What if we created more common spaces (physical and virtual) for conversation to occur, both informally and formally? The Vice-Principal (Research), for instance, is working on a series of interdisciplinary lunches for faculty members and undergraduates, following the practice of the annual Chancellor's Research Awards dinner. In the same vein, the School of Computing runs a program called 'Coffee with Profs' where faculty and students just talk. Other departments and schools have similar initiatives. *We need a way to reinvigorate this culture of just talking.* Suppose faculty wore buttons around campus that said: "I'm a prof, ask me what I'm studying"?

10 Reaching Beyond Kingston

Queen's is very rooted in Kingston, and our relationship with the city is a crucial part of our identity. The University strongly supports local and regional economic development and must continue to do so. But we must also reach beyond Kingston, Ontario and Canada, if we are truly going to become an international—and a more diverse—university. We already have one international beachhead in the BISC; the School of Business has internationalized its programs (75% of commerce students go on an international exchange); Law has a BISC-based international program; and Global Development Studies and the School of Policy Studies have their Fudan University-based programs.

Our incoming-student international activities are already formidable, but they would profit from further focus. Our successes in China, where we have a full-time liaison officer at Fudan, may provide a model to be pursued elsewhere. We need to pick some strategic international markets and direct our energies there—not, again, to the exclusion of all others, but with preferential activity. India and China are obvious foci, both emerging economic powerhouses. Other countries in South America, Africa and Asia should also be considered. We should build on the initiatives already in place in these parts of the world, such as the Faculty of Education's links in Chile, and Global Development Studies' connections in Southern Africa. Once we have our academic plan approved, we should develop a related internationalization plan that builds on our strengths and allows us to concentrate in particular parts of the world.

The 10 areas I have just discussed are ones that I believe Queen's should consider developing as we begin the academic planning process. They are not exclusive. Others will no doubt emerge over the next few months.

QUEEN'S PLACE IN THE CANADIAN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE

Last summer I engaged in a dialogue (some might say debate) with other members of the G-13 group of research-intensive universities, a group to which I am proud to have Queen's belong and a group in which Queen's must remain. That being said, I am not much concerned about our relative placing in that group, except insofar as it provides tangible and reputational benefits and pumps up the value of our name, and hence our students' degrees. By the same logic, we should pay attention to ranking exercises such as the *Globe and Mail*, *Maclean's*, and the *Times Higher Education Supplement* to the extent that they often guide many international universities' decisions on potential partnerships. But these rankings are at most indicators of reputation or diagnostic signs. Pursuing improvement within them should not be our only concern. Similarly, we must also monitor how our peer institutions position themselves for the future and consider their decisions regarding growth, recruitment and foci to the extent that they might affect Queen's.

In the course of that summertime debate, and subsequently in further dialogue at the AUCC and in the media, I have concluded that Queen's should not seek to emulate the "mega-research" universities of the country. You know who they are, so I need not name them. There is too much else that we do well, especially in teaching and in the undergraduate out-of-class experience, to put all our eggs into chasing universities much larger than us. That being said, it is imperative that we maintain and increase our share of the federal granting council "pie." Apart from allowing us to do outstanding research, research performance here generates Indirect Cost funding (a modest and inadequate sum, but necessary), and determines such things as our share of Canada Research Chairs.

We must also re-examine and perhaps even recalibrate the balance between teaching and research. As I suggested last year at a Brown Bag Lunch organized by the Centre for Teaching and Learning, perhaps it is time to revisit the traditional 40/40/20 model of faculty members' time split among teaching, research and service. What if it could be varied over the course of a career, as is now done to some extent in some Faculties? It has also been suggested in some quarters that universities should have more 'teaching only' faculty. This is a discussion which deserves to take place here.

We have also seen recent debate concerning the role of academic administrators at Queen's. I recently polled the Faculty Deans and was encouraged to discover that the vast majority of academic administrators, myself included, continue to engage in some degree of undergraduate and graduate teaching and supervision. I think it is important that we not allow our activities as heads, directors, deans, vice-principals and so on, to completely remove us from the

**our reputation what
should we stand for?**

core activities of the professoriate. At the end of the day, teaching students is the core reason why universities exist, and the reason why our provincial governments fund us as best they can, even acknowledging that this has fallen well short of need. We would be research institutes or industries without our students, and Queen's in particular has a vested interest in maintaining a reputation as a school that puts students first.

SOME POSSIBLE INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES

Without prejudging the discussions of the next few months, there are some obvious areas in which Queen's already excels, has excelled, or could excel. In selecting which these are, we will obviously have to ask the larger "meta-question": what differentiates Queen's from any number of other excellent Canadian or world universities and what can continue to make us distinctive in an extremely competitive market? Our residential nature, the quality of our students and the reputation of our out-of-classroom experience are obvious strengths, reflected in external appraisals such as the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), but there are doubtless specific points of academic distinction we need to bring to the fore.

Let me suggest a possible few for consideration:

Energy and Environment A lot of players are in this game, but we have a competitive advantage. We are involved in leading-edge research in such key areas as fuel cell technology, green chemistry, nuclear materials and environmental policy that link scholarship and innovation across both the human and natural sciences and we are situated in a city that aims to be one of the "greenest" in the country.

International Development As a "public service" university of a leading "middle power," committing our students and Queen's to making the world a better place will help boost our global profile. And it is the right thing to do.

Canadian Public Service We need to rekindle our connections with the federal and provincial public services.

Global Human Health This would include our current initiatives in cancer care and human mobility research.

Again, this list should not be seen as cast in stone but rather as my attempt to initiate cross-campus discussion.

MEASURES AND MILESTONES

Our academic plan cannot simply be a declaration of noble goals, open-ended and with no process for measuring progress. Otherwise these goals would rapidly become empty platitudes. Every university aspires to “excellence.” The question is, how do we attain it?

First of all, *a plan itself is a time-limited document which must be revisited annually.* It would be worse than useless if after our year-long development process, we adopted a plan, patted ourselves on the collective back, and filed it away.

Second, our academic plan must become the roadmap for the next part of the Queen's journey. It must clearly identify our goals and how we're going to reach them. This will require us to define specific targets and milestones that we will use to measure our progress. Some of these will be unit-specific, or faculty-specific; others will be imposed by multi-year accountability agreements with government, and by our responsibilities as a public institution. The setting of goals and measures must become an integral part of planning at every level.

accountability

TWO RETROSPECTIVE HISTORIES

Let me end with some speculative fiction.

Imagine a historian a century from now surveying the turbulent evolution of higher education at the start of the 21st century and Queen's position in particular. Here are two versions of what that might look like.

History A “Faced with rising costs and diminishing revenues, Canadian universities continued to struggle well into the second decade of the century. Faculty numbers dwindled further. International students, able to do more flexible degrees in a shorter period of time in countries such as Australia and the members of the European Community, post-Bologna, stopped coming in significant numbers, further adding to the insularity of higher education and eroding revenues. Insisting on accountability, government officials began to set curriculum on a province-wide basis, and concentrated research activity in a few major urban centres.

By 2016, the provinces introduced university rationalization. Since there was little to distinguish several previously autonomous institutions, a new University of Ontario was created in the most populous province and previously existing institutions either closed or turned into branch campuses. On-line learning, resisted strenuously in the past, was forced upon institutions in cookie-cutter ways that many found abhorrent. The distinction between community colleges and universities was eventually eliminated by the Post-Secondary Education Harmonization Act of 2019. The former Queen's University became a feeder campus of the University of Ontario in 2020.”

History B “Faced with rising costs and diminishing revenues, Canadian universities continued to struggle well into the second decade of the century. Some enterprising institutions decided to use the crisis to seize the initiative, break the mould, and adapt themselves to new circumstances. Queen’s University was a leader in this process. In a few short years, it redesigned its undergraduate curriculum to accommodate provincial growth and access initiatives, but did so in ways that did not compromise quality. It built on its traditionally strong reputation for undergraduate experience and used that “capital” to position itself for the next century, quickly leaving most of its peers behind. Undergraduate and graduate students applied in great numbers because of Queen’s flexible and diverse range of teaching methods, its ability to link study with social engagement and community service, its uncompromising focus on producing students devoted to making a global difference, and its accelerated pathways toward degree qualifications. Strategically focusing its research in particular areas brought in increased federal funding and enhanced the University’s reputation abroad, benefiting the entire faculty, staff and student community. Queen’s also maintained its position as a “top employer” in Canada. By 2020, it had established specialized campuses or programs in other parts of the country and across the world making it, despite its modest size, Canada’s premier institution combining high quality undergraduate teaching with leading edge research.”

There are lots of other possible scenarios, but between these two, I know which one I prefer.

Let’s talk about how we should move forward.

appendix one

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE UNIT/PROGRAM AND FACULTY LEVEL SUBMISSIONS

Current economic and budgetary conditions and challenges are unlikely to change in the near or distant future. At the same time, the Premier has set the ambitious goal that 70% of the population will graduate with a post-secondary qualification, and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) projects that between 2008-09 and 2015-16, university applications in Ontario will rise by 42,000 – 58,000. Our ability to respond to this increased demand while retaining our commitment to quality requires that we look closely at what we do, how we do it and how well we do. We must be clear-minded and strategic. We cannot do everything, so we must choose our areas of focus. While being mindful of the tremendous diversity which characterizes this institution, across Faculties and even within units, we must forge a coherent common vision for the future.

The following questions are provided to guide the Academic Planning Exercise. A comparable template, suitably adapted, will be provided to administrative units for input into broader university planning.

The submission deadline for unit documents will be determined by Deans. The Deans' submission deadline to the Vice-Principal (Academic) is April 15, 2010.

- 1 How will your unit or programs contribute to Queen's mission of research, scholarship, teaching and service to the community, province, nation and broader world? What steps will you take, through the delivery of high quality programs, to attain these goals?^{1,2}

Speak specifically to:

- a Program structures (areas or fields for emphasis; de-emphasis or discontinuation)
- b Interdisciplinarity
- c Curriculum reform and inclusivity
- d Degree Structure (e.g., credit hours)
- e Course format (length, weight, delivery mechanisms, location, etc.)
- f Innovative teaching and learning techniques (i.e. e-learning, field study, exchange, capstone experiences, co-curricular activities, etc.)
- g TA support and adjunct teaching
- h Infrastructure (physical)

appendix one

- 2 What are your areas of demonstrated excellence in research and graduate teaching? Identify no more than three.
 - a What metrics do you use to establish “excellence”?³
 - b Are there parallel areas of strength in other units in your Faculty or elsewhere at Queen's that might merit this being a University area of emphasis?
- 3 Outline the current and future relationship between research and teaching in your unit and programs.
Speak specifically to:
 - a Undergraduate participation in research (current and future)
 - b Graduate student role in the relationship between research and teaching (current and future)
 - c Role of postdoctoral fellows and research associates if applicable
- 4 What international activities is your unit engaged in (please feel free to use material generated for the November 2009 query from the Principal to Deans) and what additional activities would it wish to engage in, given resources?
- 5 What factors distinguish your unit from similar ones in other universities?
- 6 The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) is interested in multilateral partnerships between universities and between colleges and universities as mechanisms to improve student access to, and mobility in, the post-secondary sector (i.e. university transfer credits, college credit transfer toward baccalaureate degrees, college offerings of baccalaureate degrees)⁴. Are there opportunities within the evolution of your academic programs to consider these types of partnerships?
- 7 Some funds will be centrally allocated beginning in the 2011/12 budget year for new initiatives and established or emerging areas of excellence. State how you would allocate any net new resources awarded to your unit.
- 8 Provide a brief response on behalf of your unit to the general content of *Where Next?*, paying particular attention to areas in which you see the potential for your unit to move forward using existing resources.

¹ If applicable address program accreditation in the context of the itemized list provided.

² Please project your tenure-track and continuing adjunct staff complement ahead five years and calculate the total number of courses that can be offered given planned budgetary reductions.

³ Empirical data from OCGS and IAR reviews as well as other assessments are appropriate.

⁴ Recent documents presented to MTCU from the Council of Ontario Universities (COU): *Reaching Even Higher: The next multi-year funding plan for post-secondary education* (not yet posted to the COU site); and Colleges Ontario (CO) www.collegesontario.org/policy-positions/position-papers/new-vision-for-higher-education.pdf provide greater detail on this initiative. A further reference on this topic is the recent McGill-Queen's publication: *Academic Transformation: The forces shaping higher education in Ontario*. Ian Clark et al. 2009. <http://mqup.mcgill.ca/book.php?bookid=2363>.

appendix two

TIMELINE FOR ACADEMIC PLANNING PROCESS

Steps in Process

Release of *"Where Next? Toward a University Academic Plan"*

Submissions from Deans due

Discussion with University Council

Synthesis of Academic Plan

Preliminary report to Senate

Preliminary report to Board of Trustees

Presentation to Senate for approval

Presentation to Board of Trustees

Date

January 15, 2010

April 15, 2010

May 1, 2010

May – August, 2010

September 23, 2010

October 1, 2010

November 25, 2010

December 3, 2010