To: S. Cole, Chair of SCAD   copy: M. Watkin, Secretary of SCAD

The Principal has forwarded to the Senate the attached document, *Imagining the Future: Towards an Academic Plan for Queen's University*, prepared by the Academic Writing Team, 23 Aug 2010, with the request that the Senate develop an Academic Plan for Queen's.

I am referring this matter to the Senate Committee on Academic Development (SCAD) and ask that SCAD review it and prepare a proposal for consideration and approval by the Senate.

Senate procedures encourage Senate committees to consult with individuals or groups, as appropriate to the task at hand, and to give progress reports to Senate if necessary. Recently, the Senate has benefited from Informal Session discussions of important matters. I encourage SCAD to use whatever process it determines will best accomplish the desired result.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Georgina Moore

Secretary of the Senate

Imagining the Future:
Towards an Academic Plan for Queen's University

Submitted to Principal Daniel Woolf

by

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23 August 2010

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: IMAGINING QUEEN'S*

In the winter term 2010, the Principal, Daniel Woolf, asked us to provide input to assist him in the formulation of an academic plan for Queen's. We were tasked, inter alia, with reviewing the responses the Principal had received to the document he wrote to initiate the planning process, *Where Next?*. The Principal asked that we report to him before the senior administrative retreat scheduled for 1 September.

At our first meeting in April, we identified as our primary task *listening for resonances* – shared ideas about the challenges facing Queen's and the future of our university. To do this, we attempted to synthesize and digest the varied responses to *Where Next?* and to put them in broader context through meetings with individuals and groups from different parts of the Queen's community. We also invited all members of that community—faculty, staff, and students—to communicate directly with us. We asked people to identify the core values of Queen's as it is now, and we asked people to share their vision for the kind of university they would like to see in the next five to ten years.

What follows are the results of our search for resonances within the Queen's community. In keeping with our advisory status, we have framed this report as our recommendations to Principal Woolf. Our recommendations are framed as *goals* that Queen's as a university might set itself for the future, recognizing that the establishment of clear goals is an important first step in the planning process.

We also recognize that the establishment of metrics—or empirical and analytical measures that allow us to know how well we are doing in achieving goals—is a crucial part of the planning

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* We would like to thank Katarina Keenan-Pelletier and Eric Leclerc for their excellent support of our team's work.

process. For that reason, we have recommended, where we felt it appropriate, *metrics and analytics* for the identified goals.

We have several caveats. First, we recognize that our report does not seek to provide a comprehensive review of every aspect of our university. We did not purposely neglect specific areas, such as the finances of the university; rather we recognized our limitations and felt it best not to comment where we had insufficient knowledge or information.

Second, coming from different academic cultures with distinctive identities we recognized early in the process that the six of us held opinions that were quite diverse. Therefore, we have consciously sought to provide recommendations that go beyond our individual disciplines.

Third, we all became acutely aware of the enormity of the task of planning at the post-secondary level. Indeed, academic planning for universities has become increasingly professionalized, with peak organizations like the Society for College and University Planning, and scholarly journals like *Planning for Higher Education*, and well-developed sets of "best practices." Needless to say, given the existence of a highly professionalized academic planning industry, our group emerged from this process convinced that what is needed is an on-going *culture of planning* at Queen's.

We thus constructed our role in a more limited way, seeing this report as but one in a series of introductory steps to the process of creating an academic plan, hoping that our perspectives will be useful for the next stages of its development. To this end, we sought to synthesize the considerable amount of information generated in response to *Where Next?*, but also to listen to the range and diversity of voices and perspectives, often contradictory. In this report, we also seek to expose the contradictions that we believe are important for making planning decisions in the hope that an open and transparent process of dialogue will lead to an effective plan for Queen's that will enjoy broad and sustained support.

Our optimism about the planning process has been fuelled by our brief discussions with members of the Queen's community over the course of the summer. We were very much impressed with the thoughtful inputs received, and want to thank all those who participated, in small and large ways, in this process. It became clear to us that Queen's continues to have a solid sense of community; its members are proud of our university and its traditions, and are deeply dedicated to our core missions. These discussions with the community convinced us of the importance of *process* in the academic planning endeavour. Whatever the end *product*, the engaged dialogue among individuals and groups has been positive. The more people who think and talk about what makes Queen's the university that it is, and how we can build on our strengths for the future, the better.

Full document is available at http://www.queensu.ca/awt/index.html

2