

Response from Principal Patrick Deane and Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) Mark Green May 2022

Introduction

We would first like to thank the three external reviewers for the time and energy they have put into this review. They have approached this task with a serious dedication to the essential mission of teaching and learning at Queen's, and the resulting report offers a series of comprehensive recommendations aimed at enhancing the role of the vice-provost, teaching and learning (VPTL) in coordinating excellence in pedagogy across the campus.

Secondly, we would like to thank the members of the Queen's community, including faculty, students, staff, and administrators who brought valuable contributions to this review. The meetings with the external reviewers were essential in the formulation of the report and its recommendations. We would also like to thank those who submitted written comments to the review committee.

In reading the recommendations, we are struck by the breadth of the interests of the Office of the Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning) and the Centre for Teaching and Learning. We also noted the importance of integrating the work of teaching and learning not only with faculties and schools but with an extensive range of other operations across campus (e.g., Student Affairs, Information Technology (IT) Services, the Office of Indigenous Initiatives, the Human Rights and Equity Office, the Office of the Vice-Principal (Research), and many others). Given the range of areas highlighted in the recommendations, we have developed a two-part action plan to begin the important work of enacting the recommendations in the report.

Action Plan

The action plan will involve the Provost's Office taking steps to form the foundation for enacting the review recommendations as appropriate to the Queen's context. These actions will be complemented by the delegation of more detailed exploration of the recommendations to a group of senior leaders specializing in teaching and learning interests (as set out in recommendation 5). We have identified the appropriate group to be the [Provost Teaching and Learning Advisory Committee](#) (PTLAC), which is chaired by the associate vice-principal (teaching and learning) and includes the associate dean (teaching and learning) from each faculty and school. The PTLAC also has representation from the Bader International Study Centre, Student Affairs, IT Services, the Office of Indigenous Initiatives, and the Human Rights and Equity Office. This committee will make regular reports to the provost on its progress and develop a plan to

implement the recommendations. The committee will also consult with community members as appropriate.

Initiatives from the Provost's Office

The actions of the Provost's Office are as follows:

Action 1: Hire a Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning) and a Director of the Centre for Teaching and Learning

Responsibility – Provost's Office

The university's first task will be to hire a new VPTL and a new director of the centre for teaching and learning (CTL). These roles are currently filled by interim positions. In the job descriptions and the search processes, the university will incorporate the reviewers' recommendations. We agree with the reviewers that the VPTL should have a holistic view of teaching and learning, balancing the expectations and demands of faculty and students for a high-quality educational experience. In addition, the successful candidate should have the credibility required to be the authoritative voice for the university's teaching and learning mission. Moreover, the new VPTL should strengthen the connection between the CTL and the Office of the VPTL and work collaboratively to support the broader teaching and learning strategy at Queen's.

The search process for the VPTL will be led by the provost and vice-principal (academic) and a stakeholder committee to be appointed soon, with support from search firm Knightsbridge Robertson Surette (KBRS). The search for the new leader of the CTL will be led by the associate vice-principal (teaching and learning) (AVPTL) and a stakeholder committee, with support from search firm Boyden.

Action 2: Review Resources to Support the VPTL

Responsibility – Provost's Office

The recommendations point to initiatives that will potentially require increased work in the VPTL and CTL and the possible need for additional financial resources to fund new activities in teaching and learning. In the coming months, there will be a discussion of the resources needed to sustain and enhance the strategic importance of the VPTL. In the meantime, there will be a teaching and learning transitional development fund established until permanent budget needs are defined. This transitional budget may contribute to interim staffing to ensure the VPTL and CTL are properly supported while permanent staffing structures are developed based on the strategic planning process.

Action 3: Clarify Relationship between the CTL and VPTL
Responsibility – Provost’s Office

The reviewers recommend that the connection between the VPTL and CTL be clarified. We would like to confirm that the CTL director reports directly to the VPTL. As part of this structure, the CTL director develops key initiatives for the CTL in consultation with the VPTL. Teaching and learning initiatives are given strategic direction by the principal and provost, taking into account the pedagogies of the faculties and schools as represented by the deans and associate deans. The CTL, through the leadership of the VPTL, is responsible for acting on these strategic directions.

Action 4: Implement Individual Recommendations in the Review
Responsibility – Provost’s Office

Taken together, the recommendations cover a wide range of issues in the area of teaching and learning and have impacts across the faculties and schools, individual academic units, and many support services at Queen’s. The provost will delegate further action to the Provost Teaching and Learning Advisory Committee (PTLAC). This committee will report directly to the provost and principal and facilitate the consideration, adaptation, and implementation of the additional recommendations. It will also seek advice, as needed, from the community at large and various stakeholders across campus.

Initiatives for the Provost Teaching and Learning Advisory Committee

The PTLAC will meet regularly through the 2022-23 academic year and report periodically to the provost and principal. While all of the recommendations will be considered, priority will be given to the following areas:

a. Strategic Planning for the VPTL

The goal of this strategic planning exercise will be, as indicated by the reviewers in recommendation 3c, to “establish institutional principles that can drive consistent pan-institutional practices with respect to advancing teaching and learning excellence, while making room for different programs and disciplines to nuance practices to their unique teaching/learning issues and needs”. As indicated in recommendation 4a, the new strategic plan should be aligned with the Principal’s Strategy and other relevant strategies through a participatory community process. Leading the development of the strategic plan will be the first priority of the new VPTL. The PTLAC will complete initial research and planning to support the timely launch of this process once the VPTL is appointed.

b. Review of Current VPTL Responsibilities

As recommended, a review of the number and purpose of committees addressing teaching and learning activities should take place that will rationalize the VPTL committees over the next few months, with a goal of implementing changes before the 2022-23 academic year. This review will include consultation with stakeholders involved in these activities.

c. Articulation of Relationships with Other Units and Portfolios

The review notes the importance of the relationship between the VPTL and other areas of the university, including Student Affairs, IT Services, the Office of Indigenous Initiatives, the Human Rights and Equity Office, Faculty Relations, and the Office of the Vice-Principal (Research), among others. The VPTL will work with each of these areas to clearly articulate the nature of the collaboration and the importance of connection and communication in the service of teaching and learning. Student accommodation policies have been highlighted in the report, and the VPTL will collaborate on and facilitate principles and practices recommended by the associate vice-principal (human rights, equity and inclusion) and the vice-provost & dean of student affairs.

d. Action Plan for Remaining Recommendations

The PTLAC should develop an action plan for the additional recommendations, including dates of implementation. It may also consider further initiatives designed to coordinate and enhance teaching and learning priorities at Queen's.