

## SENATE QUESTION PERIOD – MARCH 24, 2011

*Questions for Dr. P. Taylor – Chair of the Senate Academic Planning Task Force (SAPTF) submitted to the Senate by Senator J. Morelli:*

*Dr. Taylor you were quoted in the March 2011 OnQ magazine as saying: “In essence we are going back to square one with the new teaching building and the Academic Plan. It’s an amazing time, but we have to answer some fundamental questions before we can move forward.”*

- 1. Would you please state exactly what these fundamental questions are, and exactly how the SAPTF is consulting on each of them. Please be very specific and if possible include a rationale for the approach to consulting that has been adopted for each of the fundamental questions.*
- 2. Please explain the role of consultations with groups of experts in matters related to each of the specific fundamental questions that the SAPTF has identified. Please identify specifically which experts have been or will be consulted for each of the fundamental questions.*
- 3. I have some concerns that there is an over-reliance on electronic-consultation by the SAPTF. When I last checked the SAPTF website (on March 10, 2011) there appeared to be only 16 comments (including five by members of the SAPTF, so really only eleven comments). Furthermore, out of the eight categories for which it appears that commenting is permitted, only three of the categories had any comments posted at all. This underwhelming response does not in my mind constitute meaningful consultation with the affected stakeholders. Please comment.*

### **Response from the Senate Academic Planning Taskforce**

#### **General Comments**

Senator Morelli’s questions refer to a statement that the Chair of the APTF made in February but that was not published until March 10. The statement uses general terms because it emanates from an earlier stage in the APTF’s process. Much has occurred since then, and the Task Force appreciates this opportunity to bring the Senate up to date.

At the Senate meeting on February 17, Senators emphasized the requirements both for a thorough and transparent process and for completion by April 28, 2011. In response to the challenge posed by these two requirements, the APTF has used online consultation via its website (<http://www.queensu.ca/saptf/>) to supplement live consultations with individuals, student societies, faculty boards, Senate, and community town-halls. Accordingly, a timeline giving details of these consultations, including links to the APTF’s guiding questions and summaries of feedback, is available on the Task Force [News & Events](#) page.

At the Senate meeting of March 24, the APTF will invite Senate to participate in open discussion (please see Appendix E, page 55 of this Agenda). Senator Morelli’s questions should be answered in whole or in part by the information available on the APTF website. However, the APTF also provides the following responses.

#### **Response to Question 1**

The “fundamental questions” facing the Task Force at the outset had to do with basic priorities: what should the Academic Plan formulate as Queen’s fundamental academic needs and principles? Or, to put this differently, what should be the key points of the Plan? Through discussion of the Principal’s *Where Next?*, the AWT’s *Imagining the Future*, and other documents produced in response to these, the APTF has formulated an outline with “Four Pillars” to describe what Queen’s should seek to achieve through its academic programs:

- Pillar I Fundamental Academic Literacy
- Pillar II Disciplinarity and Interdisciplinarity
- Pillar III Global Citizenship
- Pillar IV Community and Student Wellness

The “Four Pillars” structure has provided the foci necessary for consulting by means of the APTF website, community town-halls, and other meetings, beginning with the Senate session of February 17. As noted above, the schedule of these consultations, their guiding questions, and the community’s responses, are all available on the APTF website on an evolving basis. Due to the constraints of the Senate timeline, the APTF’s live consultation has been confined mainly to the month of March.

Further, the APTF recently obtained and is analyzing the unit responses to *Where Next?* that were not published. It is also consulting published literature on pedagogy and post-secondary education. It will rely on these sources as well as on ongoing consultations to refine the “Four Pillars” outline as necessary and to draft the Plan.

### **Response to Question 2**

As explained above, the APTF’s [News & Events](#) page lists all of its consultations and provides links for guiding statements, questions, and summaries related to each.

But this is necessarily an evolving process within a short timeframe. The APTF will reformulate its ideas, refine its goals, and discover new questions as it listens to the community – experts and generalists alike.

Once again, everyone is encouraged to track developments on the website and in this Senate Agenda.

### **Response to Question 3**

The APTF disagrees with the suggestion that “there is an over-reliance on electronic-consultation,” given that its online consultation is supplementary to its live consultations and is open-ended. The APTF’s online presence makes it possible for all members of the community to inform themselves of the issues at any time and to respond at any time. It also makes it possible, as earlier stages of the process did not, for all members to read and develop each others’ responses. Although the online responses are not yet many, they are increasing; together with the responses to live consultations (for instance on the issue of teaching writing) they are significant; and they are open to further development until the plan is finally written. The APTF can only offer a means and invite participation; it cannot force participation.

That said, if Senators can identify means that the APTF has neglected, the APTF is very open to any suggestions for improving the process, consistent with the short time frame and the small size of the task force itself.

### **Conclusion and Invitation to Participate**

The APTF invites all Senators and other members of the Queen’s community to stay in touch via the APTF website (<http://www.queensu.ca/saptf/>) and to participate as fully as possible in the consulting process. All viewpoints are welcome. Submissions may also be sent to [senate@queensu.ca](mailto:senate@queensu.ca).

The APTF members have volunteered to work on your behalf on a challenging but very exciting task. The Senate has set a demanding time line and the APTF will do its utmost to meet its deadline.

Respectfully submitted by The Senate Academic Planning Task Force

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