

May 25, 2011 Senate Question Period

Questions submitted by Senator Morelli to Principal Woolf (submitted at April 28, 2011 Senate Meeting)

- 1. What steps are you taking to ensure that education will be a priority issue in the next provincial election?**

Response from Principal Woolf

Government Relations are a significant part of the Principal's duties, and apart from meetings at COU, I have spent considerable time meeting both politicians and bureaucrats in the past several months. Different parties will of course choose those items that they wish to make election issues, and while we can advocate for them, we do not control those agendas. As with the recent federal election, I anticipate personal meetings with local candidates to ensure that they understand the issues facing us. Collectively, I anticipate that COU will be having further discussions on this matter in the run up to the campaign.

- 2. Are there plans or efforts collectively on the part of the Principals of Ontario's universities to ensure that education is a priority issue in the next provincial election?**

Response from Principal Woolf

Please see the answer to the first question. The Executive Heads are fully seized with the importance of this issue, and will be advocating, collectively and individually on behalf of higher education.

- 3. Given that Queen's University is Ontario's best University it is reasonable that Queen's University take a leadership role in pushing back against the rampant underfunding of Education in Ontario, and also pushing back against the disturbing trend towards the corporatization of education in Ontario in general, and of Ontario's Universities in particular. What are your thoughts on this?**

Response from Principal Woolf

I would divide this question into two parts. With respect to the first, we continue to press the case that Ontario sits at the bottom of the ladder within Canada regarding funding per student; it should be recognized, however, that the current government's priorities are accessibility, affordability and growth, rather than what we would describe as "quality funding". These priorities are based on what the government and the other political parties are hearing from their constituents throughout the province through public opinion polls and their own research.

With respect to the second question, I am not sure I understand the meaning, nor that I would agree to an unqualified and unexamined statement that there is "rampant corporatization". If the reference is to research funding, industry partnerships are crucial to our research agenda for expanding the breadth of our research activities; engagements are actively sought by many faculty seeking to test their work in industry settings, to provide employment for students and graduates and, ultimately, to advance our contributions to society. Indeed, contract-based research, as with grant-funded research, recovers indirect costs through overhead charges, which benefit faculties, departments and research administration.

Question submitted by Senator Morelli to Provost Silverman (submitted at April 28, 2011 Senate Meeting)

According to the 2010-2011 Budget Report Capital Projects spending has increased by 5.4 million dollars over the 2009-2010 level, an increase of over 900%.

Furthermore, this exceeds the projected 3.8 million dollar deficit for 2010-2011.

- 1. At a time when Academic Units are being forced to continue to cut their operating budgets, why is it that Capital Projects being funded by the Operating Budget and not by the Capital Budget at the detriment of the overall academic environment?**

Response from Provost Silverman

The one specific budget line item referenced in this question is for the School of Kinesiology and the Queen's Centre, and 2010-11 is the first full year of operation for these facilities. These projects were only partially funded by a student fee and donations, requiring an allocation from the operating budget to service the debt to fund the project. Unfortunately for some time now the province has only partially funded capital projects, and does not fund athletic buildings.

Therefore universities must use operating funds to complete capital projects if donations do not make up the shortfall. Queen's is not alone. There are currently charges to the operating budget for a number of previous capital projects including Chernoff Hall and the Biosciences building. Given our financial situation, any future capital projects must be fully funded before proceeding.