Queen's Bicentennial Vision: A Discussion Paper

Patrick Deane
Principal and Vice-Chancellor

Centennial Considerations

Queen's University is approaching its bicentennial year in 2041, a milestone in our history and development as well as an opportunity for self-reflection and long-term planning. The latter will be particularly important because the future rather than the past must be our main concern, and change is both inevitable and a prerequisite for progress.

The circumstances which attended celebrations of our first century in 1941 were dramatic. In that year the world was at war, and October 16th, the anniversary of Queen Victoria's signing of the royal charter that established the university, was also the day the Soviet government evacuated Moscow, German troops having broken through the city's main line of defence the day before. It was also the day Odessa, Ukraine, fell to Germany and the deportation of Jews from Germany and Luxembourg commenced. At Queen's the day marked the start of a three-day celebration of the university's first century with what Principal R.C. Wallace called "a note of quietness and solemnity befitting the seriousness of the days in which we live."[1]

As well as the conflict in which Canada and numerous members of the Queen's family were embroiled, the other major cloud that hung over the university was economic. University Day in that year coincided roughly with the twelfth anniversary of the Stock Market Crash; and since 1932, W.E. McNeill, Vice-Principal and Treasurer of Queen's, had been warning of the university's precarious financial position. The winter of 1937-38 saw McNeill declaring a crisis in that regard, citing increasing expenditures and declining revenues as the cause. In particular, he was concerned about erosion of the university's strategic reserves as the cost of operations surpassed institutional income.

Some of this may seem dispiritingly familiar. Whether our current circumstances are equally dramatic is a matter of opinion, but there are undoubtedly parallels to be drawn. Geopolitical challenges today are different in type and extent but without doubt they affect the life of the institution and its members in just as complex a way; and the financial constraints within which the university currently operates are strikingly similar to those felt

[1] Quoted by Frederick W. Gibson in *To Serve and Yet be Free: Queen's University, Volume II, 1917-1961* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1983), 215.

in the immediate pre-war period, even if the scale is very different. Of interest also is the fact that in 1941 there was concern expressed about the future of the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. In his centenary speech, Principal Wallace noted that "the arts college, the erstwhile home of the humanities and liberal culture, is moving towards an eclipse,"[2] this in the sway of a societal drift away from "humanistic learning" towards "professional training," a trend that would be exacerbated when returning servicemen in dramatically increasing numbers chose to study science or applied science. "Our best students are going into the sciences," he noted some years later.[3] That was of course not an aberration peculiar to Queen's but an early indication of the extent to which science and technology would become integral to postwar society, economics, and politics at large.

In 1941 Wallace accepted this reality, arguing that in a student's perspective it was "uneconomical and unwise from a social standpoint" to put job market imperatives to one side in the interests of a focus on "humanistic learning." Embracing the new political economy of science yet not wishing to see the humanities rendered irrelevant, his proposed solution was the "liberalization" of the professional schools, the importing of "humanities and liberal culture" into professional programs and those in the basic and applied sciences. He would undoubtedly have welcomed the new vision for Engineering education announced by Queen's and supported by alumnus Stephen Smith in 2023, although just as certainly he would have remarked wryly on the time elapsed between his articulation of that idea and its coming into being! One impediment to the realization of Wallace's goal of importing humanistic education into the professional schools was of course the message he was sending to the humanities themselves: namely that they were to be "converted," as Frederick Gibson puts it, "into auxiliaries of the professional faculties and schools" and therefore cast "into a subordinate role in university education."[4] The educational mission remains important today, naturally, as does the need to ensure students are well-equipped to approach problems in a holistic way; but maintaining and developing a powerful research culture in the arts, humanities, and social sciences, notwithstanding enrolment patterns, is an additional contemporary imperative.

The final issue on which it is helpful to compare 1941 with 2041 relates to capital planning. That migration of student numbers towards the sciences which so exercised Principal Wallace not only had consequences for staffing and curriculum, but it also required the extension of existing facilities and the creation of new ones with new equipment—this after construction on campus had been more or less halted by ten years during the depression and then by several years of war. As Queen's moved slowly into its second century the list of buildings needed grew rapidly, but while the needs were clear, the means of satisfying them were not. Resources remained extremely limited, so two things became paramount: long-term planning and a pragmatic, creative approach to funding both operations and the physical development of the campus. Between Principal Wallace and the new Chancellor,

[2] Gibson, 217.
[3] Gibson, 220.
[4] Gibson 218

Charles Dunning, resources were found in government and the private sector to create the facilities required to support the post-war student demographic and its interests. McLaughlin Hall (opened in 1948) was one of the first achievements of this period, as was the Queen's University Biological Station (founded in 1945), the John Deutsch University Centre (1948), and Clark Hall (1951).

Queen's centennial year in 1941 was both a celebration and the beginning of what Gibson describes as "an exercise in planning," a process that gave us much of what we take for granted at Queen's today. For the benefit of the university in its coming third century we need to embark on a similar exercise—now, as in the years leading up to that first centenary, recognizing that there are certain realities that have to be negotiated or accommodated if the university is to have a prosperous and distinguished future. The extent to which those realities echo the situation in 1941 is disconcerting, suggesting as it does that the more things change, the more they stay the same. But it is also instructive in bringing home the need for creative thinking and courage if our next hundred years is not to return us to a similar situation.

The Exercise in Planning So Far

The financial challenges that took Queen's to the front pages of national media in 2023 and that today afflict almost every university in Ontario were the result of underfunding over many decades as well as of recent changes in government policy at both the provincial and federal levels. In supporting the university in its quest to chart a path out of financial difficulty, as well as to have confidence in decisions it would be called upon to make in the immediate term, Queen's Board of Trustees reasonably asked for the most reliable possible projections relating to the funding of higher education in Ontario, the policy landscape within which universities could be expected to operate in the foreseeable future, and demographic and other trends that would affect our prospects. This work was done during the summer of 2024 and it provides a critical point of reference for this paper. As we look toward 2041 we need to frame our ambitions in a realistic and pragmatic fashion, setting goals for ourselves that respect or work around challenges that are ultimately beyond our control, and capitalize on those assets that fall within it.

The financial crisis of 2023 may have accelerated the need to lay out a longer-term vision for the university, but it did not erase the important planning initiatives that have been undertaken at Queen's since 2019. Indeed, it should be obvious that a bicentennial plan for the institution would be beyond consideration right now if our values, vision, and mission were not already articulated in the *Strategic Framework*, approved by the Board in 2021 and regularly reported against in subsequent years. There have been notable achievements within the *Framework*—the establishment of the Community Engagement and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Councils, for example, along with frameworks under development for advancing work in those areas, and a major increase in research opportunities for undergraduate students—and work in those areas can be expected to

continue at pace as the *Framework* shapes and is made manifest by Queen's vision for 2041 and beyond.

Three other major planning initiatives have been recently completed or are near completion, and they too must feed into our approach to the bicentennial and beyond. These are the *Global Engagement Strategic Plan 2023-2028,* the *Strategic Research Plan 2024-2029* (coming to Senate for approval in January), and the Capital Improvement Priorities. The prosecution of these initiatives, as well as of strategic plans in individual faculties and units, cannot help but have been affected by the university's financial constraints in recent years. But the key point to be made is this: the university's values and aspirations as articulated in these plans and frameworks are not invalidated by the budget challenge, nor are they simply to be set aside in deference to financial necessity. Financial necessity is what it is, and we have no choice but to adapt ourselves to it; but our obligation to the generations that will follow us at Queen's is to provide them with a vision that is both financially sustainable and in an academic, cultural, and social sense worth working for and worthy of our pride.

Trends: Context for the Bicentennial Vision

While it is obviously not feasible to predict all possible influences on Queen's University between now and 2041, we can be reasonably confident that some trends will persist and perhaps even strengthen (or worsen, depending on one's perspective). Planning that fails to take notice of these trends or bases itself—evidence to the contrary notwithstanding—on the hope that they will or should reverse themselves, is unlikely to be successful. While some of the following considerations are obstacles to be overcome, others are opportunities to be embraced. I begin with the obstacles:

1. Provincial government funding, already a mere 57% of the Canadian average on a per student basis, is likely to decline even further in real terms. Postsecondary education will almost certainly continue to languish far down the list of government funding priorities as fiscal restraints continue and demands increase in areas such as health care. Even were there to be a change in government, bringing with it more supportive policies regarding higher education, the overall fiscal picture is unlikely to change significantly. Higher Education Strategy Associates' 2023 report on the State of Postsecondary Education in Canada[5] estimated that Ontario would have to increase postsecondary funding by $7.1 billion per year to match the Canadian average. It is difficult to imagine a government of any stripe having the political will to make such an investment, let alone the resources: Ontario's net debt per capita in 2022 was $19,436, 105.9% above the average of the provinces.[6] Furthermore, any

[5] Higher Education Strategy Associates report by Alex Usher, posted 6 September 2023.
[6] Financial Accountability Office of Ontario, Report summary 10 April 2024, https://fao-on.org/en/communication/mr-interprovincial-comparison-2024/

funding increases that are made will likely be tied to narrowly defined results and performance.

2. Because of the situation described above, universities have been pushed to a greater reliance on fee income. Domestic student tuition was reduced by the provincial government 10% in 2019 and has been frozen by government mandate ever since. Public perception is that tuition levels and the total cost of higher education is nevertheless still high; so here again it is difficult to imagine this or any other government significantly deregulating fees—even if universities wished them to do so. The current situation, in which tuition fees and per-student funding fail to cover delivery costs is therefore likely to continue.

3. Federal government caps on international study permits have precipitated a major revenue shortfall across the higher education sector. In Ontario the annual loss for universities is expected to be approximately $300 million in 2024-25, rising to $600 million in 2025-26.[7] Apart from the financial impact of the caps, damage to the brand of Canadian higher education is already considerable and is not expected to be reversed or even reversible for a decade or more.

4. There is increasing demand for universities to address a broad range of important non-academic needs for students (such as mental health supports, substance use and addictions support, etc.) without additional funding.

While it might be argued that the circumstances outlined above converged unusually to produce a financial crisis in the universities in the post-COVID period beginning in 2022-23, the fact remains that the components of that crisis have all had a long history in the Ontario higher education system. My opening observations on the situation prevailing when Queen's celebrated its first one hundred years are a reminder that in fundamental ways very little has changed in the province since then. What we have experienced in the last few years was in some ways predictable in 1941 and can be expected to recur in the coming decades—unless of course we act now to render Queen's in 2041 more resistant to the challenge of underfunding and more in control of its own destiny.

There are other trends discernible in the university sector at the present time that map very well onto our *Strategic Framework* and that might be seen as opportunities for building that resilience;

5. Students increasingly expect to have work-integrated learning opportunities to differentiate themselves in the marketplace. This is a longstanding and growing

[7] Council of Ontario Universities, October 18, 2024: https://ontariosuniversities.ca/news/cou-statement-impact-of-federal-changes-to-international-student-study-permits/

trend that was envisaged in Queen's *Strategic Framework* and that is already a significant component of undergraduate programming in parts of the university.

6. Employment outcomes are increasingly important, with a noticeable increase in enrolment in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programs, which students perceive to have better career prospects. The postwar trend discussed in an earlier part of this paper therefore continues, with enrolment in STEM in Canada since 2010 increasing by 28% amongst domestic and by 22% amongst international students, and enrolments in the arts and humanities declining over the same period by 24% and 41% respectively.[8]

7. Despite shifting political currents and changing public opinion on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in higher education, it remains the case that barriers to education and full scholarly participation continue to exist for marginalized communities and that those barriers need to be eliminated and additional supports provided to ensure access, full and equitable participation, and ultimately the broadening of inquiry. Our understanding of these issues is reflected in our commitment to advance the goals of key documents such as the Truth and Reconciliation Task Force Report, the Scarborough Charter, and the Dimensions Charter, and it is imperative that progress continues, notwithstanding challenges that may be felt in the short term. The *Strategic Framework* lists "Responsibility" as one of the university's values: "We accept our responsibility to build a diverse, equitable, inclusive and anti-racist community for our people, to indigenize and decolonize the academy, and in all that we do, to observe the interests of the planet and the life it sustains."

8. There is an increasing expectation for mission-driven research (for example, research to support government and other sectors to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050), which is part of a larger shift away from importance being accorded to universities for what they *are* and *do,* and towards what they are *for*. Research to address specific matters in the public interest has also increasingly taken the form of community-based research; and that has in turn found its educational counterpart in community-based teaching and learning. This trend is powerfully aligned with the Vision of Queen's University as stated in the *Strategic Framework*: "The Queen's community—our people—will solve the world's most significant and urgent challenges with their intellectual curiosity, passion to achieve, and commitment to collaborate." Community Engagement is the fifth goal in Queen's strategy, and the university's first *Community Engagement Framework* has recently been developed.

9. Emerging technologies are transforming all aspects of university work and learning. There is now an expectation that all research fields will be digitalized, and

[8] Source: Statistics Canada, postsecondary enrolments, by field of study, program type.

technology increasingly affects the ways in which we teach and support students. Hybrid learning as the new norm has the potential to dramatically transform the campus experience and to bring new and unprecedented pressure to bear on university facilities broadly. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a rapidly accelerating driver of change in both day-to-day operations and the academic mission.

Critical Elements for the Bicentennial Vision

As we look forward to 2041 and to the vision for Queen's that we would like to see firmly established and in motion on that date, we need to do two things concurrently. First, we need to anchor ourselves in the university's Mission, Vision, and Values as declared in 2021 and in the institutional goals articulated in the *Strategic Framework*. Second, we need to reckon forthrightly and creatively with the trends described above (and any others that we have reason to believe will emerge), seeking out ways to advance our institutional priorities while being both faithful to our values and astute in dealing with changing and challenging circumstances. Developing a vision for our third century therefore cannot be a naïve, "blue sky" exercise, but nor should it be a mere act of resignation to the unpromising circumstances that can reasonably be predicted for the future. This is a time to combine a deep commitment to our values and goals with a high degree of creativity, open mindedness, and disinterested thinking about the future role, value, and sustainability of Queen's University as an institution.

With an eye on the university's existing values and goals, the following could reasonably be expected to find their place in the Bicentennial Vision:

1. Queen's will increase its academic quality and reinforce and solidify its reputation as a leading research-intensive university that offers a comprehensive range of undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. We will commit to a researcher-teacher model – all tenure-track faculty will teach and have research programs funded by external agencies. [See Strategic Goal #1 of the *Strategic Framework*].

2. Queen's will expand its reach and influence, and build its brand, as a global institution that attracts and retains the best talent from around the world, that offers diverse and flexible learning opportunities and pathways for learners of all ages and backgrounds, and that leverages the potential of digital technologies and innovations to enhance research, teaching, learning, and service. [See Goals #2, #3 and #4].

3. Queen's will improve and strengthen its engagement and collaboration with local, national, and international partners, including governments, industry, non-governmental organizations, and other universities, to address the complex and pressing issues facing society and to create positive impacts and benefits for all.

Underpinning this work is an understanding that as a mid-sized institution, our success depends on partnership and flexibility. [See Goals #4 and #5]

4. Queen's will deepen its commitment to Indigenization, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Anti-racism, and Accessibility, and continue to mature as a community that eliminates barriers to participation, reflects and respects the multiple identities, perspectives, and experiences of its community members, and promotes intercultural understanding, social justice, and global citizenship. [See Goals #5, #6, and Values].

5. Queen's will renew its infrastructure and rejuvenate the built campus with unique, state-of-the art buildings that inspire and help to attract top researchers and the most talented students. The resources (technology, labs, classrooms, etc) and infrastructure will align with strategic priorities and objectives, and support a safe, healthy, and inspiring environment for all members of the community. [See Goal #1].

6. Queen's will commit to the comprehensive preparation of educators by integrating evidence-based pedagogical training and ongoing professional development into the academic career path. This will ensure that faculty not only excel in research but are also able to create transformative learning experiences that actively engage students—moving beyond transactional education towards a model where students are engaged by faculty to be more deeply involved in their educational pathway. [See Goal #1, #2, and #3].

The Tuning Note: Research

The above critical components of a Bicentennial vision are, as indicated, very much continuous with the university's current *Strategic Framework*. At the same time, though, they accentuate what was implied in the ordering of the goals in that document: namely, the primacy of research, not only as an activity led by faculty members in labs and libraries but as a defining attribute of the Queen's experience and profile overall, including undergraduate learning. Increasing "the intensity and volume of exemplary, groundbreaking, interdisciplinary research" is the first listed action pursuant to the Vision of Queen's solving "the world's most significant and urgent challenges," so research therefore serves as the tuning note that brings the whole strategy into harmony. And it flows logically from this that any account of Queen's in and beyond 2041 that does not include significant achievements in the intensification of research would be dissonant with our declared aspirations.

Those aspirations are indeed longstanding, and they predate by decades the formulation of the *Strategic Framework*. In the 1980s, Queen's was a founding member of the group of

five Ontario institutions that first began meeting to advance their shared interests in the advancement of university research, but as Duncan McDowell's history indicates, the research enterprise continued to be challenged by insufficient resources, as well as by an institutional history squarely focused on undergraduate education.[9] It was not until Principal Leggett created the Vice-Principal (Research) portfolio in 1995 that Queen's began to organize itself deliberately with the goal of maximizing its research intensity.

Despite Principal Wallace's declaration that "no university, and no department of a university, is alive unless it is infused with the spirit of research," in all the institutional self-scrutiny attending the first centenary in 1941, no such concerted attention was paid to the active cultivation of research. The situation is altogether different as we approach 2041, firstly because the efforts of many at Queen's since 1995 have led to notable achievements in research, including Dr. Art McDonald's Nobel Prize in 2015. In the past two years we have welcomed two new Canada Excellence Research Chairs and claimed three NSERC prizes: The Herzberg Medal for Dr. Kerry Rowe, the Donna Strickland Prize for Dr. John Smol, and the John C. Polanyi Prize for Dr. Cathleen Crudden. Secondly, research today incontrovertibly establishes key in the academic orchestra in which we aspire to play. The national and global rankings that carry most weight with peers, government, and prospective students are heavily tilted towards research, and no institution that aspires to more than local or parochial success can afford to ignore them.

That said, Queen's has struggled to maintain its position as a leading research-intensive university in Canada. As the group of five became the Group of Ten, then the Group of 13, and then the U15, our size and disciplinary configuration have prevented the university from keeping up with its peers in terms of gross research revenues. And while those factors are the result of a natural historical evolution, the fact is they are not divinely ordained and they are indeed within the university's control. With a deliberate reorganization that continues the work begun by Principal Leggett in the 1990s, it will be possible for Queen's to improve its research standing by 2041 and set the university on a positive trajectory in succeeding years.

Our Bicentennial year must see Queen's having retained and revitalized its reputation as a top research-intensive university, with research being at the heart of our institutional impact—directly and primarily through the groundbreaking work of our investigators and graduate researchers, yet also indirectly through our undergraduate students who have been trained in research methods and self-directed inquiry. To achieve that standing, we will need to place greater emphasis on groundbreaking research, encourage and build key interdisciplinary research areas, attract the highest calibre of PhD students, and consolidate traditional strengths while building capacity in critical and emerging subjects. Queen's currently ranks fifteenth in the U15 as assessed by share of total research income, and we should aim to improve that position significantly by the time we enter our third

[9] See https://www.queensu.ca/encyclopedia/r/research-history-queens-research-over-more-175-years

century. Were we to achieve standing in the top half of the group, the consequences in terms of our global reputation and impact would be considerable.

Queen's new Research Strategic Plan will guide us as we work to achieve this goal, identifying areas of established and developing strength and creating the proper ecosystem to support high calibre research and innovation. As in the 1990s, the coming years will demand that our management of resources and investments be adjusted to support this ambition: obviously we will need to recruit and retain world-class researchers, junior faculty, postdoctoral researchers and graduate students, especially in strategic areas; we will need to maintain and build appropriate facilities for their work; and we will need to ensure our institutional policies and practices actively support the overall objective.

Riding the Trends, Navigating the Challenges

In many ways, the national and global trends in higher education described in an earlier part of this paper strongly support the direction Queen's has taken since the *Strategic Framework* was established, and which direction predisposes the institution towards this particular vision for its Bicentennial in 2041. Our commitment to active engagement with the world and its challenges resonates positively in the global academy and has made us an acknowledged part of an educational network working to bring positive benefit to society and the planet. The institutional framework for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), currently under development, is one manifestation of that commitment, as is the emerging Framework for Community Engagement, and both draw upon new pedagogies and changing expectations of students that obtain not only in this province and country, but in the world more broadly.

The focus on research is no less responsive to global trends. Indeed, research standing and impact continues to be the prime measure of universities' worth in the global community, notwithstanding recently developed rankings that legitimately seek to recognize the value of other dimensions of their work. That is not just because research outcomes are more easily quantifiable than other aspects of the academic mission. It is because a consensus still exists that regards discovery and innovation as inextricably linked to the highest purpose of universities. This was a belief well established in Principal Wallace's mind at the time of the first centenary when, although the university was unable to structure itself explicitly to advance the research mission, he could nevertheless declare the fundamental importance of a "spirit" of research. As we approach 2041 we recognize that high achievements in research depend upon practical measures and tangible resources as well as that ineffable drive to inquire and to understand.

The trend that sees student interest shifting towards STEM is certainly not antipathetic to Queen's emerging Bicentennial vision as I have been describing it. Indeed, the more profoundly we engage with the complex problems of the world, the more comprehensible and critical does the demand for expertise in those disciplines seem. Yet one of the most

salutary insights to emerge in recent decades is that very few problems of the human and natural world can find solutions within a single discipline, so to say that science, technology, engineering, and mathematics are fundamental is not to say that the arts, humanities, and social science are not, or that they are irrelevant.

Universities are discipline-bound places, so the common follow-up to that insight would be to say, as Principal Wallace said, that the optimal way forward is to "liberalize" the professions and the sciences with an admixture of the humanities and social sciences. Not surprisingly, that model has no more traction today than it had in 1941, so we need to think creatively about what changes should occur in all areas of study to make them less monadic and more properly holistic responses to a complex world. At the ideal, that would imply all disciplines—STEM or otherwise—reimagining themselves in service to a broader conception of their subject matter and its place in the world. At the very least, it should avoid devolving into a squabble about territory and numbers.

If there is growing demand for study in certain fields, it is in the interests of the university to embrace it, while at the same time bringing to bear upon that demand the wisdom and illumination that comes from a properly thoughtful and complex engagement with that subject's complex trans-disciplinary context. The result should be a leveling of the intellectual topography, or at least an academic topography shaped by thought and curiosity, rather than raw figures and protectionism. Should Queen's Bicentennial vision include a significant increase in STEM enrolments, or, alternatively, a shift towards STEM in the distribution of existing enrolments, it will be nevertheless incumbent on all of us to give thought and action to the reformulation of curricular models in order to successfully produce graduates with both an understanding of science and technology, and the human, social, and cultural frame within which those things have effect and meaning.

If we now acknowledge that the drift towards STEM is not a contemporary aberration but a longstanding fact of higher education in this country, the time is surely right for the arts, social sciences, and humanities, in particular, to ponder the lineaments of a possible future defined not by alienation from and reaction against that drift, but by a recognition of their continuity with it. As part of the present visioning process, therefore, we should convene colleagues from the arts, social sciences, and humanities, to consider positive options. A brilliant future for those fields is in no way incompatible with strength and growth in areas such as engineering, business, and science.

An institutional enrolment rebalancing that accommodates growing demand in STEM would certainly support the goal of advancing our research standing and impact, and there is no doubt it would enhance our capacity to address those global challenges identified in the *Strategic Framework*. It is also the case that growth in these areas will have a beneficial impact on university resources, government funding on a per student basis being considerably higher in STEM subjects than in others. This is a very significant consideration,

because the overall projection for support from government in the coming years is otherwise bleak and unpromising.

While growth in any area requires appropriate investments to ensure that the quality of teaching, learning, and research in the area remains high, the benefits of increased revenues need to be felt more broadly across the university. This means that along with rebalancing enrolments, reimagining the relationship between STEM, other disciplines and the inherited idea of disciplinarity, and solidifying the central position of research in the university, we will need to rethink aspects of the present budget model and the mechanism by which revenues are distributed across the whole institution. If growth in STEM is academically defensible (as it is), and also one of the few levers available to us to ensure the university's future sustainability, it is difficult to see the predisposition of students towards those subjects as anything but a great opportunity.

It will be obvious that even with a dramatic increase as described above, the long-term financial picture for the university would still be challenging. So long as Queen's derives the bulk of its income from government-funded and government-approved programming, and so long as government controls tuition levels as well as total enrolment in approved programs of study, the sustainability and therefore the future of the university is not properly in our hands. We can and must work within those conditions to advance our mission as best we can, and this paper has tried to indicate some of the ways in which that can be done. But to guarantee the integrity of our work at and beyond the upcoming Bicentennial year, we also need to find resources outside the frame of public funding—some means, compatible with our standing as a leading Canadian university, that brings in revenue to augment existing sources.

A School for Professional and Continuing Education could provide an answer to this need. The university already has offerings in professional and continuing education across all faculties. These have historically been both a service to their respective communities and a helpful and sometimes significant source of revenue, so the intention would be to build on those activities to establish a school offering a variety of online courses and programs catering to different audiences, such as professionals who want to upgrade their skills or credentials, lifelong learners who are interested in exploring new topics or disciplines, and alumni who want to stay connected and engaged with Queen's. In addition to online learning, the school could take advantage of capacity on campus during the summer period to provide intensive and immersive in-person courses.

Admissions criteria, curriculum standards, and quality assurance mechanisms would ensure proper alignment with the mission and vision of Queen's as well as protect the Queen's brand, but the school would exist as an arm's-length organization outside of normal academic operations, and therefore have the flexibility to respond to market need and maximize the benefits it can transfer to the operating budget of the university after covering its own costs. By the time of our Bicentennial, a school of this sort would have the

potential to be quite large, with a registration of many thousands of students deriving benefit from the expertise available at Queen's while contributing to the strength and long-term sustainability of the institution and its mainstream academic mission.

Queen's Bicentennial: the Opportunity

If the fortunes of universities rise and fall according to cycles, it is unlikely that one hundred years is the accurate or typical interval. In recent times, as higher education has become a mass operation supported largely or at least significantly by the public purse, it is the cycle of provincial or national politics that has had the most far-reaching impact on institutions like our own. And political cycles are quite short—very much shorter than the temporal arc that universities like to describe—which means that it is possible for the higher education sector to find itself in a fundamentally non-synchronous relationship with government, out of step as it were with its funders and possibly with the society that elects them. At only slight risk of overstatement, I would say that Ontario's universities right now find themselves in such a situation. Federal politics, too, is becoming uncongenial in different ways, the imposition of caps on international students representing a profound reversal of the outward-looking internationalism with which government has nourished universities in past years.

The upcoming Bicentennial provides us with an opportunity to take stock of the ways in which our university today relates to its previous hundred years of existence, and how it would like to see itself in its next century. It also demands we develop a vision that will enable us to weather more effectively the vicissitudes of funding and politics in the public sector. What is most striking, when we compare current circumstances to those prevailing during Principal Wallace's time, is the persistence of certain problems: some external to the university such as government underfunding and geopolitical conflict, and some internal, such the habit of thinking divisively about disciplines and a tendency to view with disdain the world that the academy exists to serve and from which it derives its material support. External factors we cannot do much to control, and their persistence is certainly not likely to encourage us as we organize ourselves for our third century. But those internal practices and predispositions are indeed within our power to change, and they do hold the potential for the university to reimagine and reorient itself in important ways that will ensure its continuing success and sustainability in the century that lies ahead.