

Submitted to Senate by J. Pierce
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Annual Report of the Associate Vice-Principal and Dean of Student Affairs to Senate

The summer of 2010 has seen a transition in the leadership of Student Affairs, as Jason Laker moved from Queen's to a new post and John Pierce has assumed the interim role of Associate Vice-Principal and Dean of Student Affairs, pending the search for and appointment of a new AVP/Dean. This annual report to Senate offers a brief overview of the initiatives, activities and accomplishments across the Division of Student Affairs during 2009-10.

1. OVERVIEW

A brief review of the mission and goals of the Division of Student Affairs was undertaken in consultation with the Directors and Coordinators of all units. The mission and ongoing goals are updated from earlier documents and offer a set of guidelines for current operations.

Mission Statement

Student Affairs offers undergraduate, graduate and professional students from diverse backgrounds a variety of programs and services designed to create vibrant, collaborative and supportive learning and living environments. The programs and services offered through Student Affairs seek to

- foster health and wellness,
- encourage personal, social and cognitive development,
- nurture the sense of engagement at Queen's and in the Kingston community and
- prepare students for the transition into a global community.

Ongoing Goals

The work of the Division of Student Affairs reinforces the University's academic mission contributing to and defining the broader learning environment by

- **Supporting Queen's distinctive educational experience**

Student Affairs is a committed leader in sustaining and enhancing the richness of the distinctive educational experience at Queen's. In particular, the Division of Student Affairs enhances and defines the "broader learning environment" by providing a breadth of accessible co-curricular student programs and services, offering leadership development opportunities and supporting a student-centred and peer-driven community.

- **Promoting student health and wellness in body and mind**

Student Affairs is a committed leader in designing and developing policies and practices that support student health and wellness across physical, psychological, social and spiritual domains,

with particular attention to the identification, assessment, referral and management of mental health issues emerging in post-secondary student populations. Further, the Division of Student Affairs provides consultation for and delivers training to campus community members, thereby improving the capacity of the University to respond to the diversity of student health issues, and in particular to signs and symptoms of mental health. In the area of physical health and wellness, Queen's offers a wide variety of programs in recreational and competitive activities encouraging participation in physical activities ranging from those aimed at developing basic fitness and wellness to varsity athletics which encourage students to strive for excellence in athletic performance.

- **Fostering culturally aware and inclusive on-campus and off-campus communities**

Student Affairs is a committed leader in developing residential and co-curricular programs, services and environments that reflect and are relevant to our diverse student population, that nurture the development of critical reflection, interpersonal and problem-solving skills, and that encourage intercultural engagement, and that promote inclusive practices. The Division of Student Affairs also seeks to create opportunities for students to develop their personal and social identities, interpersonal relationships, and commitments to social responsibility.

- **Enhancing, revitalizing and sustaining the learning environment**

Student Affairs is a committed leader in creating and sustaining spaces appropriate to programs and services that facilitate personal, social, physical, cognitive, spiritual and community development in a fiscally responsible and sustainable manner. The Division of Student Affairs advocates for physical and structural environments which are conducive to optimal learning experiences and academic success.

2. REPORT ON ACTIVITIES ACROSS THE DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

During 2009-10, Student Affairs undertook a number of initiatives and activities that drew upon all aspects of the division. Some of the highlights are listed below:

a. Mental Health First Aid

Mental Health literacy and training continues to be priority for Student Affairs. To provide staff, students and faculty with tangible skills on how best to assist someone showing signs of a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis, the department has strongly encouraged and facilitated Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training for all personnel. To date over 350 staff, faculty and students, including residence dons, (the majority coming from Student Affairs units) have been trained.

In addition to MHFA, the Working Group has expanded its focus to include the training of student leaders. A one-day course called the Mental Health Helping Skills program has been developed and has and will be offered to student leaders. Currently Student Affairs is assisting

with the development of an institution-wide approach to unify and expand current mental health activities, and fully engage all members of the community.

b. Emergency Response

In order to respond in a systematic, coordinated manner to an emergency, crisis or threat, Student Affairs had developed a number of protocols and procedures to mitigate, where possible, a negative outcome for the individuals involved and the campus community.

A revised Death Response Protocol was developed and approved in December 2009 and has, unfortunately, been utilized several times. The Protocol will be updated as required following every death.

In cooperation with the VP (Finance & Admin), a Threat Assessment Team has been formed, led by Dr. Mike Condra, to review and revise, as necessary, existing university policies on violence and disruptive behaviour, and to coordinate and develop appropriate prevention, intervention and response activities.

In an effort to assist departments and student groups in planning events from a risk management perspective, Student Affairs in conjunction with Environmental Health & Safety, the AMS and the SGPS have established the Committee on Student Hazardous Activities and Risk Management (COSHARM) committee. The mandate of the group is to create consistency and establish best practices in our approach to student event risk management at Queen's University.

c. City/Queen's Relations

A number of Student Affairs personnel continue to work closely with city partners to develop and implement initiatives related to issues of common concern namely: housing, urban planning and student relations. Significant progress has been made in these areas in the past three years, so much so that a decision was made in January 2010 to continue with the work and begin development of a longer term vision. The former working groups have been restructured to respond to four strategic areas Quality of Life, Community Planning, Economic Development and Student Engagement. The working groups are currently meeting and working on establishing the specific objectives for the plan.

3. REPORTS FROM INDIVIDUAL UNITS AND DEPARTMENTS IN STUDENT AFFAIRS

In addition to the important work undertaken across the entire division of Student Affairs, individual units and departments engaged in a number of activities and initiatives during 2009-10. The following report is highly selective and presents a few highlights. It should be noted that during this period the Queen's University International Centre (QUIC) made a transition from

Student Affairs to the portfolio of the Vice-Principal International and the Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre moved under the direction of the Provost's Office.

a. Athletics and Recreation

Academic excellence has primacy at Queen's; however, many students also place tremendous value on physical activity, wellness, recreation and sport activities as a key element of their lifestyle and their educational and co-circular university experiences. With over 500+ student-athletes participating on Varsity Team, 2500+ Varsity or Recreational Club members, 9800+ intramural participants and 1500+ registrants in fitness and wellness programs, Athletics & Recreation continues to offer a robust and diversified sport and recreation programs which supports and further enriches the university's celebrated broader learning environment. Providing relevant and quality physical activity experiences to our students is paramount. The commitment to athletic excellence is evident in the fact that 225 Varsity athletes achieved Academic All-star (achieving an 80% or greater average while participating on a varsity team or club) status in 2009-10 placing Queen's amongst the top four universities in Canada. The University Council on Athletics and Recreation Report submitted to Senate in November outlines range of activities and accomplishments in the area of athletics from September 1 2009 to August 31, 2010 (http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/Nov25_10/UCARRpt.pdf).

b. Ban Righ Centre

Ban Righ Centre is addressing current financial challenges through a more far-reaching fundraising effort than previously attempted. The *Who Is She?* community project has been launched with several goals: to build a broader annual donor base; to increase the visibility of the Centre's support to life-long education; to acknowledge countless women who have supported someone through a difficult time. This project is time intensive for both Board and staff and has an impact on the ability of staff to be as effective as were they to devote all of their time to student support and other Centre programmes. Nonetheless, staff continue to

- be available to students without appointment to attend to individual students' academic, social and financial issues as they require
- provide soup and other staples as a supplement to students' incomes and because community forms when people eat together
- administer bursaries directed by their Terms to mature women students (\$1m+ since 1974)
- promote awareness of the achievements and contributions of mature students to the academic life of the University
- tend a broad base of donors who support the Centre with their annual gifts
- provide a speakers programme for students and the larger community
- maintain a Centre in which students can meet, study, prepare assignments, discuss ideas of mutual interest with peers and other members of the Queen's community and feel they belong

c. Career Services

Career Services has continued to expand and tailor the services and support offered to assist students in their transition from campus to the next stage of their life. While career counselling and education along with the facilitation of on-campus recruitment and experiential education opportunities are the primary programs and supports offered, a number of new and innovative options have been introduced. One of the most exciting additions is a new and interactive website, made possible by an \$180,000 grant from the Counselling Foundation of Canada. The innovative site allows students, faculty and staff access to an extensive variety of information and a variety of tools and programs that allow students to explore their own career and future options in a variety of ways.

d. Chaplain's Office

The first challenge is providing a spiritual presence, face, and moment of reflection within Queen's functions and ceremonies that reflects both Queen's historic religious ties and its multi-faith present in the Canadian pluralist context. The second challenge is that of providing care and advice of a spiritual and personal nature to a growing community with diverse backgrounds. The third challenge is that of accommodating the faith needs of many diverse religious groups within the growing busyness of the Queen's academic schedule.

e. Housing & Hospitality Services

Over the past year, Housing & Hospitality Services conducted two important reviews of services to students. The first concerned food services and resulted in new food services contracts for the university and an improved financial relationship. The second, a review of facilities services within the unit, focused on engaging the staff area and providing opportunities for input about how services are best delivered to students. The review also provided an opportunity to develop better interaction with Physical Plant Services. The department also undertook a re-vamping of the Landlord Contract Program, a vital link to the landlords in the community, as well as launching an improved on-line accommodation listing service. For the coming year the department will be developing a Housing Master Plan as part of the university's Campus Master Plan initiative.

f. John Deutsch University Centre

As the focal point of co-curricular life on campus the JDUC is one of the highest traffic buildings on campus hosting over 6,000 distinct events each year and an average of 3,000 visitors each day. It is also a facility that has undergone significant change in the past two years due to the opening of the Queen's Centre, a number of staff changes and the introduction of new policies and procedures and a new room reservation system.

Following the departure of the JDUC director in August 2008, and in recognition of the ongoing discussions regarding the management and operation of the expanded student life facilities, the

director's duties were shared between Student Affairs and the AMS. Further, in July 2009 it was affirmed that, until a permanent governance structure could be finalized, the JDUC operating framework, management and council, would be extended to cover the non-athletic portion of the Queen's Centre (QC) designated for student and community use. Discussions with the AMS and SGPS on a new constitution and operating agreement for the Student Life Centre are ongoing and it is anticipated that the new structure will be in place May 1, 2010.

g. Residence Life

Residence Life will continue the process of reviewing and revising Residence disciplinary policies and procedures to enhance the judicial system's compatibility with remedial and educational philosophies as well as its effectiveness in dealing with emerging behavioural issues and trends.

Residence Life is currently engaged in a comparative analysis and assessment of Leadership programs offered in Canadian Universities to help determine whether and how a Leadership Certificate Model/Program would be an effective co-curricular opportunity to enrich leadership experiences of students at Queen's, starting in 1st year.

h. Student Health Services

Student Health Services received a grant of \$750,000 from OntarioMD to implement an electronic medical records system. This new system will improve clinic efficiency and also help to improve continuity of care for those who use the service. It will also serve to bring us up to date in terms of current standards for medical records. Health Services continues to improve clinic efficiencies and enhance revenue streams; as a result the Service has been able to reduce its existing deficit, and it is projected that it will be further reduced this year.

With the recruitment and selection of its first Physician Director, Queen's has secured an important resource available for advice on health issues. Health Services has also added some evening clinics to provide improved access to students whose busy schedules may make daytime appointments a hardship.

Health Services has been central in finding ways to improve early detection and intervention for the growing number of individuals experiencing serious mental health conditions during their university years. Eating disorders, substance abuse and other forms of mental illness represent an obstacle to success for students and it is hoped that we can review University wide supports and policies which may impact on the success of our students experiencing such challenges. The awareness of all levels of government regarding this issue seems to be increasing, and as such, seeking their support in our efforts to enhance services may prove to be a timely endeavour. The recent provincial "Mental Health Summit for Postsecondary Educational Institutions" hosted by the provincial government is a sign of their recognition of the problem and the need to address the associated issues. Funding must be a component of any approach likely to be successful, but creativity and realignment of existing resources are also going to be key. Attitudes and actions at the grass roots level of interaction with our students should be in keeping with goals that are supportive of reducing attrition due to mental health hurdles facing our students.

i. Town-Gown Relations

Town Gown, in acting as a liaison between the City of Kingston and the University, offers a wide range of advice, including information about finding upper-year housing, choosing housemates wisely and communicating with landlords. This past year, the Office pursued its mandate to bring students and community together through ongoing partnerships with the City of Kingston, Queen's student governments, K3C (community mediation services) and other university and college communities across the province. Of concern to the Office is the growth of the Queen's student population and the impact it will have on the Near Campus Neighbourhood. Town-Gown Relations is working with its partners to develop strategies to mitigate any anticipated negative outcomes of enrolment growth.