

Alignment Between the Report from the Future of the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences Working Group and the Bicentennial Vision

OVERVIEW. The place of the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (AHSS) in the future of the university emerged as a key concern expressed in the early days of consultation related to the development of the Bicentennial Vision. To address these concerns, a working group was formed to provide recommendations regarding the future of AHSS at Queen's. The following document outlines the alignment between the AHSS report and the Bicentennial Vision document.

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE BROAD THEMES IN THE AHSS REPORT AND THE BICENTENNIAL VISION. Due to its mandate, the AHSS working group provided recommendations that were focused on AHSS fields. Meanwhile, the Bicentennial Vision is a university-wide document that does not refer to specific fields, but instead leaves the identification of priority research and academic areas to subsequent work that will manifest through strategic plans and other operational frameworks. As such, many of the recommendations in the AHSS report are not found explicitly in the Bicentennial Vision, but the broader sentiment of those recommendations, e.g., increased collaboration or interdisciplinarity, are found in the Vision. This section discusses the broader themes that emerged from the AHSS working group's report and how they align with the Vision.

1. Centrality of AHSS to Queen's identity. The AHSS report positions AHSS as central to Queen's mission, noting its contributions to critical thinking, cultural understanding, and democratic engagement. The Bicentennial Vision affirms the value of interdisciplinarity, comprehensive education, and societal impact, which implicitly include AHSS, but it deliberately avoids naming specific disciplines.

2. Targeted investment and capacity building in AHSS. The AHSS report recommends dedicated investments in faculty renewal, research support, and infrastructure upgrades specific to AHSS. The Bicentennial Vision commits to strategic hiring, infrastructure renewal, and investments in areas of academic distinction, but structures funding around thematic research areas rather than discipline-specific envelopes.

3. AHSS leadership in interdisciplinary, societally relevant domains. The AHSS report positions these fields as leaders in areas such as AI ethics, climate justice, and Indigenous resurgence. The Bicentennial Vision embraces interdisciplinary research addressing global challenges and dismantling barriers to collaboration yet refrains from designating leadership to specific academic areas.

4. Public scholarship and community partnership. The AHSS report underscores the importance of public scholarship, cultural programming, and policy engagement. The Bicentennial Vision similarly embeds civic engagement, Reconciliation, and knowledge mobilization into its vision, but treats them as shared institutional responsibilities rather than discipline-specific mandates. This framing reinforces the idea that public engagement is an expectation across all faculties, ensuring institutional coherence in external relations.

5. Student experience and pathways. The AHSS report advocates for enhanced graduate funding, expanded experiential learning, and early undergraduate research integration. The Bicentennial Vision commits to a transformative student experience emphasizing belonging, affordability, and experiential learning, but refrains from discipline-specific financial commitments.

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE AHSS REPORT AND THE BICENTENNIAL VISION. The AHSS report also provided some recommendations (enumerated with italicized headings on pages 13 through 24 of the report), many of which were focused on matters within the Faculty of Arts and Science. As noted above, the Bicentennial Vision does not focus on specific disciplines and thus many recommendations are not mentioned in the Bicentennial Vision with reference to AHSS fields. Similarly, the Bicentennial Vision is an institutional document and thus does not address operational details within a single Faculty, so there is generally little explicit overlap between these recommendations and the content of the Vision document. Nonetheless, these items are addressed in what follows.

Research 1. Highlighting and facilitating large-scale collaboration. The AHSS report proposes creating a Tier-1 AHSS research centre to anchor multi-faculty, multinational projects and to integrate early-career researchers (ECRs) and trainees into high-impact research. The Bicentennial Vision strongly supports concentrating investment in select research areas, fostering co-produced research with partners, and enhancing knowledge mobilization and commercialization efforts. While the intent aligns closely, the Bicentennial Vision does not identify an AHSS-specific centre and instead promotes future competitive processes for selecting institutional research priorities.

Research 2. Optimizing central operational support. The AHSS report calls for strengthened pre- and post-award financial services and professionalized research communication, with special emphasis on ECRs. The Bicentennial Vision similarly advocates for administrative systems that enable high-impact research and minimize barriers, including through technology-enabled service delivery.

Research 3. Harmonizing unit-level support. The AHSS report recommends formal structures in units to scan for interdisciplinary opportunities, mentor ECRs, and coordinate research/awards committees. The Bicentennial Vision emphasizes inclusive research environments, mentorship, and removal of administrative barriers, which align with these goals. However, it avoids mandating specific unit structures to respect local governance autonomy and the diversity of departmental contexts.

Research 4. Trainees as the engines of research. The AHSS report prioritizes investment in graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, recommending maintaining the QGA, leveraging Mitacs and tri-council programs, and creating targeted scholarships. The Bicentennial Vision explicitly values graduate and postdoctoral training as part of research capacity building. The absence of discipline-specific funding commitments in the Bicentennial Vision reflects a commitment to equitable treatment and differences in practices across academic disciplines.

Teaching 1a. Direct-entry options for high-demand plans. The AHSS report suggests piloting direct-entry routes into competitive programs such as PPE or MAPP to provide certainty to prospective students and showcase distinctive AHSS offerings. The Bicentennial Vision endorses

program innovation and mission-aligned enrollment strategies but does not prescribe specific admissions models. This approach recognizes that direct-entry options should be developed through appropriate academic structures and be justified by market analysis.

Teaching 1b. Direct-entry interdisciplinary first-year program. The AHSS report recommends a cohort-based first-year program combining coordinated courses, co-curricular activities, and practicums. The Bicentennial Vision supports experiential and interdisciplinary learning and the use of hybrid and digital methods to broaden access.

Teaching 2. Support collaboration via integrated courses and plans. The AHSS report advocates for formal mechanisms to connect courses and degree plans across faculties. The Bicentennial Vision promotes governance models that facilitate cross-disciplinary collaboration and joint appointments, aligning in principle. Practical implementation would depend on matters like budget incentives and workload agreements, which are left to future operational planning.

Teaching 2a. Introduce breadth requirements and interdisciplinary topics courses. The AHSS report proposes creating shared topics courses on subjects like Ethics, Data Literacy, and Climate Change to meet breadth requirements. The Bicentennial Vision calls for learning outcomes emphasizing leadership, equity, and global citizenship, and encourages transdisciplinary curricula. Full alignment is possible, but course creation and related decisions rest with Senate and individual faculties.

Teaching 2b. Develop new cross-faculty degrees. The AHSS report recommends degrees jointly delivered by AHSS and applied/professional faculties. The Bicentennial Vision supports structures for interdisciplinary initiatives and joint programs, leaving specifics to later design.

Teaching 2c. Make career planning explicit alongside liberal arts education. The AHSS report calls for career development integration into degree programs through alumni engagement, capstones, and skill translation. The Bicentennial Vision emphasizes alumni mentorship and experiential pathways.

Teaching 3a. Connect course assignments to career paths. The AHSS report urges embedding career relevance into course assignments through for-credit opportunities, panels, and internships. The Bicentennial Vision supports purposeful, real-world learning for all students, which aligns with this approach.

Teaching 3b. Scaffold experiential and work-integrated learning. The AHSS report outlines a staged approach to work-integrated learning from workshops to immersive placements. The Bicentennial Vision embeds experiential learning expectations across the curriculum. Differences in presentation reflect the Bicentennial Vision's choice to set broad expectations and allow faculties to design discipline-specific models.

Teaching 4. Increase access through differentiated delivery modes. The AHSS report anticipates barriers to long residence in Kingston and recommends more flexible course delivery. The Bicentennial Vision promotes digital and hybrid delivery to expand access and quality.

Teaching 4a. Increase online courses. The AHSS report proposes rebuilding online course offerings at undergraduate and graduate levels. The Bicentennial Vision's digital transformation agenda supports this direction fully, with scope for faculties to determine program mix and quality standards.

Teaching 4b. Offer for-credit short intensive courses. The AHSS report encourages intensive courses that blend in-person and online cohorts and leverage community partnerships. The Bicentennial Vision endorses experiential learning and global engagement, and short-form credits align well with these aims.

Teaching 4c. Develop more one-year master's pathways. The AHSS report recommends reviewing master's program lengths and aligning funding models accordingly. The Bicentennial Vision supports lifelong learning and graduate training embedded in research.

Teaching 5. Connect AHSS with the new Professional & Continuing Education School. The AHSS report suggests co-designing lifelong learning and transnational offerings drawing on AHSS expertise. The BiVi explicitly promotes lifelong learning, alternative credentials, and alumni/professional education. This goal may manifest through a new School of Professional and Continuing Education, but the development of such a School is not explicit in the Bicentennial Vision to allow for operational flexibility in the context of implementing this goal.

Connections 1. Create a Community of Global Scholars in AHSS. The AHSS report envisions a structured program integrating visiting and international scholars into a cohesive community. The Bicentennial Vision aims to enhance global reputation through partnerships, mobility, and networks. Alignment with this recommendation is strong, with the Bicentennial Vision's more general framing allowing all such initiatives to be pursued at the central and faculty levels.

Connections 2. Strengthen bilateral student exchanges. The AHSS report seeks streamlined processes, pre-mapped credits, and stronger support for outgoing students. The Bicentennial Vision encourages academic mobility and international partnerships.

Operations 1. Review and stabilize the Administrative Hub structure. The AHSS report recommends periodic collaborative reviews of the hub model to ensure equitable service distribution. The BiVi supports continuous improvement, data-driven planning, and tech-enabled service delivery. However, the administrative hub model is specific to the Faculty of Arts and Science and is out of the scope of the Bicentennial Vision.

Operations 2. Set financial parameters to inform evolution of units. The AHSS report calls for clear financial parameters, such as standardized course-release criteria, to guide organizational changes. The BiVi emphasizes transparent and performance-informed financial models.

Operations 3. Review and streamline FAS decanal structure. The AHSS report suggests rebalancing associate dean portfolios and exploring hybrid models to improve academic and research leadership. The Bicentennial Vision calls for clarified collegial governance and timely decision-making. However, this recommendation is specific to the Faculty of Arts and Science and is out of the scope of the Bicentennial Vision.

Operations 4. Develop a budget model that incentivizes collaboration and innovation. The AHSS report proposes replacing current incentives that discourage cross-unit collaboration with a transparent, collaborative-friendly model. The Bicentennial Vision links budgets to academic priorities and explicitly seeks to remove barriers to collaboration. The AHSS reports assertion that the budget model has not been implemented is inaccurate at the institutional level but may be correct within the Faculty of Arts and Science. If this recommendation aims to address the latter, then this recommendation is not within the scope of the Bicentennial Vision, which focuses on institutional goals.