

Questions regarding the recent announcement of the suspension of admissions to the Bachelor of Fine Arts program November 22, 2011

On Wednesday, November 9, the Faculty of Arts and Science announced that it “is suspending admission and upper-year transfers to the Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) program for the 2012-2013 academic year based on an assessment of the faculty resources available to support the program.”

Last year, Queen’s Senate reviewed, updated, and approved the “[Purpose and Functions of Senate](#)” document. In its preamble to the Motion to approve this document ([April 28, 2011](#)), the Senate Operations Review Committee (SORC) explained that “Senate needs to execute its authority effectively through a defined set of activities that are appropriate to the current context.” For this reason, SORC explained that it had “added a new function to make explicit Senate’s authority for ‘university-level’ policies relating to the academic mission and academic services (New #8).” The same preamble also explained that SORC had “asked University Legal Counsel about the use of the term ‘approve’ (in relation to New [Functions] #5, 6 and 7) and concurred with the opinion received that it is a more accurate description [than was the previous phrasing, “establish or close”] of Senate’s role in these circumstances” (Appendix Ga, p. 60).

In my view, this decision to suspend admissions to the BFA program comes under the policies related to admissions that Senate has, according to its “Purpose and Functions” document, the authority and responsibility to approve or disapprove.

<http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/functions.html>

Question 1

I request that the Dean of Arts and Science provide Senate with the rationale and the process by which this decision was made; for example, was the Faculty Board consulted?

It is important for Senate to understand the bounds of its authority under Function 8 with respect to this type of Faculty/University decision, and also that Senate execute its authority.

Senate Legislative Functions

Senate has the authority to:

*8. approve university-level policies relating to the academic mission and academic services including but not limited to **policies related to admissions**, calendars, examinations, student financial aid, and annual enrolment planning.*

Question 2

- a) The Dean of Arts and Science has said that the Faculty will work with the Fine Arts program to examine options for the future. What are these options and do they include provisions to avert closure of the program?
- b) How does the Dean intend to address faculty renewal issues, in general, and specifically related to the Fine Arts program?
- c) Are there any other programs that the Dean foresees will be cut, closed, or have its admission suspended during the next three years?

Question 3

Will the Principal convey:

- a) the concerns of many Senators and others about this decision to the Board of Trustees, and;
- b) explain that the Board's directive for a balanced budget is causing a serious deterioration of academic quality at Queen's?

Question 4

At the September 27, 2011 meeting of Senate, the Provost stated that "The new budget model is in its early stages and will go through a consultative process involving members of the University community" ([Minutes](#), p. 2). Yet in his [Financial Update](#) of October 24, 2011, the Provost states that:

The new budget model will be implemented for the 2013–2014 budget year, and will be driven by the principles of responsibility-centred [sic] management:

- All costs and income attributable to each faculty and other academic unit should be assigned to that unit.
 - Appropriate incentives should exist for each academic unit to increase income and reduce costs to further a clear set of academic priorities.
 - All costs of other units will be allocated to the academic units.
- a) Is it the Provost's position that this every-unit-for-itself budget model is to be implemented, or is the Provost willing to consider alternatives?
 - b) Is the recently announced open session with the Queen's community, where the Provost and the Vice-Principal (Finance and Administration) will make a brief presentation and answer questions on the budget and planning process, meant simply to be an information session to explain how it is going to be, or an opportunity to seek input and broad consultation?

Respectfully submitted,
Senator J. Morelli