



Queen's
UNIVERSITY

Strategic Framework

2014-2019

Year One Implementation Report

Principal's Message

Queen's continues to operate in a complex environment, with a number of uncertainties and financial challenges. That's why, in March 2014, I introduced the Strategic Framework to help guide the university as it responds to these challenges while striving to advance its academic mission.

The framework is based on four strategic drivers that directly support the university's success as a balanced academy: the student learning experience, research prominence, financial sustainability and internationalization.

Since then, specific metrics within those strategic drivers have been developed and performance targets set. These will help the university measure its progress and success over the duration of the Strategic Framework (2015-2019).

I am now pleased to present the first implementation report for the Strategic Framework. This report highlights a number of the actions Queen's has taken in 2014/15 and its progress with respect to the performance metrics, such as:

- Undergraduate student engagement
- Experiential learning opportunities
- Development of new academic programs
- Research intensity
- Revenue growth and diversification
- International enrolment management

The report also presents a number of supplementary indicators that provide further information about Queen's performance, including admissions average, student retention and graduation rates.

The implementation of the Strategic Framework and Queen's success as a university will continue to be built on the energy, determination and passion of students, faculty, staff, alumni and the other members of the Queen's community.



Daniel Woolf
Principal and Vice-Chancellor

Introduction

This document, the first annual report on the implementation of the 2014-2019 Strategic Framework, summarizes our progress during the 2014-2015 academic year towards the framework's interim (2017) and final (2019) targets, and highlights examples of the initiatives designed to ensure we meet or exceed the targets. These initiatives, developed at the faculty, school and university levels, also support the overarching goal of the Strategic Framework, which is to ensure Queen's remains a university recognized as much for research excellence as for its transformative student learning experience.

The key performance indicators for the Strategic Framework's four drivers are:

1 Student Learning Experience

- Undergraduate Student Engagement
- Graduate Student Engagement
- Undergraduate and Graduate Experiential Education Opportunities
- New Credentials: Professional and Other Innovative Programming

2 Research Prominence

- Research Intensity and National Position
- Tri-Council Funding
- Alignment with the Strategic Research Plan

3 Financial Sustainability

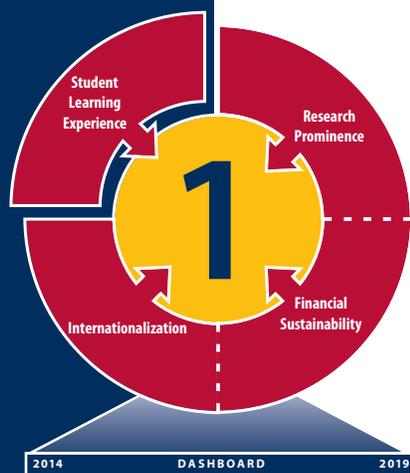
- Revenue Generation
- Revenue Diversification
- Cost Containment

4 Internationalization

- International Research Engagement
- International Undergraduate Student Recruitment
- International Undergraduate Student Engagement

Two sets of supplementary indicators, measuring the quality of our student population and additional components of financial sustainability, are also monitored.

For completeness, we should note that although this is the first annual report, we have previously issued a number of preliminary reports that together document the development and implementation of the Strategic Framework to this point. *Strategic Framework: 2014-2019* (April 2014) presented an overview of the framework, its overall objectives, and metrics under consideration, *Strategic Framework: 2014-2019 Initial Report* (September 2014) presented the framework's performance metrics in detail, and *Strategic Framework: 2014-2019, Setting Targets for the Strategic Framework's Key Performance Indicators* (December 2014) established the interim and final targets for the framework's metrics.



Student Learning Experience

Undergraduate Student Engagement

Undergraduate student engagement is measured by the National Student Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Queen's compares favourably with other Ontario universities on most of the twenty composite engagement indicators built from the NSSE survey items, but is at or below the average on five indicators: Discussions with Diverse Others (both first year and fourth year students), Student-Faculty Interaction (first year only), and Effective Teaching Practices (first and fourth year). Our goal is to score above the provincial average where we are currently below or at average, and to maintain our scores where we are currently above it.

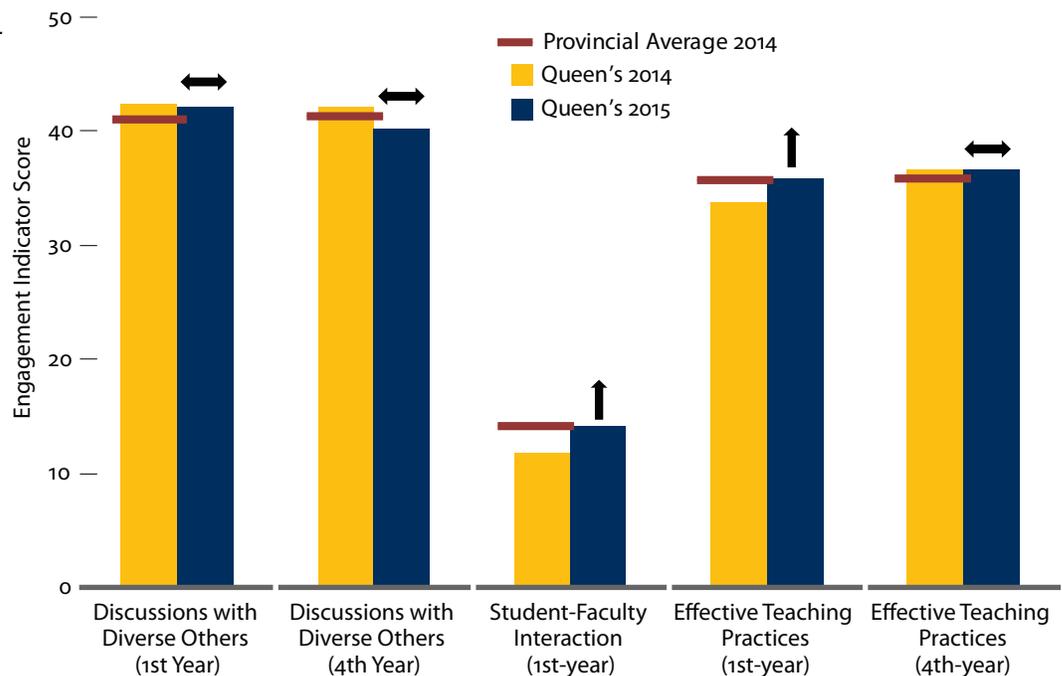
For the five NSSE indicators listed above, and bearing in mind that percentage differences of less than 6 percent are not statistically significant, Queen's 2015 results indicate encouraging increases in first year Student Faculty Interaction (+20.51 percent) and first year Effective Teaching Practices (+6.21 percent), and no significant change in the other three. The practice of other universities in Ontario is to coordinate on administering NSSE every three years, rather than annually, which is our practice. Provincial comparisons will not therefore be available until 2017 and 2020. This report presents Queen's 2014 and 2015 results in relation to the 2014 provincial average.

To assist our efforts to respond in a meaningful way to the survey results, a NSSE Action Group has been established and charged with the task of analyzing and reviewing Queen's annual NSSE results. The action team is developing analyses for each faculty and school. These analyses will help to identify faculty- and school-specific strategies focused on improvement of the five indicators.

Additionally, several working groups have been created, under the direction of the Provost's Advisory Committee on Teaching and Learning (PACTL). The groups are all focused on support for student engagement; for example, one group is working to promote the integration of technology-enhanced learning methods and tools, where appropriate, in our delivery of programs and courses across faculties at Queen's.

Figure 1

Undergraduate Student Engagement: Queen's 2014 and 2015 Performance against the 2014 Provincial Average



Graduate Student Engagement

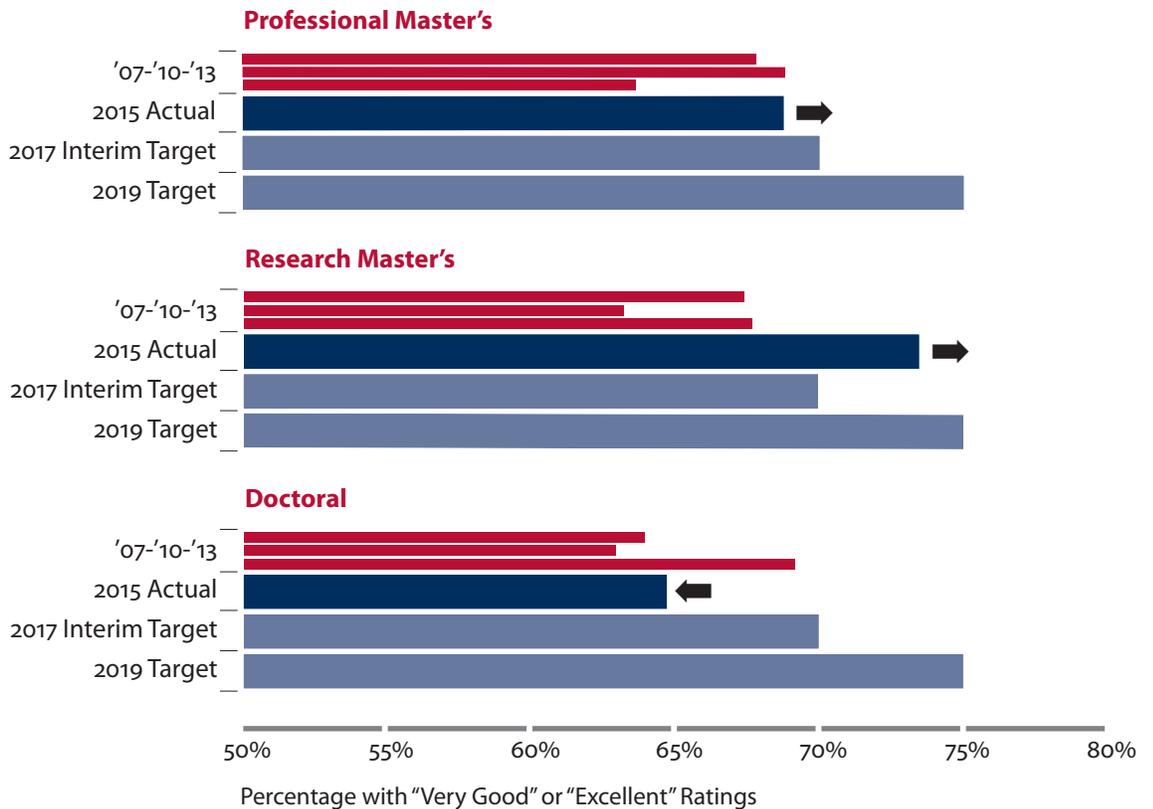
Of the Queen's graduate students responding to the 2013 Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey (CGPS), 65 percent rated their overall academic experience as "very good" or "excellent", in line with the national average. Our goal is to increase this to 70 percent by 2017 and 75 percent by 2019. Our 2015 CGPS results indicate improvement in both professional and research master's student ratings, the former in line with, and the latter higher than, our best results, but doctoral student ratings have fallen back to 2010 levels from their 2013 peak. All the changes are, it must be said, within the margin of sampling error, and more definitive trends will be detectable with future administrations of the survey.

A variety of initiatives designed to improve the graduate student academic experience are underway.

- The School of Graduate Studies is meeting with faculty members in each academic unit to review a variety of indicators of the health of the unit's graduate program(s), discuss best practices, and identify key determinants of a high-quality graduate experience.
- All graduate programs have posted degree-level expectations, learning outcomes and indicators of achievement to assist students and their advisors to monitor progress and identify problems, and transferable skills profiles are being developed for all programs.
- The Expanding Horizons professional development workshop series has been expanded to 64 workshops and participation has increased to 1,700+ student registrations (a 60 percent increase over 2013-14).
- We recently launched an initiative to link current students with past graduates who can provide career transition advice and support students in applying their acquired skills in the workplace.

Figure 2

**Graduate Student Engagement:
Overall Academic Experience Ratings by Student Type**



Undergraduate and Graduate Experiential Education Opportunities

The growing importance of experiential learning reflects the desire of both undergraduate and graduate students to integrate practical and work-related elements into their programs. NSSE asks undergraduate students whether they have participated or intend to participate in “an internship, co-op, field placement, student teaching or clinical placement”; the proportion of final-year students who respond positively is used to measure our students’ opportunities for undergraduate experiential education. Our target is to increase undergraduate participation in experiential learning from 45 percent to 50 percent by 2019. CGPSS asks students in professional master’s programs to rate “opportunities for internships, practical and experiential learning as part of the program”. We use the proportion of “very good” and “excellent” ratings to measure experiential education opportunities for these graduate students. Our target is to increase this proportion from 53 percent (in 2013) to at least 60 percent by 2017 and to 70 percent by 2019.

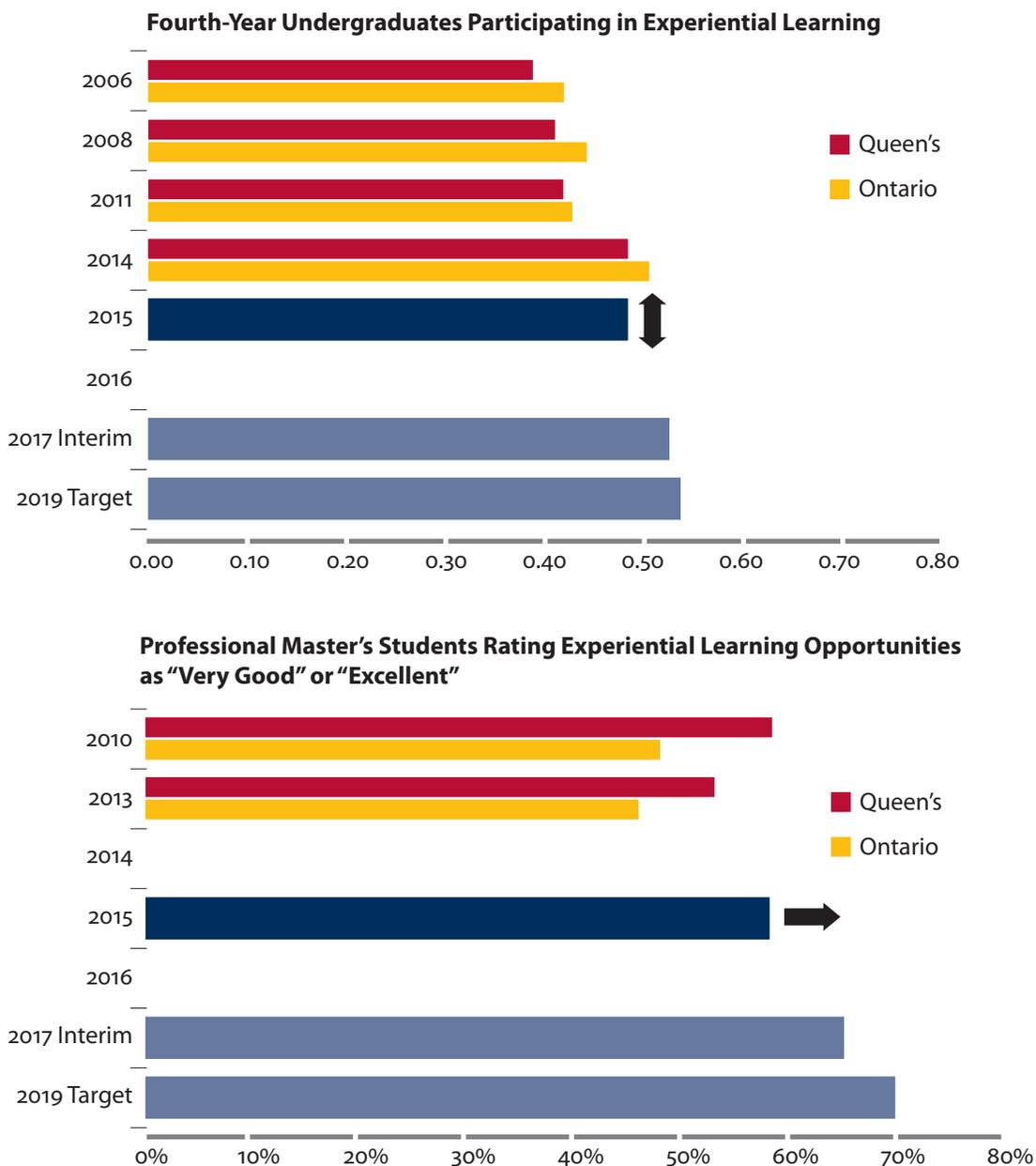
The 2015 NSSE results indicate that undergraduate student participation in experiential learning remained unchanged at 45 percent between 2014 and 2015, while professional master’s student ratings of experiential learning opportunities increased from 53 percent to 58 percent between 2013 and 2015.

Besides the many initiatives in place at both the undergraduate and graduate program level to enhance experiential educational opportunities, there are a variety of new university-level activities.

- An Experiential Learning Working Group is identifying best practices to support those wanting to offer experiential learning programs, and recommending strategies for developing and growing self-sustaining, curricular- and co-curricular-based experiential education opportunities.
- In October 2015, the second annual graduate and post-doctoral Career Week will provide trainees with workshops on marketing their skills in the job market and resume preparation, and will provide networking opportunities with employers, community leaders and alumni.

Figure 3

**Experiential Learning:
Undergraduate Student Participation and Graduate Student Ratings**



New Credentials: Professional and Other Innovative Programming

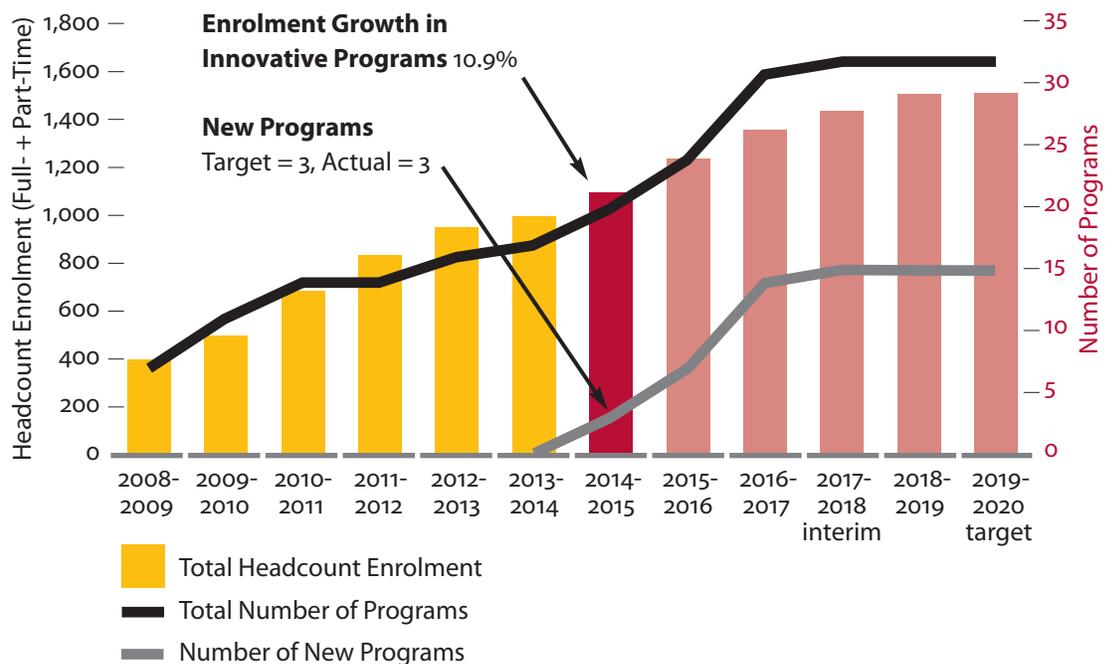
Both Queen's Strategic Framework and its Strategic Mandate Agreement with the provincial government commit the university to expanding its professional and innovative graduate program offerings over the next five years. Our target is to double the number of professional and innovative graduate programs by 2019 and to increase the number of students in these programs to the point where they account for almost half of total graduate enrolment; we envisage enrolment in research stream graduate programs to grow only modestly over the same period. Those programs that offer advanced course work and applied research elements in specialized or professional fields, those delivered in alternative locations or via alternative formats, those catering significantly to part-time students, those delivered jointly with other universities, and certificate/diploma and interdisciplinary programs, all qualify to be defined as innovative programs.

In 2014-15, Queen's introduced three new graduate diploma programs (Risk Policy and Regulation, Professional Inquiry, and Business Administration), and enrolment in professional and innovative programs increased by 11 percent. The new programs and the increased enrolment demonstrate the effectiveness of our [Long-Term Strategic Enrolment Management Framework](#), which guides the development of medium and long-term enrolment strategies and planning processes to ensure Queen's enrolment management aligns with the university's strategic priorities.

In short, we are making good progress towards our interim and final targets, and we may be reasonably confident of further progress because a number of other professional or otherwise innovative programs are in the planning, development and approval pipeline.

Figure 4

Innovative/Professional Graduate Programs





Research Prominence

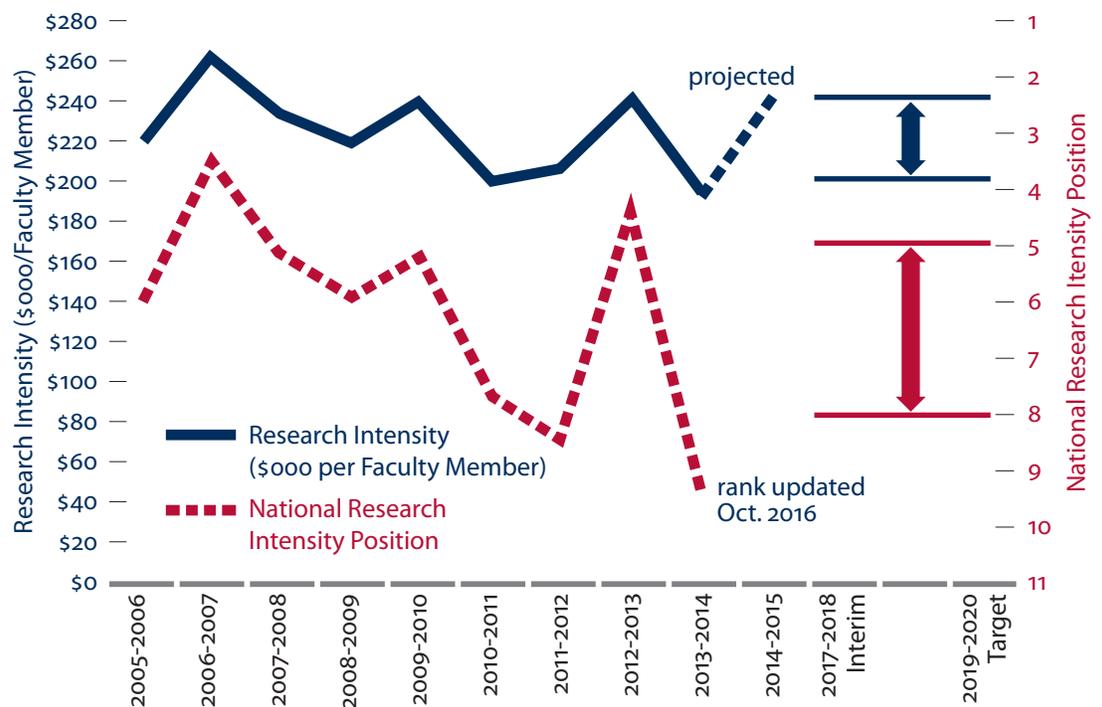
Research Intensity and National Position

We measure research intensity and national position as the funded research per faculty member and our rank among Canadian universities. The figures for 2013-14 show a significant decline over 2012-13. Recent developments are, however, more promising. Preliminary data for 2014-15 indicate that funded research per faculty member has recovered to its 2012-13 level, which should result in a significant improvement in our rank over 2013-14. Also, Queen's has in the past few months received more than \$55 million in funding from federal and provincial agencies. This funding will advance research in health, cardiology, physics, chemistry, psychology, geography, biology and computing, and provide important infrastructure for research facilities across campus. Careful monitoring is nonetheless required. Our challenges in this regard, include the increasingly competitive environment for research funding and the pace of faculty renewal. These challenges are not unique to Queen's. All U15 (i.e., Canadian research-intensive) universities seek a balance across challenging and complementary areas of emphasis that include, but are not limited to, research intensity and national position.

For the future, a newly revised internal research awards program will provide support for areas of institutional research strength with the goal of facilitating subsequent competitiveness for external funding. Also we continue to use the Queen's National Scholar and the Canada Research Chair programs as tools to build strength and depth in the key research areas of the Strategic Research Plan (see below). Finally, a working group is reviewing our research prominence metrics with the goal of broadening the set of indicators that measure our areas of research prominence. The group's initial report is expected in December 2015.

Figure 5

Queen's Research Intensity and National Research Position

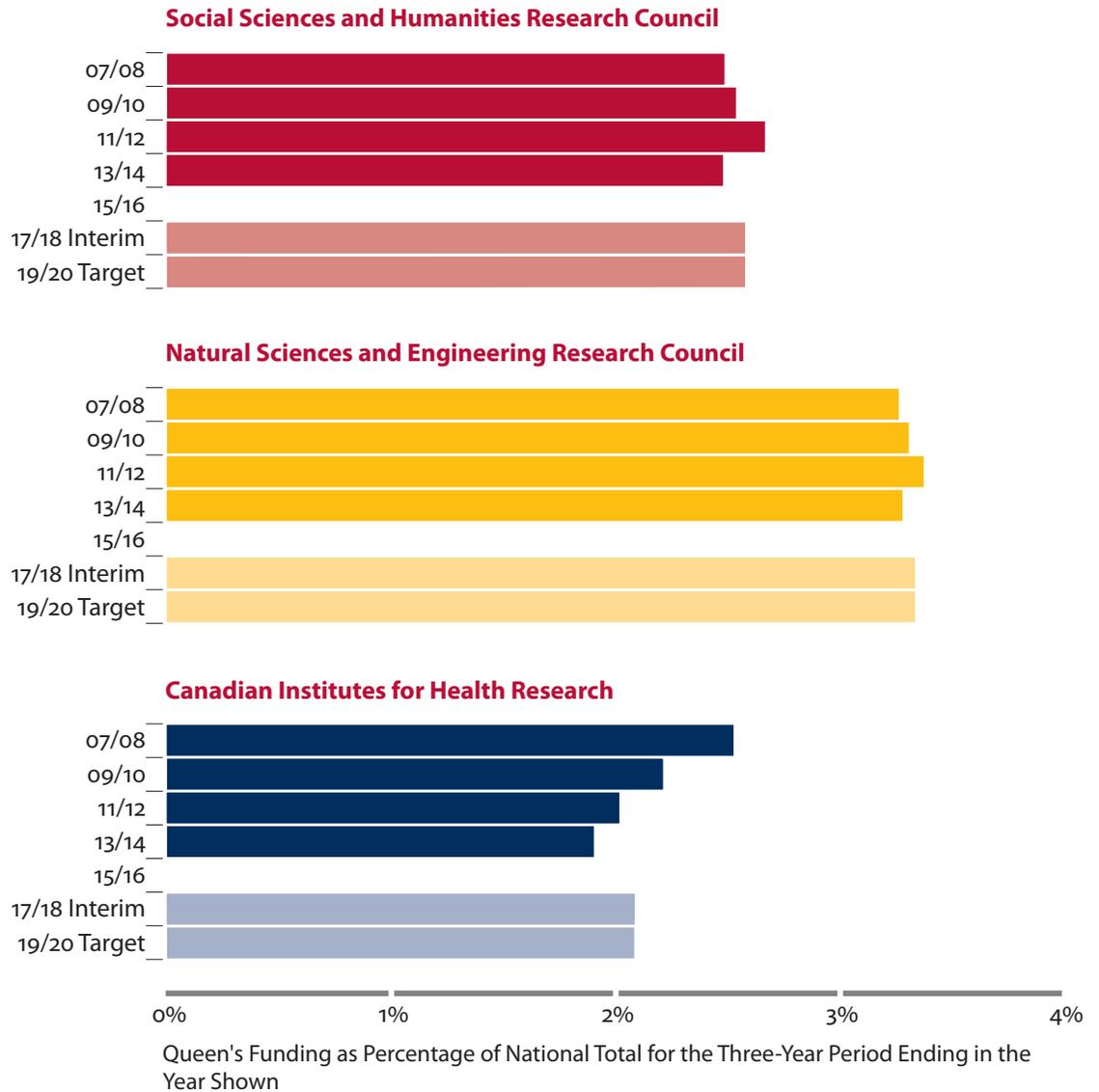


Tri-Council Funding

We measure our shares of funding from the three federal agencies. For 2013-14, all three shares declined, with the most significant decline occurring in the share of Canadian Institutes for Health Sciences funding. The shares are used to determine our Canada Research Chairs allocation and our funding from the federal Research Support Fund, both of which have declined commensurately. We are hopeful that new faculty recruitment associated with, for example, the Queen's National Scholar program, will enhance our competitiveness in the Tri-council programs.

Figure 6

Tri-Council Research Funding Shares



Alignment with the Strategic Research Plan

Appointments and renewals associated with two federal programs (Canada Research Excellence Chair, Canada Research Chair) and with our own Queen's National Scholar program all align with the four themes of the Strategic Research Plan. Our goal is to maintain 100 percent alignment for these appointments, and to ensure that overall faculty renewal is also thus aligned to the maximum extent possible.



Financial Sustainability

If we are to implement the Strategic Framework to full effect, it is paramount that we are financially sustainable. We use our ability to generate new operating revenue, and to broaden our sources of operating revenues, as measures of financial sustainability. Three additional indicators of financial sustainability (the primary reserve ratio, the net operating revenue ratio, and total endowment per full-time equivalent student) are included in appendix 1.

Revenue Generation

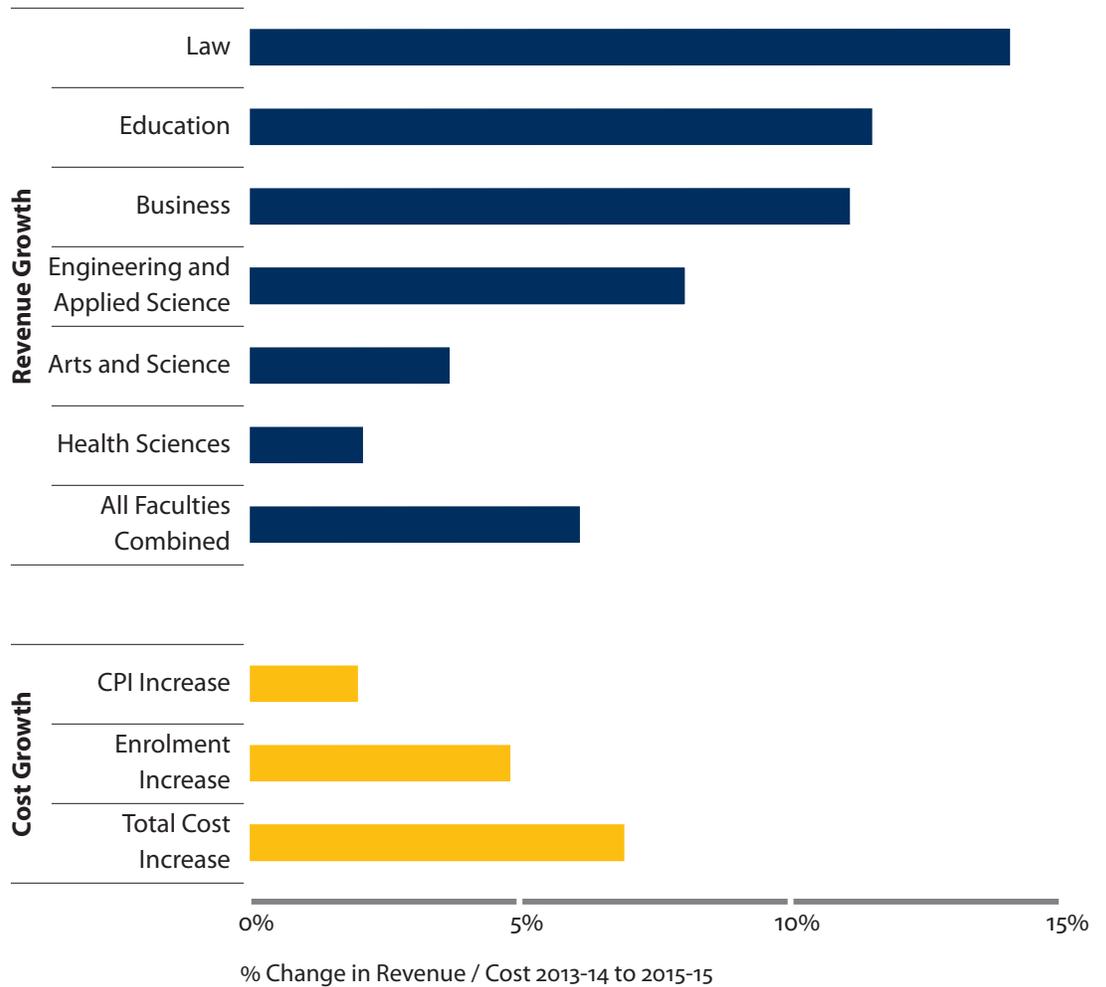
Queen's goal is to maintain real revenue per student by ensuring increases in faculty and school revenue attributions offset the combined effect of inflation and enrolment growth. Most faculties and schools met this goal in 2014-15, primarily through increased revenue from enrolment growth and tuition and fee increases.

The provincial government regulates fee increases differentially, with a more restrictive cap on Arts and Science tuition than on other program areas. The government also sets enrolment in some programs, including several in Health Sciences. These caps and limits serve to explain why, as the figure below shows, Health Sciences and Arts and Science are the two faculties in which the revenue increase did not keep pace with inflation and enrolment growth.

Health Sciences is currently exploring new programming that, if successful, will generate additional revenue in the future. The recent opening of two new residences has afforded Arts and Science the opportunity to grow its student intake this fall by 300 students. There is therefore cautious optimism that the financial situation of both faculties will soon show signs of improvement.

Figure 7

Faculty/School Revenue Growth 2013-14 to 2014-15 In Relation to Increased Cost of Operations

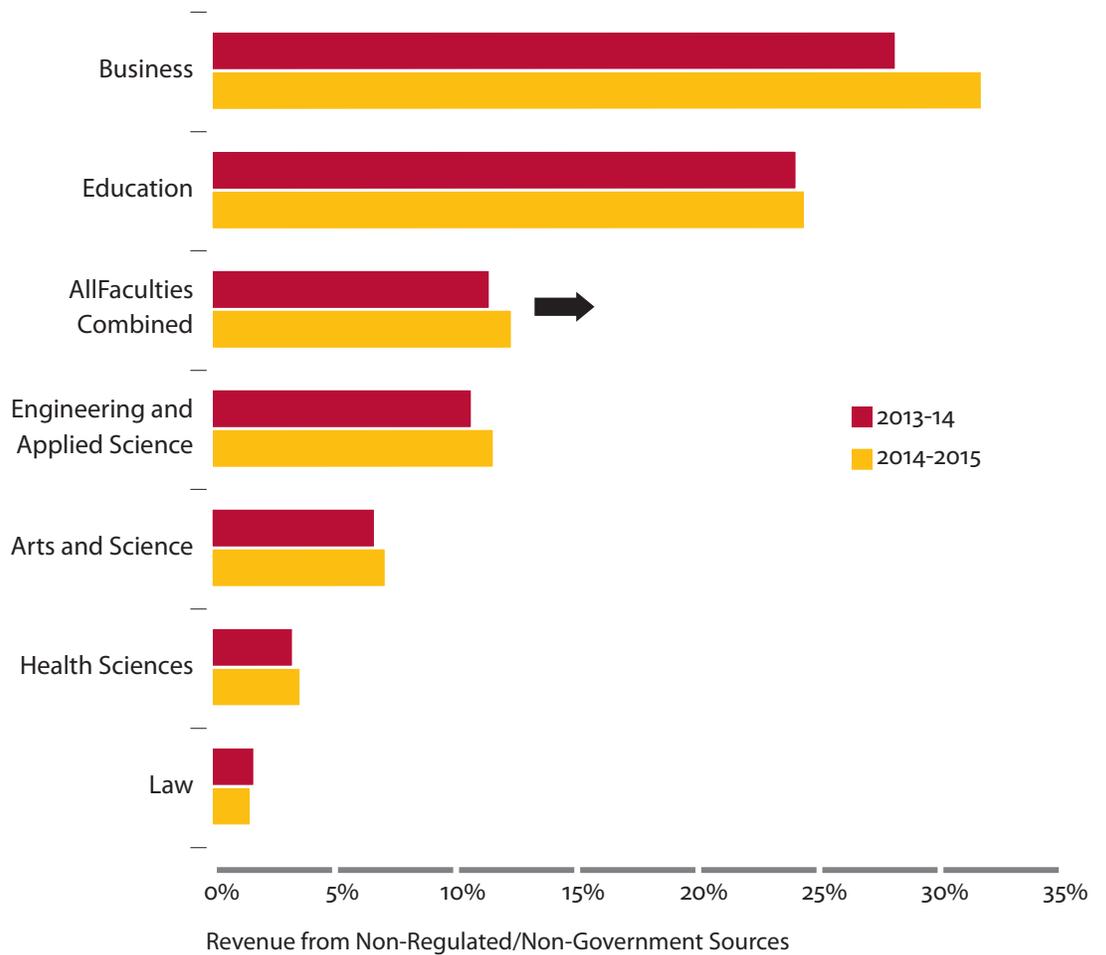


Revenue Diversification

All but one of the faculties and schools reported increases in the percentage of revenue not from government or government-regulated sources (operating grant and domestic student tuition). A dominant strategy in this regard was increased international enrolment, which explains why Law was the one faculty that did not diversify: the JD, which is by far its largest program, is specific to Canadian law (excluding Quebec), and the applicant pool is predominantly domestic.

Figure 8

Percentage of Faculty Revenue from Non-Regulated and Non-Government Sources



Cost Containment

Besides growing and diversifying revenue, we also strive to contain costs. We are in the midst of a major cost containment exercise that includes an analysis of university-wide and faculty-level data for Queen's and other universities. The findings from this analysis will be shared with the Provost's Advisory Committee on Budget before the next steps in the exercise of identifying, and developing business cases for, selected cost-containment strategies.



Internationalization

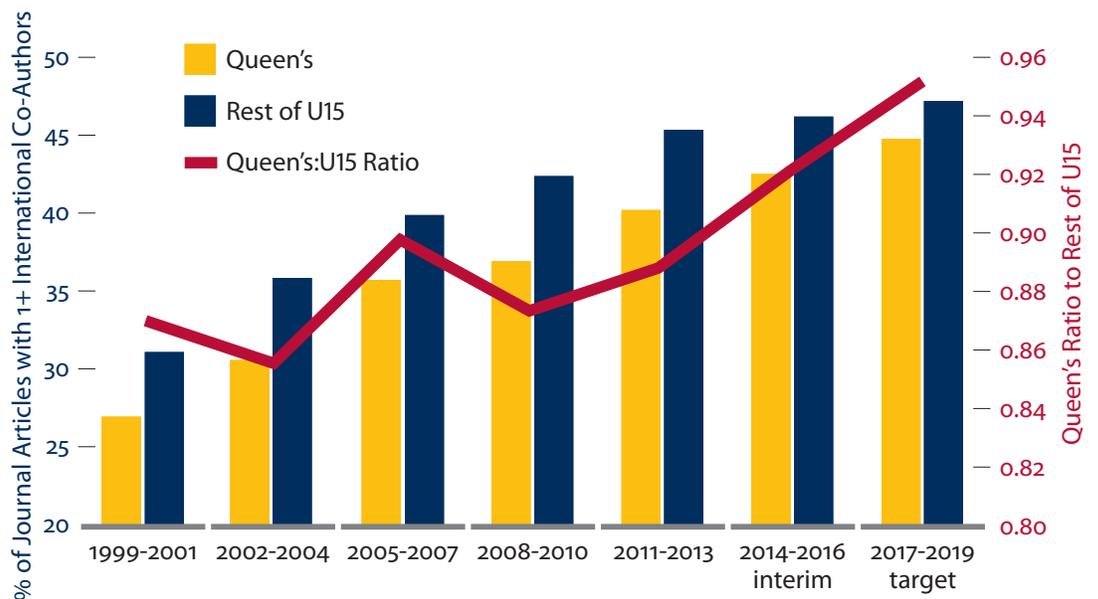
International Research Engagement

We measure international research collaboration as the number of refereed journal articles with both a Queen's author and an international co-author, expressed as a proportion of all refereed journal articles. International research collaboration has almost doubled within the U15 over the last 15 years, and Queen's progress has matched this growth, but Queen's remains slightly below the U15 average. Our goal between now and 2019 is to catch up with the U15 and remain there.

The next three-year reporting window for international research collaboration will be 2014-2016 inclusive, and results will be available for the Strategic Framework 2017 annual report.

Figure 9

International Research / Publication Collaboration



International Undergraduate Student Recruitment

Our target is that, by 2019, 10 percent of our incoming undergraduates will be international fee-paying students. If this is accomplished and maintained, the steady state will be reached in 2022-23 when 10 percent of all undergraduate degree program students will be paying international fees.

The number of newly admitted international fee-paying undergraduate degree program students increased from 116 students in 2013-2014 to 212 students in 2014-2015, a year over year increase of 83 percent. The growth in this area can be attributed to various initiatives underway at both the faculty and university level, including the following.

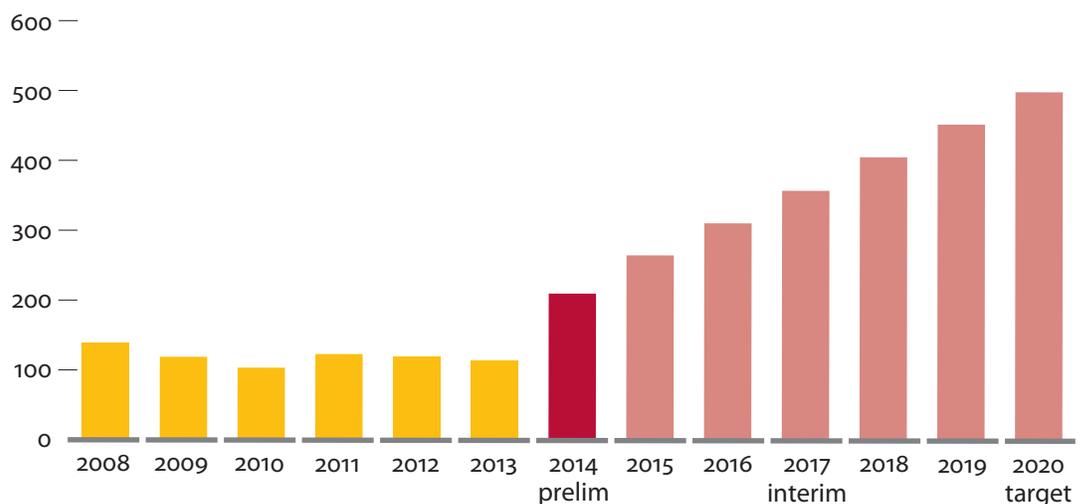
- The addition of a full-time recruiter based in Shanghai, a strategic region of focus for Queen's international recruitment.
- Engagement of a leading international recruitment agency to help focus our efforts in target markets, and the development of the role of Director of International Recruitment to oversee all international outreach and recruitment-related activity.
- The development of three new full-year English language bridging pathways, which help to expand capacity for conditional offers.
- Enhancement of online and webinar contact with prospective international students through new multi-media conference facilities.
- Earlier assessment of applications leading to earlier offers of admission.

Our further progress will be guided by the [Comprehensive International Plan](#), and by the [Long-Term Strategic Enrolment Management Framework](#), which outlines specific actions that directly support our goal to increase Queen's international enrolment, including expanded recruitment activities in strategic regions.

Our target's realization will depend not only on the success of our international undergraduate recruitment initiatives, but also on several other factors including, critically, residence capacity and student support services.

Figure 10

International Undergraduate Intake: Program Students



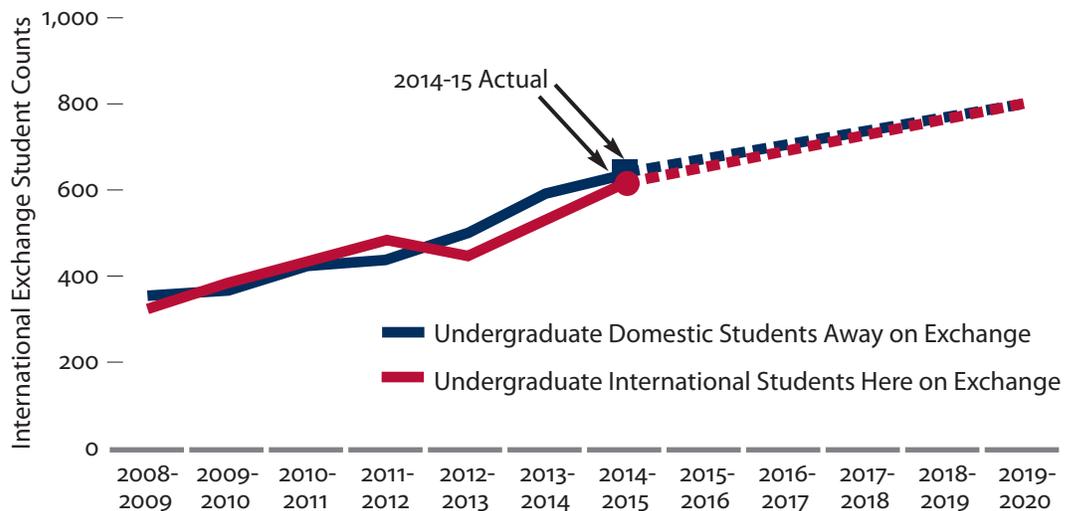
International Undergraduate Student Engagement

We did not previously identify a performance indicator for undergraduate student international engagement. Henceforth, we shall use the number of undergraduate students participating in international exchange activity, which is the indicator proposed in the recently developed [Comprehensive International Plan](#). Exchange activity is defined as a reciprocal arrangement formalized by a signed agreement with a partner institution, in which the exchange student pays tuition fees to the home institution. Our goal is to increase participation in exchange activity by 25 percent between 2014 and 2019.

We have already seen progress in the past 12 months. The number of international students on Queen's campus participating on exchange has increased from 528 students in 2013-2014 to 614 students in 2014-2015, and the number of domestic students participating on international exchange abroad has increased from 594 in 2013-2014 to 641 in 2014-2015. Further progress will be supported by the effective management of international strategic exchange partnerships, which is ultimately the responsibility of the Associate Vice-Principal (International).

Figure 11

International Students Here on Exchange and Queen's Students Away on Exchange



SUPPLEMENTARY INDICATORS

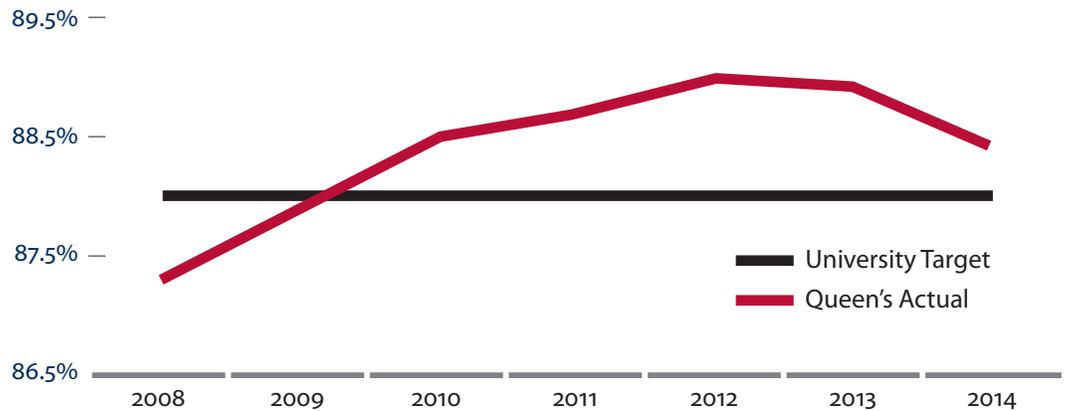
1. Student Population Quality Indicators

Queen's is committed to ensuring that the implementation of our Strategic Framework does not negatively affect the high quality of students we recruit, retain and graduate. At the undergraduate level, the metrics we use to measure student quality are the average grade of admitted students, the student retention rate between first and second year, and the degree completion rate, all three of which were stable as of September 2015. The graphs below indicate that the quality of Queen's undergraduate students recruited and their success once here are being maintained.

A – ADMISSION AVERAGE

Figure 12

Queen's Entering Student Admission Averages, All Programs Average



B – FIRST-TO SECOND-YEAR RETENTION RATE

Figure 13

Queen's Year-1 to Year-2 Retention Rate, All Programs Average

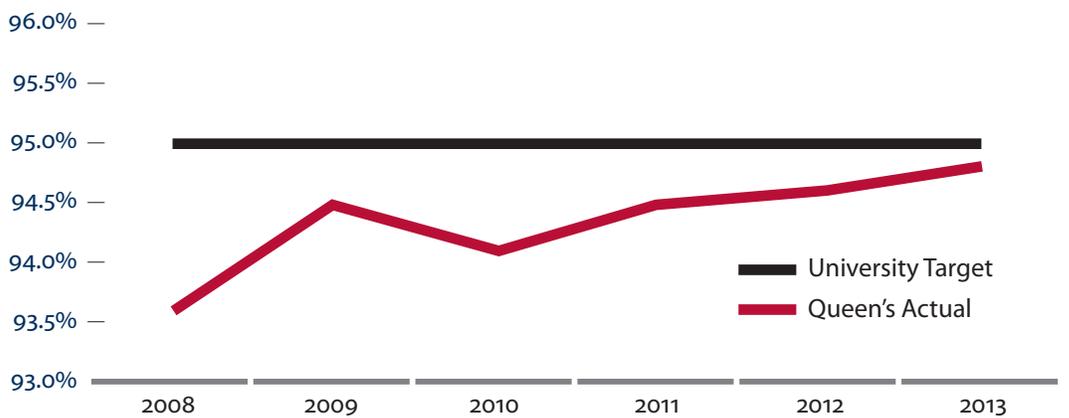
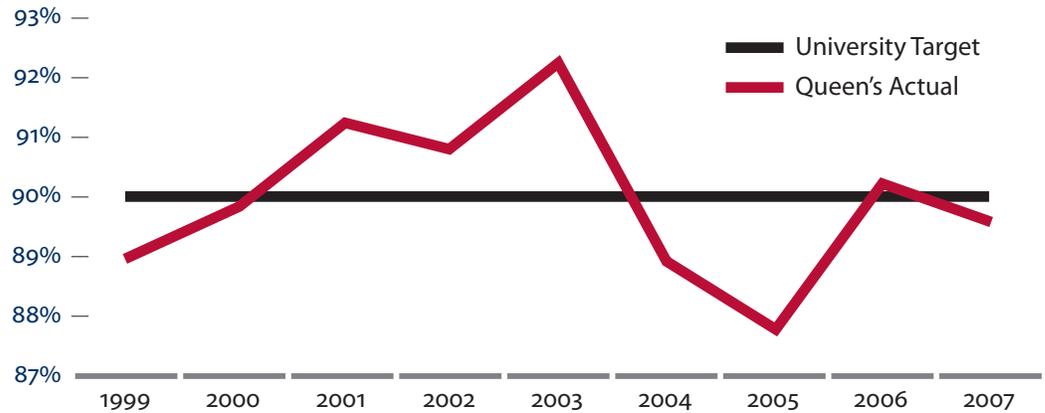


Figure 14

C – BACCALAUREATE GRADUATION RATE

Undergraduate Degree Graduation Rate, All Programs Average, Seven Years Following the Intake Year Shown



2. Additional Financial Sustainability Indicators

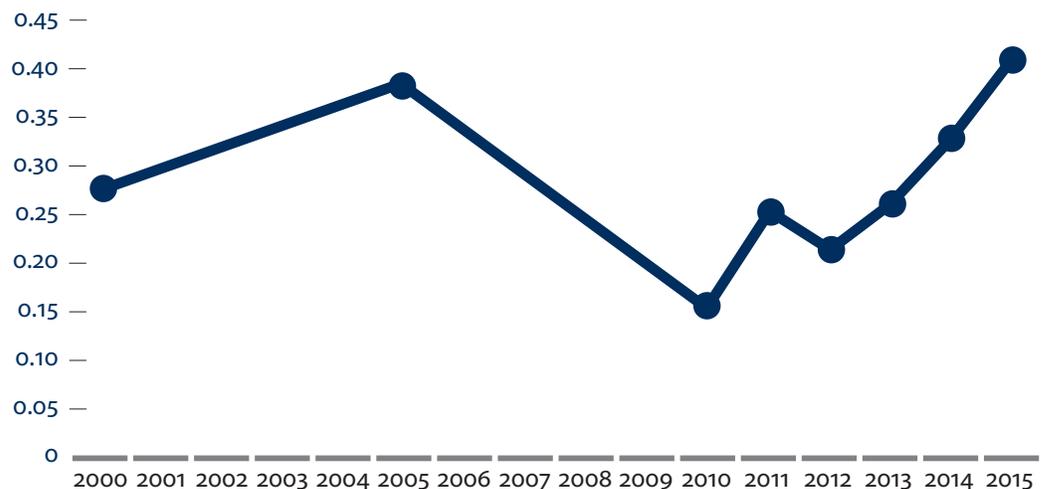
Trends in ratios based on consolidated financial results are good indicators of the overall financial health of the university. We have adopted three such ratios.

A – PRIMARY RESERVE RATIO

The primary reserve ratio, which is defined as expendable net assets divided by total expenses, helps to determine whether the university's resources are sufficient and flexible enough to support the mission. It indicates how long an institution can function using only its expendable reserves without relying on additional assets generated through operations. A ratio of 0.4, for example, means the institution's reserves will cover 40 percent of one year's operation (roughly five months). The university's recent balanced budgets, after several deficit years, are reflected in improvements in this ratio.

Figure 15

Primary Reserve Ratio for Fiscal Years Ending April 30

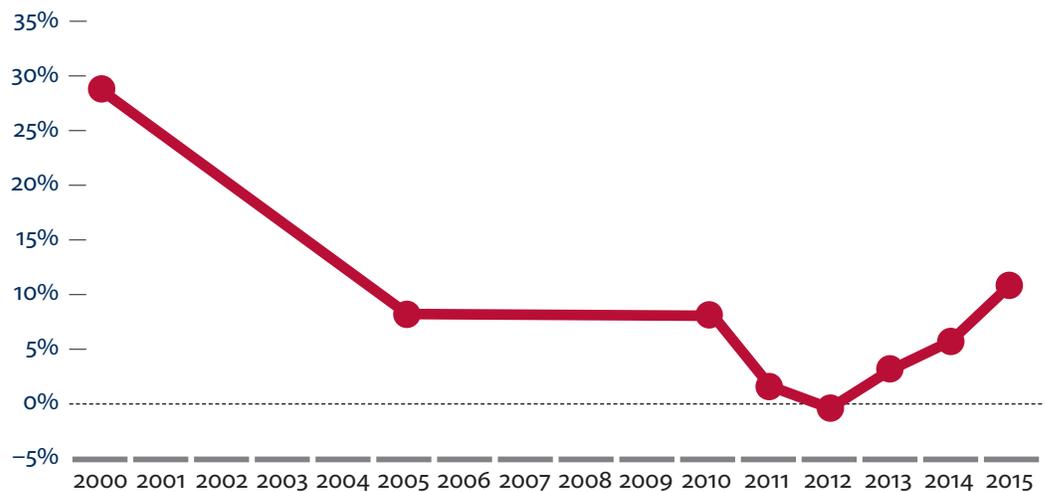


B – NET OPERATING REVENUES RATIO

This ratio is defined as cash flow from operating activities divided by total revenues. Positive cash flow from operations indicates strengthening position, and, conversely, structural negative cash flows are almost always an indication of financial pressures, particularly if there are no identified initiatives to reverse the shortfall. Significant positive cash flows could be deceiving if they are a consequence of underspending on operations critical to an institution's core mission. The increase in the ratio since 2012 indicates stronger operating results and, potentially, flexibility for future strategic investments.

Figure 16

Net Operating Revenues Ratio for Fiscal Years Ending April 30



C – ENDOWMENT VALUE PER STUDENT

This ratio is self-explanatory. Endowments enable universities to support students, attract world class faculty, and support the mission of the university in perpetuity. Endowment per student provides information on the effect of the endowment relative to student enrolment changes.

Figure 17

Endowment Value per Student for Fiscal Years Ending April 30

