

# Queen's University Academic Plan 2011

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## Queen's University Academic Plan 2011

### **Introduction**

The Academic Planning Task Force (APTF) was struck by Queen's University Senate in November 2010 with a mandate to consult widely and draft the University's Academic Plan. We have spent the past ten months doing exactly that, not only consulting with faculty, students and staff, but reviewing the many unit submissions to the Principal's "[Where Next?](#)" and to the Academic Writing Team's "[Imagining the Future.](#)" What we have encountered in this process is a remarkable academic community with strong allegiance to this institution and to its mission. At the same time, students, faculty and staff have shared frustrations with some of the directions in which they fear the university is heading, particularly in response to financial challenges greater than any we have experienced in recent history. The document we have produced is in part a distillation of this consultation, and in part an exercise of our own collective experience and imagination as we try to draw the bold outlines of the Queen's of the future.

This is a significant time for Queen's to embark on the writing of a new Academic Plan. A number of articles, both in the popular press and in [university publications](#) have pointed to the serious threat posed by financial pressures, and increasing student/faculty ratios on the quality of the undergraduate learning experience in Canadian universities. Moreover, most universities have not yet come to terms with significant changes in the capacities and the priorities of today's students. Queen's, as one of the leading universities in the country, must take these concerns seriously. If we are to remain a great university that takes inclusive excellence seriously, we must revisit and perhaps realign our priorities, our structures, and even our current identity.

The Academic Plan does not seek to impose particular practices, but attempts to articulate a broad set of principles, priorities, and recommendations for the University.

### **Our Vision for Queen's**

Queen's University is the Canadian research-intensive university with a transformative student learning experience.

The University's proud history with its strong tradition of leading research, teaching excellence, and student engagement as well as its beautiful campus, relatively small and close-knit community, and its breadth of co-curricular opportunities for students facilitate a transformative learning environment within a research-intensive environment. Since its early days, Queen's has developed leaders in government, industry, health care, education, research and many other important sectors of society. The Academic Plan builds on these strengths to guide Queen's in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Our Academic Mission**

We regard Queen's as a university that is both student-centred and research-intensive. Its mission is thus defined by two central activities: learning and discovery. To ensure that these two activities work together learning must proceed in the same way that research progresses: through the guided struggle with a question, a problem, a relationship, or a task.

In this Report we are primarily concerned with teaching and learning. Another [task force](#) currently examines the way in which we organize and support our research activities. Of the two activities teaching is arguably the more complex, at least from an operational point of view. But what has become clear to us is that the research-intensive nature of the university must inform and enrich its teaching and learning enterprise. We use the term "active or inquiry-based learning" to describe the curriculum structure that emerges from this design. The teacher teaches by posing research challenges; the student learns in the same way a researcher conducts research.

Some elements of the student learning experience will lead to the development of specialized forms of knowledge; others will be more general with a wider range of application. Our students will gain expertise in one or two particular disciplines, but they will also acquire an understanding of their place in a culturally, economically, and politically diverse world, and be empowered to participate in it in an informed and creative manner. Above all they will experience the joy of discovery.

### **Guiding Principles for the Academic Plan**

The Academic Planning Task Force began its work by proposing eight principles concerning the University, its faculty, staff, students, and its functions, and six principles concerning the academic planning process.

#### **For the University:**

1. Queen's must preserve the University as a balanced academy that offers an outstanding undergraduate experience enriched by high-quality graduate and professional programs within a research-intensive environment.
2. Queen's must recognize that our core activities, teaching, learning and discovery, derive their nature and their significance from our strength as a research community.
3. In teaching, in research, and in its administrative operations, Queen's must both preserve genuine strengths and foster and promote innovation for the common good.
4. Queen's must provide all students, regardless of their chosen program or discipline, with core competencies and skills.
5. Queen's must both foster disciplinary learning and research and look beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries to bring methods and perspectives across the University together.
6. In admissions, hiring, education, research, and service, Queen's must promote diversity, inclusivity, and equity.
7. Queen's must interact with local and regional intellectual culture, but also look beyond its location in Kingston and Canada to find its place in the world. In education, research, and service, Queen's must foster a global citizenship that includes local and regional citizenship.
8. Queen's must consider all students, whether undergraduate, graduate, or professional, first and foremost as students rather than as sources of revenue for the University. That said, Queen's needs to acknowledge their multiple roles as students, researchers, teachers, and employees.

**For the Planning process:**

9. Students are a heterogeneous group, and come to Queen's with various aspirations, values, abilities, learning styles, different cultural and racial backgrounds, and needs. Planning for academic programs and the community environment must seek to understand and respect this diversity.

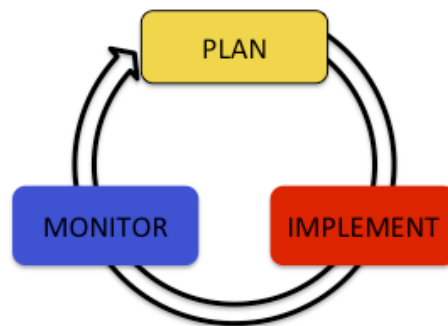
10. Queen's is a relatively decentralized institution. Key decisions about curricula and programs have to be made by the Schools, Faculties, and Departments. The Academic Plan does not seek to impose particular practices, but to articulate a broad set of principles, priorities, and recommendations for the University. Units will have to determine how best to apply these within their own institutional contexts.

11. At the same time, the Academic Plan must articulate clear objectives and suggest provisions for implementation, accountability, and, where applicable, measurement of outcomes.

12. Pilot projects should be used to test and adjust new initiatives.

13. In the transition from planning to implementation, all groups on campus (faculty members, non-academic staff, and students) should be consulted.

14. Planning cannot be a one-time event. The University must continuously adapt to changing circumstances. We view the creation of this Academic Plan as one phase in an on-going cycle:



**The Four Pillars of the Academy**

Alongside pressing global issues, universities all over the world are facing challenges related to resource constraints and the changing nature of students and faculty. Our own response to these requires creative revisioning of the academic mission. To this end, the Queen's Academic Plan identifies four core pillars of the academy:

- I. The Student Learning Experience
- II. Disciplinarity and Interdisciplinarity
- III. Reaching Beyond: Globalism, Diversity, and Inclusion at Queen's
- IV. Health, Wellness, and Community

Full documents for each of these pillars are appended, but summaries of each follow. We do, however, urge readers to consult the main documents.

## I. The Student Learning Experience

In a research-intensive university, the student learning experience must be the experience of the researcher. A researcher has a question to be answered, a problem to be solved, a relationship to be understood, a behaviour to be analyzed, or a task to be undertaken. In this process, information will be needed, and academic skills will be required to interpret and organize what has been gathered. The basic relationship of the researcher to the problem or task is one of active inquiry, and that is the mode of learning we wish to promote among our students. Such an approach is variously called, active learning, problem-based learning, or constructive learning, but we will refer to it as inquiry-based learning. We help our students to formulate problems or tasks, and they solve or execute them in their own way, individually, in teams, consulting with faculty and teaching assistants (TAs), interacting at the right moment with different kinds of library resources, books, articles and internet sites with the aim of creating a final product for dissemination.

An [inquiry-based curriculum](#) has a number of components. Lectures form an important part of the experience. A good lecture can effectively prepare the student for an investigation—its history and its larger context. It can even start the process off, making some initial progress, running into obstacles, searching for a way around or an entirely new approach. Lecturing is in fact modeling, and what the students need more than anything, are snapshots of the process of inquiry.

However, the real learning, the deep analysis, and the struggle for insight and understanding are the result of time spent individually or with a small group of peers. During this intensive process, the students should have access to a full range of resources and support services and be guided and supervised by instructors or TAs. Collaboration and different forms of peer tutoring would enrich the learning experience in different ways.

Towards the end of this focused and intense process of inquiry, the lecture can once again play a critical role, bringing the class back together, reinterpreting the journey, connecting important ideas that have emerged from the inquiry, providing a new level of understanding.

Furthermore, we have identified a set of academic skills that are fundamental to the inquiry-based learning process. They include:

- critical reading
- effective writing and communication
- numeracy
- [inquiry](#)
- critical thinking
- problem solving
- [information literacy](#)
- [academic integrity](#)
- effective collaboration
- intercultural literacy

We must emphasize that these skills are intimately interconnected and that their development lies at the heart of the academic enterprise. Indeed they fit closely the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents' "[Undergraduate and Graduate Degree Level Expectations](#)" and, as a set, they represent, the fundamental "outcomes" of a Queen's degree. We point out that inquiry-based learning is already a significant objective of most undergraduate programs and is standard fare in graduate curricula where the intent is to develop the tools to form new questions and to develop testable hypotheses to further our knowledge.

Queen's excellent array of academic support services, the [Queen's Learning Commons](#), the Library, the [Centre for Teaching and Learning](#), and the [Queen's University International Centre](#) (QUIC) can play, or continue to play, a significant supporting role in the design and delivery of this inquiry-based curriculum and in particular in the enhancement of these fundamental academic skills.

#### *Developing Communication Skills and Fostering Students as Writers*

All Queen's students should graduate with an ability to communicate their expertise effectively in speech and in writing. Communication skills thus need to be addressed early and receive continuing attention with writing requirements in every year of study. The capacities to read or listen with critical understanding and to reformulate are skills intimately connected with communication and learning, effective thinking, and academic integrity. Academic integrity needs to be fostered at its roots by enabling students in the communication skills and discursive conventions appropriate to their chosen fields of study. The intimate linkage between communication skills, learning, and academic integrity means that university students need to learn not just general communication skills but also disciplinary writing, i.e., the discursive/communicative practices appropriate to their specializations. To improve the quality of student writing at Queen's, the Writing Centre, the University's most important academic resource for teaching writing, will have to be able to enhance its service as both a centre for general writing instruction and as a facilitator for the distributed, discipline-specific, teaching of writing within departments.

Finally, our student body itself is a tremendous resource. Queen's students form an active and vital social community, and the inquiry-based approach with its collaborative nature will foster an equally lively academic community. This is all the more important in view of the increasing heterogeneity and diversity of our students.

An inquiry-based curriculum will also provide graduate students with opportunities to develop pedagogical and teaching skills as an essential part of their graduate training. Graduate students may thus also play an important role in teaching fundamental academic skills.

In an increasingly diverse and competitive world, the assessment and marking of student work requires creative rethinking as well.

As part of all this, instructors must carefully assess the material in their curricula and ensure that they have allowed their students enough time for inquiry and independent learning. Rather than produce

Queen's graduates who know less, we believe that our students will be better prepared to succeed in an increasingly competitive and globalized world.

We must also continue to foster the spirit of student service and extra-curricular activities on campus, and in particular, increase our efforts to link these to learning.

*Key Recommendations:*

1. That Queen's make the teaching and learning of the Fundamental Academic Skills a high priority. Though we hesitate to single out any particular skills for special mention, as the various components of FAS are closely integrated, most of the comments we have received, from a wide range of disciplines, concern critical thinking and inquiry on one hand, and writing on the other. Those three are of course intimately connected, but writing, both general and discipline-specific, stands at the culmination of any project or investigation, as we must have a way of setting down and sharing our thoughts and conclusions.
2. That departments and faculties articulate how and where in their curricula they systematically develop the Fundamental Academic Skills. [This would be a natural part of the [Queen's Quality Assurance Process \(QUQAPS\)](#)].
3. That Queen's develop a model for an expanded Queen's Learning Commons—incorporating its five partners, the Adaptive Technology Centre, IT Services, Learning Strategies Development, Queen's Library, and the Writing Centre—with an integrated approach to programming and profile. This model should take as its starting point the current QLC [strategic planning](#) process and focus on key academic skills with specialists in different fields, such as writing, numeracy, inquiry, information literacy, technology, collaborative learning, and adaptive technology. In particular, the Writing Centre's role and the possibilities for its enhancement should be taken under serious consideration.
4. That the University provide seed money for pilot projects that focus on developing the Fundamental Academic Skills.
5. That where appropriate, Queen's move to or continue the development of an inquiry-based model of learning.

## **II. Disciplinarity/Interdisciplinarity**

Recognizing both that most students attend university to learn about specific fields of knowledge, and that no area of knowledge operates in a vacuum, we believe that the student learning experience should have a strong disciplinary focus as well as significant interdisciplinary encounters.

“Disciplinarity” refers to expertise in a discipline, including the understanding of methodology and the capacity to obtain, analyze, and employ specialized knowledge. Most students should gain disciplinarity, in this sense, within their selected programs or concentrations.

While useful distinctions have been made between multi-, cross-, trans-, and interdisciplinary approaches, we use “interdisciplinarity” loosely here to include all of these. “Interdisciplinarity”

designates an experience of investigating an issue or problem that relies on contributions from several disciplines, and that may be taught or mentored in a collaborative manner.

We have heard some concerns that placing greater emphasis on interdisciplinarity may be at the cost of disciplinary resources, time, or programs. In our understanding, interdisciplinarity supposes and depends upon disciplinarity, and we have no intention of recommending a “watering down” of specialized knowledge. But we suggest that students benefit from wider educational experiences and that an interdisciplinary experience can both contextualize and enrich the disciplinary.

Like Fundamental Academic Skills, disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity are foundational for successful careers and global citizenship. Since not all problems can be solved by discrete disciplines, students must learn to combine and coordinate diverse approaches, methods, and perspectives. Business organizations don't survive unless Sales, Marketing, Operations, Research and Development, Finance, and Human Resources all work together. Hospitals cannot function without the interaction of countless medical, psychological, legal, financial, and administrative disciplines. And so on. Queen's graduates will serve their society best if their disciplinary expertise has an interdisciplinary perspective.

*Key Recommendations:*

6. Queen's should promote interdisciplinarity (in its broadest sense) while ensuring that individual disciplines are not eroded.
7. Queen's should foster a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration in teaching and research by removing administrative, financial, and structural barriers to cross-listing of courses and team-teaching by two or more professors in different disciplines and by providing students with greater access to courses outside of their chosen fields.
8. Queen's should encourage inter-departmental cooperation and foster administrative creative will to enable a faculty member to teach or co-teach in another unit.
9. As a general rule, Queen's should recognize the value of the medial and the dual-concentration degree in its capacity to facilitate interdisciplinary learning.

Note: We acknowledge that medial and dual concentrations are exclusive to undergraduate programs. Moreover, cross-listing of courses is a frequent practice in graduate courses, co-teaching is not uncommon, and collaborative programs exist and flourish.

### **III. Reaching Beyond: Globalism, Diversity, and Inclusion at Queen's**

#### *Global Citizenship*

As a research-intensive university with strong undergraduate and graduate programs and professional schools, Queen's has a responsibility to provide learning and research programs that contribute to education for life in a global society. A Queen's education should impart to students an understanding of their place in a culturally, economically, and politically ever-changing world and empower them to participate in it in an informed and responsible manner. While Principal Woolf has suggested Energy and Environment, Global Human Health, and International Development as “possible institutional priorities,” Queen's also needs to recognize the central role that research and teaching in the arts and



humanities as well as language instruction have in making sense of human experience. Humanities research, with its historical, interpretive, and analytical methods, poses questions about common assumptions, uncovers new meanings, and finds new ways to understand human interactions. The University needs to ensure that science and professional students understand the social implications of their work in a global world and that arts and humanities students have the basics in science and numeracy to understand and make responsible use of technology and global natural resources and environments.

#### *Equity and Diversity*

A Queen's education should encourage appreciation of the diversity of cultures within Canada and the rest of the world, and foster respect for Indigenous Nations' knowledge, languages, and cultures. To ensure that academic planning provides the impetus for enhancing equity and inclusion, Queen's needs to adopt an expanded definition of "communities," taking into account Aboriginal communities, international communities, and the equity-seeking group members of Canadian society. Diversity cuts across many lines: race, gender, ethnicity, language, religion, (dis)ability, marital status, income, education, and sexual orientation. The institutional obligation to ensure that Aboriginal students are able to access higher education is rooted in Canadian settler-Aboriginal history and relationship and thus differs fundamentally from its responsibilities for other equity seeking groups in Canada.

#### *Internationalization at Home*

While Queen's already has a strong program of international mobility to strengthen global awareness and has succeeded in increasing the numbers of international students on campus and of linkages abroad, the APTF has been advised that student mobility and international collaboration are not the only ways in which Queen's must engage a changing world. "Internationalization at Home," as suggested by QUIC, adds another dimension to student mobility and the creation of linkages abroad: improving the international and intercultural dimension of the Queen's campus proper through a curriculum rich in international and domestic content and developing the intercultural communication competencies of faculty, staff, and students. Although internationalization and "Internationalization at Home" enhance diversity of ethnicity and race, it is important to keep in mind that Canada and the Queen's community are already multi-racial and multi-ethnic and are composed of other minorities as well. To quote from the Senate Educational Equity Committee (SEEC) Response to "Where Next?": "If international partnerships are to be meaningful and students to be prepared for international experience, they must be informed by an educated appreciation and knowledge of other languages, histories, cultures and their contributions to a shared modernity and humanity that allows our students to learn from others as well as to teach or assist." Global-mindedness is not just a prerequisite for meaningful internationalization; it is also its objective.

#### *The Importance of Language Learning*

At the beginning of the process, the APTF proposed a foreign language requirement for all undergraduate students. During our consultation we learned that such a requirement does not have sufficient undergraduate student and faculty support. We therefore decided not to pursue this issue any further. However, we strongly recommend that Queen's promote the importance of modern language

learning, the learning of ancient languages such as Latin, Greek, and Biblical Hebrew, and the learning of Aboriginal languages. All Canadian institutions of higher learning, particularly research-intensive universities, have the obligation to offer their students the opportunity to acquire knowledge in at least one language other than English and French. Language learning is critical to inquiry-based learning in the humanities and social sciences, and it contributes essentially to internationalizing the campus. Most importantly, it enables students to contribute effectively to a culturally, economically, and politically ever changing world.

#### *Diversification of Curricula and Integration of Indigenous Knowledge*

Despite the efforts made by individual departments, programs, and schools to diversify their curricula and enhance inclusivity, Queen's curricula continue to under-represent Africa, South Asia, East Asia, the Middle East/Islamic World, Latin America, and the Caribbean. In addition, adequate representation of Indigenous issues in curricula across campus needs to be a major objective. The University must take meaningful steps to raise consciousness of Indigenous issues across Canada and abroad. To become a national and global leader, Queen's needs to enter into an equal partnership with the Aboriginal Community, recognize Aboriginal history, culture, and ways of knowing as educational core competencies for all students, and make Queen's a welcoming place where Indigenous values and knowledge are respected. To integrate Indigenous knowledge meaningfully, the University needs to promote the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal students and to examine ways to increase their participation in degree programs and activities across campus.

#### *Local Globalism*

It is in this spirit that Queen's also needs to foster local globalism, including responsible engagement and equal partnerships with the Queen's, Kingston, and other communities in Ontario and in Canada. To be able to participate internationally, students need to develop "local-mindedness" first. Innovative community and place-based learning, increased emphasis on Field Studies, and community volunteer opportunities will enhance the pro-diversity approach to teaching and learning. Through engagements of these kinds, Queen's students will learn much about cultural diversity while strengthening Queen's relationship with its regional communities.

#### *Key Recommendations:*

10. Queen's should develop an equal partnership with Indigenous and Aboriginal Communities by making the Aboriginal Council an integral part of the Queen's decision making structure.
11. Queen's should make the recruitment of Aboriginal students, faculty, and staff a priority, establish an Endowed Research Chair in Aboriginal Studies, and create an Aboriginal Studies Certificate, which might develop into an Indigenous Studies Program.
12. Queen's should consider the QUIC arguments for "internationalization at home" in order to improve the intercultural dimension of the Queen's campus proper.
13. Queen's should enhance the integration of visa students and optimize learning experiences that domestic students gain from international exchanges.
14. Queen's should promote the importance of foreign language learning as both a relevant academic and employment skill.

15. Queen's should follow the SEEC's recommendation to define a clear set of "core educational competencies" for all undergraduate students around "the interplay of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, ability, and class in a changing society and economy" and include Indigenous history, culture, and methodologies in all appropriate courses.
16. Queen's should continue in its effort to attract and engage women students in science and engineering and to create the environment and conditions that would make the traditionally male-dominated disciplines more accessible and attractive for female students.

#### **IV. Health, Wellness, and Community**

The first requisite for students to develop fundamental academic skills, disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge, and a capacity for global citizenship is a safe, supportive, inclusive, and engaging community. Without an environment that fosters inclusive community values, students, staff, and faculty will never be able to perform to the best of their abilities, will not take proper advantage of the academic experiences available in the University, and cannot contribute their own unique perspectives and innovation to Queen's.

##### *Safety*

A university campus should combine the safety of a home with the stimulation of a learning community. It should be a space where students always feel safe, whether to study or relax on their own, or to interact with others. It should be a space where ideas, controversial or otherwise, can be discussed without fear of censorship or reprisal. This encompasses not only the campus but also the classroom, residences, and the surrounding areas where students, faculty, and staff interact. Queen's must make every effort to eliminate all discrimination, violence, and harassment on campus.

##### *Health & Support*

Queen's campus must also provide the support, formal and otherwise, that students need outside of the classroom. The tragic loss of three students last academic year has brought this urgent need to the forefront of our entire community's awareness. The response within the Queen's community has been laudable. Health, Counselling and Disability Services (HCDS), has done its very best to ensure that, despite budget constraints, counseling and community outreach remain vibrant. This includes working to ensure that counseling wait times are kept low and continuing to find ways to ensure that students are aware of and make use of counseling services before problems become severe. We must build on this strength. Queen's should be a place where no one ever loses all hope or resorts to extreme actions because they believe there is no other choice. Ensuring this requires a combination of formal and informal measures, including consistent and compassionate policies for students with disabilities that have negatively affected their academic records.

##### *Diversity, Inclusivity, and Social Justice*

Various sorts of planning projects at Queen's have sought to identify "the Queen's experience" and expand upon what makes Queen's unique or special. But it is also necessary to address the aspects of Queen's identity that may work against inclusivity. Much work, such as the report of the Diversity and

Equity Task Force, initiatives by Student Services, as well as the work of the equity groups of the AMS and SGPS, has been done in recent years to investigate the ways in which Queen's culture and community has excluded particular groups and individuals. It is essential — as an institution devoted to creating responsible global citizens — that Queen's be a community from which all can benefit and to which all can contribute. No member of the Queen's community should feel excluded from the university or alienated on its campus. This should include a particular focus on the inclusion of Indigenous students and groups on campus, a group that has expressed particular feelings of exclusion and invisibility.

#### *Women Working in Academe*

A number of inequities continue to affect the academic success and health of women faculty and that of their (female) students at Canadian universities and at Queen's. While women's representation in Canadian academe has been increasing over the last few decades, the increase has not been uniform at all ranks of appointment and across all fields of instruction. Women are also underrepresented in academic leadership positions. In addition, women's median salaries remain below those of their male colleagues. The careers of women academics are also affected by the fact that the dominant university culture continues to be male defined. Women have to negotiate a framework of traditional assumptions on which the university is built, and they often do not receive recognition for what Joan Eveline has called "glue work": "face-to-face collaboration in everyday workplace practices, much of it tacit and often informal, [which] involves skills of co-operation, facilitation and nurture, usually thought of as feminine". This includes mentoring and counseling of students.

#### *The Importance of Non-Academic Staff*

Our non-academic staff members perform vital roles in ensuring the smooth operations of the institution. Their work is often behind the scenes, but it is essential for effective communication between different layers of the University. In addition they are often the main point of contact for our students, both for academic and non-academic matters. In order to draw effectively on this experience and expertise, the University must make sure that they are active participants in implementing the Academic Plan and all important Queen's initiatives. We believe that Queen's would benefit from the creation of a strategic Human Resources plan that addresses issues such as workforce planning, career development, succession management, and training.

#### *Post-doctoral fellows*

Post-doctoral fellows are a highly talented fourth tier in the university staff hierarchy and over the past 10 years have become increasingly important components of a university's research and even its teaching enterprise. Queen's must continue to search for ways to bring them to campus and integrate them more formally into the university structure

*Key Recommendations:*

17. Queen's should continue to solicit feedback about how to make the campus more safe and welcoming, create strategies to deal with harassment of all forms in all areas on campus and ensure orientation programming around safety and anti-harassment are expanded.
18. Queen's should ensure that there is strong and well promoted academic, health, wellness, and financial support to help students get through persistent issues and unusually difficult periods. This includes both formal measures, but also helping students learn to take care of and support themselves and each other.
19. A university-wide equity plan, in consultation with student and administrative equity bodies, should be implemented. In addition, all departments and faculties on campus should be encouraged to develop their own equity committees and plans. This sort of structure will ensure that broad university plans are implemented at the departmental level, and that overall university planning remains sensitive to the needs and experiences of individual departments and faculties.
20. Queen's should move to create more formal space, programs, and areas of recognition for Aboriginal students, staff, and faculty on campus. This could include the addition of an Aboriginal cultural component to the convocation of Aboriginal students. Programs should be aimed both at improving the sense of Aboriginal community on campus, and also at creating more positive interaction between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students on campus.
21. Queen's should address the under-representation of women and members of other equity-seeking groups at the upper academic ranks and in academic leadership positions.
22. Queen's should create a strategic Human Resources plan that addresses issues such as workforce planning, career development, succession management, and training.

## **Pillar I: The student learning experience**

### **A. Teaching and Learning**

#### **1. Hallmarks of the student experience at Queen's**

We begin with what is of value to us all, faculty, students and staff, in the educational experience of our students.

*High academic challenge.* Students choose Queen's to be academically challenged. They come to engage in the analysis and discussion of important issues and problems that will challenge them deeply and foster their growth, so that they can find a place in the world where their knowledge and abilities will be needed. However, though the bar we set must be high, it is important that they be able to succeed. Given the highly competitive nature of their environment, it must be possible, with serious effort, for them to get "good marks," and we must make it clear what it is that they must do to obtain these.

*A strong sense of academic community.* Queen's has a legendary social and cultural community. We are positioned as well as any university in Canada to ensure that this functions as a strong effective academic community as well. Our academic pursuits are teaching, learning, and discovery. Different members of the community engage in all of these in different proportions. In particular, for the academic community to thrive, students should be given tasks of discovery and encouraged to teach one another, typically by simply collaborating. Faculty can do a lot to promote and facilitate such formal and informal scholarly activity among students.

*Reflective scholarship.* Rob Beamish, Queen's professor of Sociology, reports that he tells his first-year students at the beginning of the year that they have to learn to move, not more quickly, but more slowly. The point is that most of our students come from an already rushed and multi-tasked life with an expectation that university will be even fuller and more frantic with less reflective time. In fact the greatest gift you can be given (or in fact that you can give yourself!), when confronted with a new and challenging problem or task, is the time to think deeply, to consider the options and possibilities, and to experience the wonder of discovery. The main challenge for any research-intensive university is to provide more opportunities for professors and students to sit down together face-to-face.

*Student-teacher interaction.* No matter what, there never seems to be enough of individual student-teacher interaction. Certainly at some point in the learning process large lectures can work well. Referring to our discussion in the Appendix of the three stages of learning, this is the case in the first stage of "romance," when the problem or issue is defined or discussed or played with. Large lectures can also accomplish many of the goals of the third stage of "generalization" when the ideas and techniques are brought together and orchestrated. But in the second stage of "precision" when the students are struggling to get hold of the pieces and put them together with understanding, either individually or in small groups, student-instructor time is essential. This is particularly important when the student has submitted or presented a piece of work that needs the careful response of the teacher.

The need for small-group student-teacher interaction should prompt us to look critically at the many different ways in which faculty spend time, all the way from lecturing, to marking papers, or to coping with the many administrative tasks that seem to come along with teaching these days, and then making sure that time is well spent. It is this focus on "time well spent" which has led us to centre our curriculum discussion on inquiry.

## 2. An inquiry-based curriculum

“You learn by doing.” This is an assertion of Chris Knapper, Director Emeritus of the [Centre for Teaching and Learning](#). What Chris is describing is often called “active learning” and it is surely a significant component of effective student engagement. The question is how do we get there – how do we “activate” the student?

Inquiry has a central role to play in accomplishing this task. [Inquiry learning](#) begins with a question, a problem, an objective, a strategy to be formulated, a behaviour to be analyzed or explained, a complex system to be understood or taken apart, or put together, or, in the arts, the aesthetic capture of an experience. Inquiry learning fosters curiosity, creativity and cross-disciplinarity, and it develops the skills of the scholar. These include the ability to ask succinct, important questions, and to follow these up with an investigation of the problem at hand by what ever means are appropriate—the close reading of texts, the conduction of experiments or surveys, deductive reasoning, working with peers or with a mentor, and careful reflection on what has been found. Finally some creative outcome is produced for dissemination. [Summerlee and Murray \(2010\)](#) have demonstrated that students engaged in inquiry early in their university careers out perform their peers.

The process of student inquiry may result in different outcomes in different disciplines, but a standard pattern in the university is that some time is spent in a large “lecture” format which might be more or less interactive, depending on the material and the nature of the classroom, followed by time in small more intimate configurations such as the seminar, the tutorial, the workshop, the lab, or the performance. In these small sessions, the process is much less “scripted” than a traditional lecture and both instructor and student find the experience a creative challenge. The teacher has directions in which she wants the process to go, but student must be able to proceed without too heavy an instructional hand. Given the substantial heterogeneity among the students, this process works best with the possibility of some one-on-one contact between student and teacher, and the increases in student-faculty ratios we have been experiencing make this a challenge.

Lectures can play a valuable role in setting the inquiry up, in providing a “live” demonstration of the problem solving process, in working with ideas and arranging them on a larger canvas. Just as an apprentice painter “copies” the masters, so a student learns how to inquire by watching the process at work, and then attempting to undertake a similar investigation. An important aspect of teaching is modeling.

As part of all this, instructors must carefully assess the material in their curricula and ensure that they have allowed their students enough time for inquiry and independent learning. Rather than produce Queen's graduates who know less, we believe that our students will be better prepared to succeed in an increasingly competitive and globalized world.

*Student interactions.* A certain amount of the assistance and feedback needed by students can be provided by students in the same program who are more senior, or by other students in the same course. Much of this happens automatically as students work together on problems, particularly if a strong sense of community has been established in the course. The instructor can play an additional role in promoting and enabling this form of collaboration and interaction. [Summerlee and Murray \(2010\)](#) found that students who were involved in inquiry-based learning pilots developed positive peer interactions (also called learning communities) that served them throughout their academic careers.

### 3. Fundamental academic skills

*Imagine that there is a tract of overgrown land and you have been given the job of preparing it for new seed. You have two weeks until the rains come. It is a privilege to have been given this significant task.*

*You have been given a set of tools to work with. But as you begin, with high expectations, you find that the tools do not measure up to the challenge of the land. The hoes are not sharp, the pitchfork blades bend in the hard ground and the shovel handles break. As the first week comes to an end your despair and frustration mount. The worst of it is that you blame yourself, because no one has told you that somewhere there are better tools, shaper blades, thicker steel, stronger handles. In fact you could even build them yourself. The materials are at hand.*

The tools we refer to here are a set of academic skills that are fundamental to the learning process. They include:

- critical reading
- effective writing and communication
- numeracy
- [inquiry](#)
- critical thinking
- problem solving
- [information literacy](#)
- [academic integrity](#)
- effective collaboration
- intercultural literacy

The development of these skills, which are intricately interconnected, lies at the heart of the academic enterprise. Indeed they fit closely the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents' "[Undergraduate and Graduate Degree Level Expectations](#)" and, as a set, they represent the fundamental "outcomes" of a Queen's degree.

How are these learning skills to be developed and enriched? This question poses a challenge particularly in large courses with limited TA budgets. There are, however, teaching strategies which can make a positive contribution in this direction. One of these is peer teaching. Our students are all high achievers, but in different ways and some are much better at thinking clearly, organizing their thoughts and writing than are others. Thus serious and responsible small group work can accomplish a great deal, especially if this is set up well and given some supervision. Indeed, the instructor of the course can play a significant role in facilitating this. However it must again be pointed out that this cannot be expected to apply equally in all disciplines.

Because any training in academic skills requires much time and expertise, many courses will have too full an agenda to focus on them at all closely, and thus, in practice, this objective will be concentrated in a few specialist courses. It will be up to individual disciplines to decide just when this should occur. Some departments might want to do this by running a special third-year seminar course as an important prelude to a seminar focus in the fourth year. Others might feel that this should happen in the first year.

Much of our discussion in the Task Force was indeed focused on first year. Since these academic skills are essential for effective learning, it would seem to be important that they be emphasized in the first year, so that they can have an impact on the student's entire learning trajectory. An idea we talked about throughout our academic planning deliberations is the creation of a special first-year interdisciplinary course focused on academic skills, but active and lively in a way that would make it a "transformative"



experience for the students that brings them face to face with the true nature of the research university. However, while some disciplines (and faculty and students) applauded this idea, others were not enthusiastic and suggested that students in first year were not “ready” and needed the time to prepare properly for more specialized courses. We now feel that it is better to let different disciplines mount pilot programs of different kinds to discover the best platform and timing to focus on this set of academic skills.

We do point out that the two professional undergraduate Faculties are already well on their way to promoting their own brand of academic skill. In the Applied Science and Engineering Faculty, these lie at the core of the objectives of the APSC 100/200/300 series and similar programs are found in the School of Business.

#### **4. The critical role of academic support—the Learning Commons, the Library, the Centre for Teaching and Learning and the International Centre.**

While all academic skills need to be woven into program curricula, many of the components of this academic skill set require additional intensive expert face-to-face interactions. The experience of the Writing Centre makes it clear that this is true of effective writing, but it is also the case also for inquiry, numeracy and information literacy. Our academic support services, particularly the Learning Commons, the Library and the Centre for Teaching and Learning must play a significant role in this, in focused interactions with the students, either individually or as part of the delivery of a course, in the training of TAs and even faculty.

##### *The Queen's Learning Commons*

Queen's has an extensive support network for student learning. Some of this is *local* and is housed in help centres or resource centres within departments. But there is also a central university service—the [Queen's Learning Commons](#) (QLC), and we focus on that here. The reason for this particular focus is that many of the components of academic skill are quite specialized and are integrated in a way that many discipline specific tutors might not realize. For example a student who is unable to make progress with an assignment might clearly exhibit inadequate *writing* skills whereas the real problem might be a complex mix of poor skills of writing, inquiry and critical thinking. The QLC staff understands this close interrelatedness very well.

QLC is a hub coordinating its five partners – the Adaptive Technology Centre, IT Services, Learning Strategies Development, Queen's Library, and the Writing Centre. It also hosts the highly successful [Inquiry@Queen's](#) program. Through these services, it provides resources, workshops, in-class seminars, and one-on-one professional consultations for students who need to enhance or develop their learning skills. Foremost among these resources are personnel—staff members who specialize in student needs of different kinds, and students themselves who provide peer mentoring.

Currently staff shortages limit the capacity of the QLC to meet the needs of all the students who come to it for help. In our view, the *real* need for the services they offer is greater than this apparent demand, in fact much greater. This is clear from student and faculty response to a comprehensive QLC survey conducted in April 2011. This was also the clear message received by the Task Force at a Town Hall on Writing and from consultations with the staff of the Writing Centre, both held in March 2011. Students with poor academic skills of one kind or often fail to recognize the real nature of the problem. In addition, they might think (wrongly) that QLC is essentially a remedial service and not for them or are simply too shy or hesitant to “take the step.”

We believe that an expanded and fully integrated QLC will be a critical component of our objective to realize a true inquiry-based curriculum. This of course will require that QLC be integrated with the work of the academic departments. That is it must be able to step into the centre of the first-year curriculum working in partnership with the relevant departments and faculty.

We recommend that Queen's develop a model for an expanded QLC with an integrated approach to programming and profile. This model should take as its starting point the current QLC [strategic planning](#) process and focus on key academic skills with specialists in different fields, such as writing, numeracy, inquiry, information literacy, technology, collaborative learning, and adaptive technology. As part of the numeracy specialty, a statistical consulting service, particularly to serve senior undergraduates, graduate students and post-doctoral fellows, would be a much needed addition.

#### *Transforming space into place*

The physical learning environment found in the Queen's Library's five facilities serve very well our call for open learning space where different types of interaction (with books, with peers, with faculty, with the web) can be found. Not surprisingly these spaces are heavily used. The rapid increase in the development of secure online and print archives will soon allow us to plan for more such space. In many ways, these many types of open space provide a model of the learning environment we imagine being realized throughout the campus, in all aspects of our teaching and learning enterprise.

#### *The Centre for Teaching and Learning*

The [Centre for Teaching and Learning](#) (CTL) provides teaching support for faculty and students and does this through a variety of programs, workshops, special purpose courses and on-line resources. The programs are of high quality and certainly meet the needs of those who seek them out. Associated with the centre is IT Services' [Emerging Technology Centre](#) (ETC) with staff who focus on the increasingly central role technology plays in the delivery of our courses. Notable among these are Moodle and resources for online delivery systems and lecture capture. The challenges we currently face in offering a viable inquiry-based curriculum structure will require transformed pedagogies and new conceptualizations for teacher, student and TA, and in this, the CTL will be needed to play a critical role.

#### *The International Centre*

The [Queen's University International Centre](#) (QUIC) is a support service for all members of the Queen's community and through its activities promotes an internationally informed and cross-culturally sensitive learning environment. It provides a wide range of services both for international students arriving at Queen's and for students who are about to go forth to other parts of the world to study or to work.

### **5. Assessment and marking**

A significant component our work, as a university, is the assessment of the quality of our students' work. The results of this assessment can have a significant effect on the lives of our students. It might even be fair to say that marks drive much of student learning. For this reason, if we wish to accomplish our learning objectives, the assessment procedures should provide a measure of how well these objectives have been met.

Thus, in an inquiry-based curriculum, our assessment should be inquiry-based. The problem is that such assessment is labour intensive, requiring time and expertise.

In the sciences, while there is increasing attention paid to inquiry-based learning, there is also an increased reliance on multiple-choice tests and online quizzes. Such tests certainly have their uses—they measure technical proficiency and that is a basic prerequisite for conceptual mastery in the discipline.

But higher order thinking processes can only be measured with more subtle and complex (and expensive) evaluation.

There seems to be a high correlation between technical proficiency and higher order conceptual skills, so that in measuring the first we do a reasonable job of measuring the second. However, if marks really do drive learning, an inquiry-based test will give students a clear message that inquiry is to be taken seriously.

We recommend that the University look critically and imaginatively at the question of student assessment perhaps mounting some pilot projects in which different approaches are tried. To this end, we provide a few assessment guidelines. These are offered, not as mandates, but as possibilities that units might consider in the periodic redesign of their assessment structures.

- Not all assessment needs to affect student “marks,” i.e., data that is carried onto the student transcript.
- Suppose that *early* assessment did *not* affect student marks. Suppose, for example, that first-year marks never appeared on the final student transcript. It would be interesting to discover the effect of that on student attitudes and work habits in first year.
- Where possible, attention should be paid to the students’ overall workload, so that they have a reasonable chance to submit their “best work.”
- Consideration should be given to the use of pass-fail courses to encourage students to take a course outside their main area, or to experiment with a risky learning strategy.
- Consideration should be given to finding ways for a student to take a course at a “lower level” with a reduced workload. One approach, referred to in *Where Next?* as “credit-stacking,” would give reduced credit for such courses.
- Finally more radical departures from traditional approaches are being [discussed](#), for example, the possibility of taking a major examination when the student is ready, assessment through an authenticated portfolio of work.

## 6. The graduate program

In developing many of our general principles around student learning we have had the undergraduate program in mind, but most of these principles apply, often in a modified form, also to the graduate program. For example, academic skills are certainly fundamental to the graduate program. Most of our students have good mastery of some, such as inquiry and critical thinking, but others, such as effective writing, might need further attention.

Our graduate students have a wide range of career aspirations and goals, and it is the responsibility of departments to know what these might be and to tailor their program accordingly. The small size of most of our programs and the strength of our faculty should allow us to do this well. Some of our students go on to careers as intellectuals, academics, and professors and we currently prepare them well. Others will not spend their career in a research university, and may not work in academia at all. Thus their program requirements should allow and even encourage a wider, more interdisciplinary experience and a broader array of capacities and skills more suited to the needs of different working environments.

It is likely true that most of our PhD students will be engaged in some form of teaching in their careers, either in universities and colleges or in an industrial or business context, and so it is important that we give them relevant training and experience with different forms of teaching. In particular, if we imbue our graduate students with advanced versions of the fundamental academic skills and combine these with a strong emphasis on teaching and learning education, we not only gain a significant number of engaged educators who can benefit our undergraduate students, but also produce a rather valuable graduate. Think

what it could do for our recruitment of students and the image attached to our graduate degrees if we became the university that leads in teaching our graduate students to teach, while still providing a very strong base from which to innovate and contribute through research.

Finally, our graduate students provide an essential service in terms of marking and tutoring. The other side of this coin is that the TA work typically provides a significant component of their funding. However, we must pay attention to the balance of their work, between TA duties and research, and at the same time provide them with more creative tools for undergraduate teaching.

It is critical that this teaching work be properly supervised.

## 7. Student Service

Queen's has a strong reputation for university service, participation, and volunteering. Queen's students have opportunities to participate in everything from sports to student politics, from the arts to student clubs. These activities not only make Queen's a vibrant place, but can provide valuable learning experiences. Queen's must continue to encourage these opportunities while also doing a better job of formally and informally recognizing the role of student service in the learning process.

First, we must ensure that everyone on campus gets similar opportunities to get involved and serve. Second, we should make greater strides to extend this spirit of service off-campus, to the Kingston and neighbouring rural communities, and to other parts of Canada and the world. Third, as recommended in *Imagining the Future*, a greater attempt should be made to link service and learning. This could come from integrating topic-centered service into individual courses or curricula. A related idea is to offer non-credit service certificates.

## B. Developing Communication Skills and Fostering Students as Writers

All Queen's students should graduate with an ability to communicate their expertise effectively in speech and in writing.<sup>1</sup> The COU's Degree-Level Expectations, both Undergraduate and Graduate, mandate "communication skills" alongside expectations for knowledge.<sup>2</sup> It is important that communication skills be treated as more than another item in a list of outcomes, however, for in practice their relation to knowledge and expertise is integral. Effective communication is essential for the demonstration of knowledge and the performance of expertise. Still more, it is essential in many ways to the acquisition of knowledge in the first place: the capacities to read or listen with critical understanding and to reformulate are skills intimately connected with both communication and learning. As the APTF has been told more than once in its consultations, learning to write is learning to think.<sup>3</sup> It follows that the University should give communication skills priority, monitor them, foster their early enhancement, and

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<sup>1</sup> The consultative data considered for this section include online responses to Pillar I; minutes of the informal session of Senate, 17 Feb. 2011; minutes of the Town Hall on Writing, 7 Mar. 2011; minutes of the Writing Centre Forum of 25 Mar. 2011; "Enhancing Writing Instruction at Queen's — A Writing Centre Response," 1 April 2011; and the open letters on the teaching of writing posted on the [RAPB](#) in November 2010.

<sup>2</sup> For instance, the "Communication skills" expectation for an undergraduate honours degree is "The ability to communicate information, arguments, and analyses accurately and reliably, orally and in writing, to a range of audiences." UUDLEs and GDLEs were formulated by the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV). OCAV mandated that all Ontario universities adopt UUDLEs as of June 2008 (Queen's Senate Minutes, 21 May 2008, [http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/agendasminutes/May21\\_08.pdf](http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/agendasminutes/May21_08.pdf), p. 4). QUCAPs, approved by Queen's Senate in Nov. 2011, invokes both UUDLEs and GDLEs as standards for evaluating Queen's programs, curricula, and teaching (secs. 2.2.1, 4.2.1, 4.3.1, 4.3.4). For texts of both, see [QUQAPs](#), Appendix 1.

<sup>3</sup> Gabrielle McIntire, in the Writing Centre Forum, 1 April 2011; see also Reed Smith, *Learning to Write* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1948), p. x. Thanks to Doug Babington for bringing the latter to our attention.

be prepared to remediate them where necessary. At the Town Hall on Writing (7 Mar. 2011), Mary Louise Adams (Kinesiology) memorably proposed that Queen's should strive to be known as "the University you go to, to be produced as a writer." We endorse this suggestion in the belief that producing Queen's graduates "as writers" would be the surest sign of producing them as effective thinkers.

As an open letter from the Queen's Department of English has also emphasized, "Proper teaching of writing is well known to be central to safeguarding academic integrity":

Dr. Jim Lee, Academic Integrity Advisor to the Vice-Principal (Academic), cites "poor English-language writing skills, poorly developed critical thinking skills, and a lack of knowledge and training about proper citation practices in academic work" among the contributing factors to departures from academic integrity.[5] And "academic integrity," he observes elsewhere, "is at the heart of the university's mission, and the principles of AI form the basis of the academic standards and expectations to which all academic work is held, in both teaching and research." [6] [. . .] AI is best achieved not reactively, by policing infractions, but proactively, by teaching students proper research and composition methods.<sup>4</sup>

We endorse this view as well. We recommend that Queen's foster Academic Integrity at its roots by enabling its students in the communication skills and discursive conventions appropriate to their chosen fields of study.

We say "appropriate to their chosen fields" because the intimate linkage between communication skills, learning, and academic integrity means that university students need to learn not just general communication skills but also the discursive / communicative practices appropriate to their specializations. Chris Ferrall (Economics) laments the "prevalent attitude that one must first solve a problem, then 'write it up,'" and recommends "that students learn to integrate writing more fully into their thinking."<sup>5</sup> Such views are confirmed and elaborated in the pedagogical literature of "situated learning" and more specifically of "writing in the disciplines." As S.P. Norris and L.M. Phillips put it:

Reading and writing do not stand in a functional relationship with respect to science, as simply tools for the storage and transmission of science. Rather, the relationship is a constitutive one, wherein reading and writing are constitutive parts of science. Constitutive relationships define necessities because the constituents are essential elements of the whole . . . . Reading and writing are inextricably linked to the very nature and fabric of Science.<sup>6</sup>

For this reason, the "Initiation into a discourse community—enculturation—is a crucial event in an academic's career."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See <http://realacademicplanning.wordpress.com/2010/11/05/open-letter-twenty-professors-of-english-to-principal-woolf-and-dr-susan-cole-5-november-2010/>. The sources by Jim Lee are: "[Cultural influences can affect academic integrity.](#)" *Queen's Gazette*, 25 May 2009, and "[Raising awareness about academic integrity.](#)" *Queen's Gazette*, 8 September 2008.

<sup>5</sup> [Writing Centre Forum](#), 25 March 2011.

<sup>6</sup> "How literacy in its fundamental sense is central to scientific literacy," *Science Education* 87 (2003), 226; qtd. in Marilyn K. Florence and Larry D. Yore, "Learning to Write Like a Scientist: Coauthoring as an Enculturation Task," *Journal of Research in Science Teaching* 41.6 (2004), 638. See also Michael Carter, Miriam Ferzli, and Eric N. Wiebe, "Writing to Learn by Learning to Write in the Disciplines," *Journal of Business and Technical Communication* 21.3 (July 2007), 278-302.

<sup>7</sup> Florence and Yore 638.

Some of Queen's professional and other programs do currently teach disciplinary writing. First-year law students receive "training in legal research, legal writing and oral advocacy."<sup>8</sup> The School of Business has a "Communications and Professional Development Requirement" for its Bachelors in Commerce and takes "an integrated approach that includes a communications laboratory in first year, [and] a designated communications course in every year." All "students who entered the program before Fall 2009 . . . are required to pass a writing proficiency test."<sup>9</sup> The Faculty of Engineering and Applied Sciences requires that students pass an English Proficiency Test in addition to taking "a minimum of 36 AU's in Communications," and offers courses in "Engineering Communications" and "Technical Communication."<sup>10</sup> Finally, the Life Sciences program at Queen's lists "communication skills" among its core competencies: "the ability to communicate information, arguments, and analyses accurately and reliably, orally and in writing to a range of audiences."<sup>11</sup> But training in communication skills, let alone discipline-specific training, is not at present a general requirement at Queen's.

Beginning with its informal session in Senate in February 2011, the APTF has consulted widely on the propositions "that the performance or mastery of a discipline is largely coextensive with the ability to write in that discipline and that writing should therefore be taught in connection with disciplines."<sup>12</sup> Support for these propositions has been strong,<sup>13</sup> though some have argued for general writing courses at the first-year level in lieu of or in addition to discipline-specific training,<sup>14</sup> and still others worry that required first-year writing courses would infringe on time and resources needed for teaching disciplinary content.<sup>15</sup> Support for improving the teaching of writing in general has been practically unanimous.

The [Writing Centre](#), founded in 1986, is Queen's most important general resource for teaching writing. Operating on a small budget with (at present) a director, an administrative secretary, and about 37 part-time staff members (4 senior program coordinator/tutors, 5 adjunct instructors, 17 tutor/consultants, and 11 peer tutors), the Writing Centre offers six regular courses in writing (both on-campus and by correspondence) plus a non-credit graduate thesis course. One of its distance courses, WRIT 195\*, addresses disciplinary modes of writing, "from the business memorandum to the literary review," while its on-campus "Analytical Writing" course (WRIT 275\*) is interdisciplinary. Another of its courses, WRIT 235, "Writing in the Community," is threatened with discontinuation for budgetary reasons. The Writing Centre also holds about 3,000 one-on-one consultations for about 1,300 students (both graduate and undergraduate) yearly, organizes undergraduate peer-tutoring, and hosts a "[handouts](#)" webpage with links to over 40 advice documents on grammar, composition, and citation. As senior program coordinator Lori Vos notes, the Writing Centre can also "train TAs and advise instructors on

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<sup>8</sup> Faculty of Law, "First-Year Program" (<http://law.queensu.ca/prospectiveStudents/jdProgram/firstYear.html>). Josh Karton notes that "because Law is an intensively verbal discipline, Queen's Law students get three years of writing activities" ([Writing Centre Forum](#), 25 March 2011).

<sup>9</sup> Queen's School of Business, 2010-11 Calendar, <http://www.queensu.ca/calendars/business/Communications%20and%20Professional%20Development%20Requirement.html>.

<sup>10</sup> 2010-11 Calendar, [http://queensu.ca/calendars/appsci/Communications\\_Courses.html](http://queensu.ca/calendars/appsci/Communications_Courses.html). See also Brian Frank's comments in the Writing Centre Forum of 25 March. The Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board (CEAB) has identified communications amongst the 12 graduate outcomes to be assessed for all engineering programs.

<sup>11</sup> See "[Core competencies within Life Sciences](#)." Worth noting, however, is the School of Medicine's warning that the teaching of "communication skills" will suffer from the cutting of TA budgets (School of Medicine Response to *Where Next?*, p. 16).

<sup>12</sup> [APTF Take-away for Senate, 17 Feb. 2011](#).

<sup>13</sup> See APTF Take-away for Senate, 17 Feb. 2011, and the Town Hall of 7 Mar. 2011.

<sup>14</sup> See submissions by Craig Walker, 3 Mar. 2011, Ronald Weisman, 7 Mar. 2011, and others in the responses to [Pillar I](#).

<sup>15</sup> See, e.g., the [Town Hall on the Undergraduate Academic Experience, 10 Mar. 2011](#), and comments by Peter Taylor in the Writing Centre consultation (1 April 2011)

how to teach writing and how to integrate writing assignments in their curricula,” but “departments and professors need to be more aware of the Writing Centre so they can collaborate better.”<sup>16</sup> In sum, the Writing Centre functions both as an instructional “centre” and as promoter-facilitator of more distributed, discipline-specific training within departments. Both its strengths and its limitations in the latter role were illustrated by the two-hour Writing Centre Forum held in March 2011: it was an excellent and inspiring session featuring presentations from faculty in six disciplines, but it is not a regular event, and only about 35 students and faculty attended. Asked in early April if the Writing Centre would have the resources to handle an increase in demand associated with a ramping-up of writing-intensive courses at Queen’s, its senior personnel responded that they are already stretched. A good idea that arose in our consultation is that academic departments each designate a Writing Centre liaison to enhance communication with faculty and raise consciousness of writing issues and existing resources within departments.<sup>17</sup> We endorse this proposal and recommend, further, that Queen’s take the Writing Centre seriously as an essential academic resource and investigate options for its enhancement both as a centre for general writing instruction (through both courses and consultations) and as a facilitator for the distributed, discipline-specific, teaching of writing within departments.

The APTF has also discussed the idea of requiring students to take writing diagnostics at admission and/or graduation, for several possible purposes: (a) to identify which students need what level or kinds of instruction or, conversely, which students might be qualified to serve as peer tutors, (b) to alert the students themselves to specific needs for improvement, and (c) more generally to signify the institution’s seriousness about requiring proficiency in writing and communication. But the APTF also had reservations about recommending diagnostics, given the probable cost and difficulty of implementation and the question of efficacy. If diagnostics merely confirm what is already known—i.e., that the vast majority of incoming students need help developing their communication skills—scarce resources might be better spent directly on writing courses (which can include their own diagnostics). Nevertheless, we do recommend that the university investigate this option for the purposes cited above. A diagnostic designed to advise and motivate students about their writing needs could conceivably improve efficiency if wisely combined with resources for self-help or targeted consultative instruction. The University of Waterloo has an [English Language Proficiency Requirement](#) with a diagnostic essay exam administered three times a year that appears to function primarily as a mechanism to motivate students to seek help for any writing difficulties. It directs students who fail to consult with the Waterloo Writing Centre, and also has alternative provisions for ESL students. We recommend that Queen’s explore the costs and benefits of this and/or of similar programs.<sup>18</sup> Since graduate/professional students are generally assumed to have achieved proficiency in communications but in some cases have not, and since they are frequently employed as TAs, Queen’s should also explore the advisability of writing diagnostics specifically for incoming graduate/professional students.

While there is strong consensus that Queen’s students need considerable help in developing communication skills,<sup>19</sup> the range of suggestions about how to provide it is broad rather than conclusive.

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<sup>16</sup> [Town Hall on Writing](#), 7 Mar. 2011. Testimony from students at the same Town Hall suggests that the Writing Centre should be more widely known among students as well.

<sup>17</sup> APTF Consultation with the Writing Centre, 1 April 2011.

<sup>18</sup> Queen’s Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science has had a “Written English Proficiency” diagnostic for about a decade (see [http://queensu.ca/calendars/appsci/Regulation\\_15\\_Written\\_English\\_Proficiency.html](http://queensu.ca/calendars/appsci/Regulation_15_Written_English_Proficiency.html)). No remedial action is specified in this Regulation, but see note [10] above.

<sup>19</sup> See especially Frank Burke’s “[Open Letter](#)” on Writing, 17 Nov. 2010. Don Drummond observes of current university graduates: “they have one glaring weakness. They struggle to write,” and he adds: “I really believe this difficulty in writing goes back to the learning environment. It starts with a weakness in K-12 and it is not being addressed in university. Of course, universities will argue this is an unfortunate by-product of inadequate funding. But it must be acknowledged to a degree it also reflects resource allocation decisions” (5-6).

Mindful of the variance both in the community's suggestions and in the needs and operations of diverse units at Queen's, we offer the following recommendations.

**Key Recommendations:**

1. That Queen's make the teaching and learning of the Fundamental Academic Skills a high priority. Though we hesitate to single out any particular skills for special mention, as the various components of FAS are closely integrated, most of the comments we have received, from a wide range of disciplines, concern critical thinking and inquiry on one hand, and writing on the other. Those three are of course intimately connected, but writing, both general and discipline-specific, stands at the culmination of any project or investigation, as we must have a way of setting down and sharing our thoughts and conclusions.
2. That departments and faculties articulate how and where in their curricula they systematically develop the Fundamental Academic Skills. [This would be a natural part of the [Queen's Quality Assurance Process \(QUQAPS\)](#)].
3. That Queen's develop a model for an expanded Queen's Learning Commons—incorporating its five partners, the Adaptive Technology Centre, IT Services, Learning Strategies Development, Queen's Library, and the Writing Centre—with an integrated approach to programming and profile. This model should take as its starting point the current QLC [strategic planning](#) process and focus on key academic skills with specialists in different fields, such as writing, numeracy, inquiry, information literacy, technology, collaborative learning, and adaptive technology. In particular, the Writing Centre's role and the possibilities for its enhancement should be taken under serious consideration.
4. That the University provides seed money for pilot projects that focus on developing the Fundamental Academic Skills.
5. That where appropriate, Queen's move to or continue the development of an inquiry-based model of learning.



## **Appendix to Pillar I: The teacher in an inquiry-based classroom**

A classical analysis of learning identifies three phases or stages. A classic exposition of these is found in A.N. Whitehead's 1922 essay *The rhythm of education*. Whitehead identifies the three stages as Romance (motivation, lighting the fire), Precision (the highly focused intensive job of gathering resources, developing technique, and organizing ideas) and Generalization (making connections, getting the big picture, moving to a higher level of abstraction). The idea is that all learning follows these cycles (more or less) but with many different periods. There is a dominant cycle which lasts a life-time, from child, to youth, to adult, but within this, there are myriad smaller cycles of different periods swirling like eddies in a fast-flowing stream.

The delivery of an inquiry-based curriculum can be nicely analyzed in terms of these stages. Depending on the material, the inquiry might last a few weeks, a single week, a single class, or there might be several subproblems within each meeting.

Stage 1 (Romance) is the introduction of the problem, the mystery, the quest. Motivation is the dominant mood here but it is also important to get the students on their way, to set the context, play with the problem a bit (some blind alleys?) and put enough clothes on the issues that the students can see how to proceed. Teaching is modeling and Whitehead himself was keen on the image of the professor struggling with a problem in front of the class.

Stage 2 (Precision) is the intensive student interaction with the problem or task, and it requires a delicate dance between the teacher and the student. The problem, or one like it, will be connected to the scholarship of the discipline and a body of knowledge will have grown up around it, and indeed one of the objectives of the course (no doubt the reason the problem was chosen) will be for the students to gain some mastery around those ideas and techniques. Certainly we cannot expect the students to reconstruct much of that body of knowledge on their own, so the teacher has to find a way to put it before them at the right moment, perhaps through a process of guided discovery, always warning of the dangers of uncritical acceptance of any form of knowledge. This can be a significant and creative pedagogical challenge, particularly in a large class, but it's important to think of the classroom as the launching pad for learning that extends well beyond its walls.

Much of what happens at this stage is student-driven and on a class level, the outcome is apt to be disorganized and chaotic. This can be moderated by a certain amount of teacher-led pacing so that different working groups reach certain milestones (more or less) at certain times. But to allay student anxiety that they have learned what they are "supposed to learn," it is important to have somewhere a coherent account of the results, particularly those that are "needed for the exam."

Stage 3 (Generalization) arrives when the inquiry or task is more or less completed. The instructor's job at this point is to summarize the journey, draw the conclusions together, highlight the ideas and techniques, and relate the new growth to the larger forest.

This 3-stage curriculum structure has a lot to say about (and learn from) the design of classrooms and lecture theatres, and different stages often work best in different types of space. On the whole, stages 1 and 3 can work well in a formal lecture setting whereas stage 2 thrives in an open interactive space where students and instructors can move around. One standard approach combines large lectures (say one or two per week) with small more intensive seminars, tutorials or lab experiences, together with an array of easily accessed resources. This approach seems to require different types of space at different times. Another approach puts the class in a fixed multi-purpose interactive space which can serve all stages.

## Pillar II: Disciplinarity and Interdisciplinarity

“. . . we can seek to transform the disciplines, encourage communication between them or use them to create new intellectual configurations or alliances, but we can never entirely dispense with them as means of organizing knowledge. Interdisciplinarity could therefore be seen as a way of living with the disciplines more critically and self-consciously, recognizing that their most basic assumptions can always be challenged or reinvigorated by new ways of thinking from elsewhere. Interdisciplinary study represents, above all, a denaturalization of knowledge: it means that people working within established modes of thought have to be permanently aware of the intellectual and institutional constraints within which they are working, and open to different ways of structuring and representing their understanding of the world.”<sup>20</sup>

Interdisciplinarity has been prescribed for years—at Queen's and elsewhere—with good reason. It is prominent in the recommendations of both Principal Woolf's *Where Next?* and the Academic Writing Team's *Imagining the Future*.<sup>21</sup> With some qualifications we endorse these recommendations. But we need to be clear about what we are recommending when we recommend “interdisciplinarity,” how it relates to disciplinarity, how it emerges and develops, how it can be fostered, and why we should want it.

### Definitions

“Interdisciplinarity” is a slippery term.<sup>22</sup> It has a precise definition but is also used loosely to denote anything from disciplinary variety to anti-disciplinarity. As Joe Moran has argued, “the value of the term [. . .] lies in its flexibility and indeterminacy” (14). To clarify what has been recommended for Queen's in the name of interdisciplinarity, we nevertheless begin with some definitions.

Drawing on a longer account by Julie Thompson Klein, Deborah DeZure has usefully defined interdisciplinary learning as

the synthesis of two or more disciplines, establishing a new level of discourse and integration of knowledge. It is a process for achieving an integrative synthesis that often begins with a problem, question, or issue. It is a means of solving problems and answering complex questions that cannot be satisfactorily addressed using single disciplinary approaches.<sup>23</sup>

DeZure then proceeds to distinguish the *interdisciplinary* from other metadisciplinary approaches:

This is in contrast to *multidisciplinary*, which is a process for providing a juxtaposition of disciplines that is additive, not integrative. The disciplinary perspectives are not changed, only contrasted. Team-taught courses in which faculty provide serial lectures are often multidisciplinary. *Transdisciplinary* approaches provide holistic schemes that subordinate disciplines, looking at the dynamics of whole systems, such as structuralism or Marxism. *Cross-disciplinary* methods view one discipline from the perspective of another, e.g., referring to examples of expressionism in literature in an art history class on expressionism. (*ibid.*)

In Queen's planning discussions, “interdisciplinarity” has been used for all of these things and others as well. Rather than quibble over terminology, we therefore defined the term “loosely” in

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<sup>20</sup> Joe Moran, *Interdisciplinarity*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Routledge, 2010), 180-81.

<sup>21</sup> *WN* 7; *IF* sec. 4.3 and goal 4.7.

<sup>22</sup> On the complexity and definition of “interdisciplinarity,” see Klein 1990, chs. 1-3; Austin et al.; DeZure; Moran 13-16.

<sup>23</sup> DeZure p. 1, quoting and paraphrasing Klein 1990, pp. 66, 188; on 66 Klein is herself summarizing a discussion by Erich Jantsch.

our consultations to designate “an experience of investigating an issue or problem that relies on contributions from several disciplines, and that may be taught or mentored in a collaborative manner” (Pillar II). DeZure’s mapping of the cognate terms will help us recognize semantic slippage, but the important points to be considered here remain (1) what Queen’s students and faculty want when they want “interdisciplinarity,” and (2) how the university can best satisfy those wants.

### What we want when we want “interdisciplinarity.”

One thing we clearly want is more freedom for disciplinary sampling and variety—more border passes. Daniel Woolf puts this best in *Where Next?* Under the rubric “Interdisciplinarity,” he states: “We need to find ways around or through departmental, faculty, and in some cases, university boundaries” (7). These “boundaries” or “barriers” are complaints of long standing at Queen’s. A SCAD Report of 1996 calls for greater “Interdisciplinary and Inter-Unit Cooperation” and recommends “That the University and its academic units facilitate interdisciplinary activity by eliminating administrative barriers to inter-Departmental and inter-Faculty activities”.<sup>24</sup> At the level of course-availability, at least, there is little evidence of progress on this front. Commerce students required to take at least 4.5 credits (old-style) in Arts and Science still complain of being unable to register for the courses that interest them.<sup>25</sup> A faculty member in English reports that her students lack access to upper-level courses in other disciplines, while her colleague in History notes that courses that should be cross-listed are not, and that her seminar on Chinese history therefore excludes the students who would be most interested in taking it.<sup>26</sup> Interdisciplinary Special Field Concentrations at Queen’s have recently been suspended because, due to departmental prerequisites, “students had difficulty taking courses in other departments.”<sup>27</sup> The Department of Political Studies warns that new constraints on teaching resources pose “[n]ew barriers for access to our courses by students in other departments.”<sup>28</sup> Environmental Studies complains of “the complexities of timetabling associated with interdisciplinarity” and of “the silos of Queen’s faculties and departments that impede collaboration, particularly when resources are scarce.”<sup>29</sup> Religious Studies writes in response to *Where Next?*: “We believe that the University must address structural barriers that stand in the way of true disciplinary [sic]. In particular, find a better measure of departmental performance than bums-in-seats: this discourages inter-departmental cooperation.”<sup>30</sup> Many more complaints of these kinds were voiced in our consultations.<sup>31</sup>

If these statements are representative, the “boundaries” or “barriers” problem appears to relate more to course-availability than to research (more about this below). For students choosing courses there are actually several barriers, closely related but distinct:

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<sup>24</sup> SCAD, “[Report on Principles and Priorities](#)” (Approved by Senate Jan. 1996), (Recommendation 11).

<sup>25</sup> APTF Consultation with Queen’s School of Business, 15 March 2011.

<sup>26</sup> Town Hall on Disciplinarity/Interdisciplinarity, 11 April 2011.

<sup>27</sup> SCAD, “Proposal for a Spanish Latin American Studies Minor,” [Senate Agenda for 28 April 2011, Appendix Cc](#), p. 36. In the same Senate Agenda, see also the SCAD “[Proposal for a Medieval Studies Minor](#).” In both cases a 5-credit minor is being introduced to replace a 14-credit Special Field Concentration, with cross-disciplinary barriers at issue in the suspension of both SPFs. This is clear evidence of the way in which cross-disciplinary barriers are limiting our potential to offer rich programs even where all of the resources are available on campus.

<sup>28</sup> Political Studies, Unit Response to *Where Next?*, ca. April 2010, p. 2; see also p. 14.

<sup>29</sup> Environmental Studies, Unit Response to *Where Next?*, ca. April 2010, p. 1. The same report also suggests a place where the boundaries are breached, in connection with graduate supervision in its MES program: “cross-appointed faculty [. . .] who interact with graduate students as co-supervisors or supervisory committee members . . . [have] provided us with a way to break down the barriers of existing university structures through graduate student experience.” (p. 2).

<sup>30</sup> Religious Studies, Unit Response to *Where Next?*, 19 April 2010, p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> See, further, comments by mark, David Veitch, Cassandra Frengopoulos, and others in response to [Pillar II](#).

1. Barriers to students in one concentration taking upper-level courses in another department, faculty, or school;
2. Barriers to cross-listing of courses between, e.g., History and Political Studies;
3. Barriers to the team-teaching of courses by two professors, especially from different units, to joint-offerings of courses by two or more units, and to other “forms of inter-departmental cooperation.”

Some of these are barriers merely to disciplinary variety in students’ programs, while others may be barriers to the development of intercultural or interdisciplinary courses. But they all remain serious impediments, frustrating the learning and teaching ambitions of both our students and our faculty.

In his brief for “Interdisciplinarity,” Principal Woolf not only anticipates these complaints but indicates their roots: “on the teaching side, we are much less successful at interdisciplinary initiatives because budgets are apportioned to departments. [ . . . ] It is tough for a department head trying to maintain courses to enable a faculty member to teach or co-teach in another unit” (WN 7).

We would underscore this explanation and print it in red. In particular, it needs to be emphasized that the problem does not necessarily lie in the “traditional departmental structures,”<sup>32</sup> or in “the silos of Queen’s faculties and departments” in themselves, but rather in the structure of budgetary allocation that encourages units to husband resources that sustain their core activities, “particularly when resources are scarce.”<sup>33</sup> To recognize this problem is not the same as finding the remedy, but it is important to recognize the distinction if we are to avoid throwing out the academic-discipline babies with the financial-accounting bathwater.

For, as many studies emphasize, disciplines are not the enemies but the complements—one might say the disciplinary parents—of interdisciplinarity. “The very idea of interdisciplinarity can only be understood in a disciplinary context,” writes Moran (ix). “Interdisciplinarity and specialization are parallel, mutually reinforcing strategies,” writes Klein; “The relationship between disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity is not a paradox but a productive tension characterized by complexity and hybridity.”<sup>34</sup> “[I]nterdisciplinarity,” writes DeZure, “is not a rejection of the disciplines. It is firmly rooted in them but offers a corrective to the dominance of disciplinary ways of knowing and specialization. [ . . . ] we need the depth and focus of disciplinary ways of knowing, but we also need interdisciplinarity to broaden the context and establish links to other ways of constructing knowledge. It is this dialectic between analysis and synthesis that provides the creative tension from which we will all benefit in a world in which crossing intellectual boundaries is increasingly the norm.”<sup>35</sup> For these reasons, our objective at Queen’s should be to promote interdisciplinarity (however this may be understood) *while and by* fostering the disciplines they “inter.”

In practical terms, this means that Queen’s might do well in this area by building upon strengths it has, and that its innovation should be less a matter of dissolving or amalgamating disciplinary departments than of sending more emissaries (both students and faculty) between them. What if two

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<sup>32</sup> Woolf, WN 7.

<sup>33</sup> Environmental Studies, Unit Response, p. 1 (as quoted above). It should be noted that this financial problem can only be exacerbated by the University’s recent shift in accounting by which faculty salaries are lined out to the Faculty rather than University accounts.

<sup>34</sup> Julie Thompson Klein, 2000, p. 7; qtd. Orr 46.

<sup>35</sup> DeZure 2.

departments traded a few faculty, as ball teams do players, for a year or two? Or what if Queen's financial accounting found ways to share resources more flexibly among its departments, so they did not have financial motives to guard core courses against students from other units? (see also note [13]). In many such cases it is not just interdisciplinarity that suffers: when commerce students cannot register for the history or philosophy courses that interest them, there is a loss in cultural "rounding" as well. A small reform that might enhance interdepartmental mixing would be assign offices more randomly, rather than put all English professors in one hall, Biologists in another: what else might develop if they were all mixed up and English talked in the hallways with Biology? Another remedy may lie in grading relief for students who would like to venture into far-flung disciplines but fear for their averages: what if they were allowed one or two pass-fail electives outside of their concentrations, or if their lowest mark in an outside course could be converted to pass-fail?<sup>36</sup>

The dynamic, "mutually reinforcing" relationship between disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity relates also to the doubts expressed by some as to whether interdisciplinarity can be legislated from above. The Academic Writing Team cautions against seeking to achieve interdisciplinarity "by creating an administrative structure in which to house it" (4.3, p. 24). Noting that interdisciplinary areas such as "law and economics" have evolved of their own accord, a professor of Economics advises: "The attempt . . . to tilt research in an interdisciplinary direction would be a serious mistake. My point is not that the number and boundaries of disciplines are fixed forever, but that change is a natural process within the academic environment and that a centrally-administered eugenics of disciplines would be counter-productive."<sup>37</sup> An Art professor offers a similar account:

Discipl[in]es such as the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology at the University of Toronto (originally a graduate institute but now an undergraduate programme as well) emerged as a result of students and scholars in the Sciences and Medicine becoming interested in History and Philosophy, and vice versa. A similar, but more recent case is the establishment of programmes in Environmental Studies from a phil[o]sophical and humanistic perspective. A number of students in Engineering become interested in pursuing architecture at the graduate level. Some are now enrolling in dual degrees, such as Engineering and Art History, to prepare for the M. Arch. . . .<sup>38</sup>

There is a fit between these accounts of interdisciplinary development and DeZure's view that it "often begins with a problem. . . . that cannot be satisfactorily addressed using single disciplinary approaches." Interdisciplinary ventures generally *grow out of* the disciplines in both senses of that phrase. If these accounts are correct, the university's ideal role is not to order interdisciplinarity from above but to provide the conditions in which it can emerge from below. One of these conditions is the health of disciplines, and another is the freedom of both faculty and students to move between them.<sup>39</sup>

Thus "interdisciplinarity" in the least precise sense of the term—as "flexibility" or disciplinary variety<sup>40</sup>—appears to be no less important than is interdisciplinarity in the more rigorous sense, since one produces the other. In this connection, the Queen's dual degrees—dual majors, major-minors, and medials alike—are all of value. The Queen's medial, which some have advised eliminating on the grounds that it is anomalous,<sup>41</sup> is particularly attractive, since medial students advance to upper-level

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<sup>36</sup> The allowance of two pass-fail credits was recommended for similar reasons by the Curriculum Review Working Group in its Draft Report of September 2000; see Recommendation 4, pp. 8-9.

<sup>37</sup> Dan Usher, Response to *Where Next?* (18 Feb. 2010), p. 1.

<sup>38</sup> Cathleen Hoeniger, response to Pillar II, 7 April 2011.

<sup>39</sup> See [Research Centres, Institutes and other Entities](#)

<sup>40</sup> See, for instance, comments on Pillar II for March 22.

<sup>41</sup> Curriculum Review Working Group, Draft Report of September 2000, Recommendation 2.

courses in both of their concentrations while still finding room for five credits in still other areas.<sup>42</sup> This is a place where Queen's should appreciate the strength in its distinctness rather than seek uniformity with other systems.

But if the mere experience of multiple disciplines is good, particularly for undergraduates, there is also a need, particularly for graduate students and researchers, for the more rigorous interdisciplinarity that integrates diverse disciplinary methods and perspectives. A graduate student, Andrea, expresses this need in response to Pillar II:

graduate students . . . experience interdisciplinarity in ways other than through course work. For instance, grad students may choose co-supervisors from different fields or may work with a research project that—as is increasingly common—spans several disciplines. These situations are easy to market as beneficial, innovative, and in line with dominant “progress” discourses; however, such endorsements obscure the seemingly irresolvable conflicts that can arise when attempting to work with divergent epistemological frameworks and/or methodological paradigms. As far as I am aware, very little research addresses these complications, and researchers in interdisciplinary teams are left to make compromises that can jeopardize the value of their work. If the university is going to tout interdisciplinarity as an ideal, then I would like to see some dedicated resources developed to help students and faculty navigate this largely unexplored terrain. I am suggesting rigorous engagement with this issue, not tokenistic and shallow advice. Perhaps the Centre for Teaching and Learning could be tasked with undertaking such a project. The bottom line is that it is irresponsible to encourage graduate students to engage in activities for which they lack the tools needed to pursue their research with integrity. [10 April 2011]

It is here that DeZure's distinctions between interdisciplinarity and other metadisciplinarity comes into play. The need for students to learn “to function within a number of knowledge frameworks” (*IF* 24) is real, but if mere multi-disciplinarity is important for the development of proper interdisciplinarity, it is also distinct from it. Queen's must take care to promote disciplinarity and multi-disciplinarity while also taking measures such as this student suggests to ensure that truly interdisciplinary efforts receive the guidance and support they require.<sup>43</sup>

Despite Queen's longstanding verbal support for interdisciplinarity, some faculty who have worked hard to advance it report that in reality, “students and faculty want specialization for credentials [. . .] There is not a lot of payoff within the academic community for interdisciplinary work, whether in respect or in money—so students learn to want disciplinarity. Most problems are global but there are few forums in which to discuss them.”<sup>44</sup> Principal Woolf himself voices a similar perception: “It is hard to synchronize undergraduate and graduate interdisciplinary programs with academic job markets that remain, for the most part, driven by traditional departmental structures” (*WN* 7). As both of these comments indicate, the problem lies partly in the way knowledge and inquiry are structured outside of Queen's, and partly in a conservatism inherent in student demand. Among the more difficult balances the academy must learn to strike is the balance between supporting modes of research and education that respond to the existing social context and have relatively assured “payoffs,” and truly fostering renewal.

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<sup>42</sup> See Comments on Pillar II by David Parker, Mar. 24; Mark Jones, Mar. 27; Cathleen Hoeniger, April 7. The comments by Parker and Jones suggest that Queen's medial is, in terms of contact hours, a rough equivalent of a dual major in the U.S.

<sup>43</sup> Andrea suggests that the CTL could help with this problem; in a separate discussion, Doug Babington suggests a role for the Learning Commons (Town Hall on Disciplinarity and Interdisciplinarity, 11 April 2011). The Library's online “[Research by Subject](#)” pages, which offer terrific guidance to many academic specializations, would do well to include a page dedicated to interdisciplinary approaches.

<sup>44</sup> Town Hall on Disciplinarity and Interdisciplinarity, 11 April 2011.

If the University itself cannot impose new approaches and methods from above, it is crucial that it support and promote them where they have begun to occur from below. At the very least, there needs to be a concerted effort to remove the barriers, discussed above, that have made extra-disciplinary sampling, cross-listing, and team-teaching difficult. But beyond that, the University can and should challenge or even gently pressure students to venture somewhat beyond the bounds of a safe, comfortable, or remunerative program.

It is with this in mind that the APTF has discussed the possibilities of introducing students to the issues of disciplinary and interdisciplinarity head-on and early, via a core requirement for a (loosely speaking) interdisciplinary half-year course in year 1 or 2—a team-taught course that would bring two disciplines to bear on a single theme or problem, such as environment, global warming, cultural diversity, water, war, diet, or exploration.<sup>45</sup> They could all be “myth and demystification” courses, teaching scholarly methods by emphasizing the gaps between popular conceptions and critical knowledge. But by bringing the two approaches together on one subject and in one classroom, they would also emphasize the limits of particular disciplinary approaches. Our consultations have elicited cautious interest in such a proposal, with concerns ranging from resources (how can one even imagine mounting such a course given the present constraints? or wouldn’t the resources devoted to this detract from disciplinary content we already lack the time and resources to cover?) to timing (wouldn’t it be better to teach such a course in year 2, once students have had time to learn about some disciplines through their first-year intros?).

**Key Recommendations:**

6. Queen’s should promote interdisciplinarity (in its broadest sense) while ensuring that individual disciplines are not eroded.
7. Queen’s should foster a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration in teaching and research by removing administrative, financial, and structural barriers to cross-listing of courses and team-teaching by two or more professors in different disciplines and by providing students with greater access to courses outside of their chosen fields.
8. Queen’s should encourage inter-departmental cooperation and foster administrative creative will to enable a faculty member to teach or co-teach in another unit.
9. As a general rule, Queen’s should recognize the value of the medial and the dual-concentration degree in its capacity to facilitate interdisciplinary learning.

Note: We acknowledge that medial and dual concentrations are exclusive to undergraduate programs. Moreover, cross-listing of courses is a frequent practice in graduate courses, co-teaching is not uncommon, and collaborative programs exist and flourish.

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<sup>45</sup> The DET specifically recommends a “pilot interdisciplinary course addressing equity, diversity, and social justice issues” (DET, “Engagement with Academic Planning: Curriculum and Research,” n.d. [ca winter 2011], p. 1). Religious Studies suggests: “The University should think about adopting team-taught, theme-based courses for the first-year experience (maximum 25 students per course)” (Religious Studies, Response to Where Next?, p. 3).

### **III: Reaching Beyond: Globalism, Diversity, and Inclusion at Queen's**

#### **1. Goals and Commitments**

As a research-intensive university with strong undergraduate and graduate programs and professional schools, Queen's has a responsibility to provide learning and research programs that contribute to education for life in a global society. And for more than a decade, it has promoted this ideal with slogans such as "preparing leaders and citizens for a global society."<sup>46</sup> To be prepared for our global society students must be aware both of their rights as individuals and of their collective responsibilities. A Queen's education should impart to students an understanding of their place in a culturally, economically, and politically ever-changing world and empower them to participate in it in an informed and responsible manner. It should encourage appreciation of the diversity of cultures within Canada and the rest of the world, and foster respect for Indigenous Nations' knowledge, languages, and cultures. To be able to participate internationally, students need to develop local-mindedness first. They need to understand how Aboriginal people lived in Canada before the settlers arrived. They need to work outwards from there, through the history of settler-Aboriginal interaction, which has shaped this nation, and on into Canada's contribution to and place in the wider world.<sup>47</sup>

At this moment in history, Canadian universities and colleges have a tremendous opportunity to prove themselves as true global leaders by providing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students with improved access to post-secondary education. As outgoing Auditor General Sheila Fraser observes in her June 2011 Status Report,<sup>48</sup> the living conditions on First Nation reserves continue to worsen, and the gap between First Nations access to post-secondary education and that of other segments of the population continues to grow. While one of five Canadians has a post-secondary degree, only one in thirty-three Aboriginal people do.<sup>49</sup> Aboriginal peoples are also the fastest growing segment of the Canadian population, an only partially realized potential in the work force. Post-secondary institutions across Canada have come to realize that improving access to education for Aboriginal youth and promoting retention of those who have already entered the system is not only a legal,<sup>50</sup> moral, and professional responsibility, but an economic imperative. As Don Drummond has pointed out, relatively modest investments in Aboriginal education today will save millions of dollars in the future.<sup>51</sup>

In *Where Next?* Principal Woolf envisions Energy and Environment, Global Human Health, and International Development among "possible institutional priorities" for Queen's (16). As he proposes, "committing our students and Queen's to making the world a better place will help boost our global profile." However, the University needs to recognize the central role that

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<sup>46</sup> The quoted phrase appears, for example, on the Dean of Arts and Science's letterhead. SCAD's "Report on Principles and Priorities," approved by Senate in January 1996, states: "By gaining a global perspective, Queen's graduates will obtain the skills and cultural understanding needed to thrive in the international environment."

<sup>47</sup> As suggested by Vice-Principal (Finance and Administration) Caroline Davis in her response to this draft.

<sup>48</sup> See [http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl\\_oag\\_201106\\_04\\_e\\_35372.html#hd3a](http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag_201106_04_e_35372.html#hd3a)

<sup>49</sup> This observation was made by Roberta Jamieson, President and CEO, National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation (NAAF) in her 13 June presentation at the Queen's University Conference on Indigenous Issues in Post-Secondary Education: Best Practices."

<sup>50</sup> The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, particularly its preamble and articles 13, 14, and 15 should be used as a reference guide.

<sup>51</sup> "Indigenous Issues in Post-Secondary Education: Building on Best Practices," 12-14 June 2011.



research and teaching in the arts and humanities have in making sense of human experience. Humanities research, with its historical, interpretive, and analytical methods, poses questions about common assumptions, uncovers new meanings, and finds new ways to understand human interactions, and these functions are essential in developing a spirit of equal partnership. Inquiry practiced in the humanities helps us to understand the past, and in turn, to prepare for the future.<sup>52</sup> The University needs also to ensure that science and professional students understand the social implications of their work in a global world and that arts and humanities students have the basics in science and numeracy to understand and make responsible use of technology and global natural resources and environments. Aboriginal people will have an important role to play in all these areas.

In their transition to an inclusive academy that strives for inclusive excellence, most post-secondary institutions struggle with the phenomenon of “islands of innovations with too little influence on institutional structures”:

“Although we know meaningful engagement with diversity benefits students educationally, little has been done to create a comprehensive framework for excellence that incorporates diversity at its core. Similarly, new research about how to help diverse and differentially prepared students succeed has not yet provoked widespread change across higher education. And diversity is not typically a focus at any level in ‘quality improvement’ efforts. As a result, education leaders routinely work on diversity initiatives within one committee on campus and work on strengthening the quality of the educational experience within another. This disconnect serves students – and all of education – poorly.”<sup>53</sup>

In their Response to “Where Next?,” the Human Rights and Equity Offices emphasize the importance of diversity and equality: “Unless we understand the role that diversity of perspectives, interests, abilities and worldviews play in shaping the world and the fabric of Canadian and global society, and unless we embrace this role within our enterprise, we will not be able to achieve the stated goal of being the best among global players no matter what the financial or political conditions of the day are.”<sup>54</sup> The Human Rights and Equity Offices are uniquely positioned to assist the University in the development of processes to ensure that academic planning provides the impetus for enhancing equity and inclusion. The APTF endorses their recommendation for an expanded definition of “communities,” “taking into account Aboriginal and First Nations communities, international communities, and the equity-seeking group members of Canadian society.”<sup>55</sup> Diversity cuts across many lines: race, gender, ethnicity, language, religion, (dis)ability, marital status, income, education, and sexual orientation, among others.

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<sup>52</sup> In its Response to “Where Next?,” the Department of Spanish and Italian, for example, expresses its concern about the apparent marginalization of the Humanities in this document: “We find it worrisome that in the ‘Where Next’ document under the title ‘Some Possible Institutional Priorities’ nowhere is there any mention of the Humanities. Although the Principal states that this is only a starting point, we find that the omission of any reference to the Humanities may be an indication of where the Humanities stand in the overall discussion. One should also note that the Humanities at Queen’s have been and continue to be one of the university’s major strengths and that most departments in the Humanities have, for some time now, engaged in interdisciplinary studies and have begun key innovative processes,” p.4.

<sup>53</sup> *Making Excellence Inclusive: Preparing Students and Campuses for an Era of Greater Expectations: Toward a Model of Inclusive Excellence and Change in Postsecondary Institutions*. Damon A. Williams et al. Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU), 2005: vii.

<sup>54</sup> The Human Rights and Equity Offices Response to “Where Next?,” p 1.

<sup>55</sup> The Human Rights and Equity Offices Response to “Where Next?,” pp. 1-2.

## 2. Internationalization and “Internationalization at Home”<sup>56</sup>

Principal Woolf points to some of Queen's existing international activities and resources, including the Bader International Studies Centre (BISC) at Herstmonceux Castle and international programs in Business, Law, and Global Development Studies.<sup>57</sup> As the APTF has learned from individual unit responses to “Where Next?,” there is not a single academic unit on campus that does not already engage in internationalization through individual faculty members' research, research collaborations, student and/or faculty exchanges, and international programs. To cite just a few examples: the School of Urban and Regional Planning has an enviable track-record in [its] China projects and its Ambassadors' Forum. SURP also has an active student exchange program with Fudan University. The School is the “implementing agent” of the Memorandum of Understanding between the University and the Ministry of Land and Resources, China.<sup>58</sup> SURP also developed a new course module on “Planning for Multiculturalism” in 2008/09. DEVS (with administrative assistance from the IPO and support from faculty members in History) has a successful “Semester in Shanghai” program, which sends up to fifteen Queen's students to Fudan University for a full fall term each year. More recently established, a multiple-year partnership between Queen's DEVS and the University of Cape Town provides internships with non-governmental organizations or community-based organizations for up to five undergraduate and two master's students from Queen's each year.<sup>59</sup> One of the History Department's areas of strengths is World History. To quote from the department's Response to “Where Next?”: “with the overhaul of HIST 122 and the creation of a combined grad/undergrad methodology seminar, World History has come into its own as a distinct field with a highly interdisciplinary approach that attracts students from Development Studies, Politics, Gender Studies, Sociology, Economics, and elsewhere.”<sup>60</sup> In its Response to “Where Next?,” the School of Medicine draws attention to the contributions of the Department of Family Medicine in Bosnia, funded first by CIDA and most recently by the World Bank, which have led to a comprehensive re-organization of that country's health care system and the creation of multiple training sites for family physicians under the guidance of Queen's University. The Department of Family Medicine also has Initiatives in Tanzania (concerning HIV/AIDS) and in Afghanistan. A decision has recently been made to establish within the School of Medicine an Office for Global Health.<sup>61</sup> The very successful Queen's/Cuba exchange, which brings annually 35 Queen's students to the University of Havana and a Cuban scholar to Queen's, could serve as a model for student

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<sup>56</sup> In his Response to “Where Next?” Wayne Myles, Director of QUIC, promotes what he refers to as “Internationalization at Home.” Myles explains that the term was first used by Bengt Nilsson of Lund University in Sweden in his paper “Internationalisation at Home – Theory and Praxis” [16 February 2010], p. 2.

<sup>57</sup> See “Where Next?” p. 13, “Reaching beyond Kingston.”

<sup>58</sup> See School of Urban and Regional Planning Response to “Where Next?.” Since 1996, SURP has been training eight groups with more than 180 trainees from different government tiers of the Chinese land administrative sector. SURP is also working to develop an “International Development Project Course” to SURP students. The course will include international travel for two weeks most likely to India or to China, where students will study local urban problems and propose planning solutions for the same. It will be offered in collaboration with a local urban planning program. Fudan University in China and CEPT University in India are potential host institutions.

<sup>59</sup> In addition, four UCT graduate students over four years will spend a term at Queen's for independent study, curriculum development, and internship work. The partnership has received the support of the Students for Development program that is funded by the Canadian International Development Agency and managed by AUCC.

<sup>60</sup> Response to “Where Next?,” p. 3.

<sup>61</sup> School of Medicine Response to “Where Next?,” p. 8.

and faculty exchanges. DEVS 305 "Cuban Culture and Society," which has been running for four years, is an example of interdisciplinarity and faculty cooperation to be emulated. Four departments, Film and Media Studies, Global Development Studies, the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures, and Sociology, cooperate in facilitating this course.

Other strengths in internationalization include Queen's founding membership in the Matariki Network of Universities (MNU), which brings together seven international universities to develop both teaching and research collaborations. In January 2011, Queen's signed an agreement with Blyth Education to pilot a Queen's-Blyth International Studies Program to offer undergraduate spring-summer courses in six international venues.<sup>62</sup> Internationalization is supported at Queen's by the Office of the Vice-Provost (International), the Queen's University International Centre (QUIC), the Faculty of Arts and Science International Programs Office (IPO), the School of Business Centre for International Management, and other international offices on campus.

In the past few years, internationalization at Queen's has made headway with increases in international student exchanges, international work-and-study opportunities, international research collaborations, and international enrolments in the graduate and professional schools. As of January 2011, "International student enrolment in the STEM disciplines at Queen's ranges between 15% and 60% of years 1-2 Masters and years 1-4 PhD. The School of Graduate Studies (SGS) has signed agreements with the governments of Egypt and China in an effort to gain access to highly qualified students who are funded by their respective governments for study abroad."<sup>63</sup> The preliminary report for "Enrolment Planning 2010-20" also states a general commitment to "enhanc[ing] the geographic and cultural diversity of the student population" (2). Moreover, Principal Woolf suggests that international activities at Queen's "would profit from further focus" and recommends that

"we [...] pick some strategic international markets and direct our energies there-not, again, to the exclusion of all others, but with preferential activity. India and China are obvious foci, both emerging economic powerhouses. Other countries in South America, Africa and Asia should also be considered. We should build on the initiatives already in place in these parts of the world, such as the Faculty of Education's links in Chile, and Global Development Studies' connections in Southern Africa."<sup>64</sup>

In his Response to "Where Next?," Vice-Provost (International) John Dixon suggests further that Queen's "establish a periodic process to identify global regions in which Queen's will focus its resources and activities (such as recruiting, partnering), recognizing that we can't be active and effective everywhere" (4-5). He highlights the success of the recently established China Liaison Office in Shanghai, "the mandate of which is to raise our profile, support our academic and research activities and linkages, and facilitate student recruitment in China" (2), and he suggests that Queen's open a second Liaison Office in another region of focus (8).

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<sup>62</sup> Patrick O'Neill, "Queen's-Blyth International Studies Program: Background," 30 Jan. 2011, as sent to Department Heads in February 2011. "The potential for revenue generation" figures largely in the rationale for this project; it is of course important that such ventures and the participation of Queen's students in them be subject to rigorous academic supervision and review.

<sup>63</sup> Queen's Enrolment Planning Task Force, "Enrolment Planning 2010-20: Preliminary Report" (Jan. 19, 2011), p. 4. The corresponding figures given in SCAD's "Enrolment Plan 2010/2011 – 2011/2012" (<http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/agendasminutes/032510/SCADRpt.pdf>), less than a year earlier, are "between 15 and 35%," p. 3.

<sup>64</sup> "Where Next?," p. 13.

Queen's Library is also well positioned to support internationalization and diversity.<sup>65</sup> It provides research classes for students in QBridge, the Queen's School of English 10-week university pilot program that provides academic English training to students who have been conditionally accepted into undergraduate programs at Queen's. The Library's support is essential to the success of many international students who have had limited opportunities to develop their research skills. The Library is also a recognized leader in providing services to students with disabilities through its Adaptive Technology Centre. It has appointed specialists in diversity and internationalization, as well as in Aboriginal Studies.

Wayne Myles, Director of the Queen's International Centre (QUIC) observes in his Response to "Where Next?" that "Queen's is still [...] functioning at the basic level of internationalization in which the institution focuses [...] on increasing numbers of linkages abroad and attracting [...] international students. There is much more that can and should be done" (2). QUIC proposes that Queen's consider Bengt Nilsson's concept of "internationalization at home," including "a curriculum rich in international and domestic content, and vehicles for the development of intercultural communication competencies (including but not limited to language)." "By improving the intercultural dimension of the Queen's campus proper," this Response advises, "we are not only providing a better educational environment to the wider student body but also improving the reputation of Queen's and Kingston as an international education destination worthy of consideration" (3). These suggestions, along with those made by Principal Woolf and John Dixon regarding strategic international markets have important implications for the teaching and learning of foreign languages and the strategic hiring of faculty and staff.

Myles refers to "deepening the cultural sensitivity of the university community" as a first important step toward creating "genuine international ethos" on campus.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, he suggests that Queen's strike a better balance between international activities abroad and those at home. As he observes, "the stronger Internationalization at Home at Queen's becomes, the more successful we will be with regard to international partnerships, exchange agreements, and research collaborations."<sup>67</sup> According to Myles, internationalization at home will require:

- opportunities for faculty and staff development
- resource development to deliver international education
- a curriculum rich in international and domestic content
- vehicles for the development of intercultural communication competencies (including but not limited to language).<sup>68</sup>

QUIC is well positioned to play a central role in the process of Internationalization at Home, for it already provides community-building programs for newly arrived students and offers intercultural training programs in cooperation with Human Resources and the Centre for Teaching and Learning. Several steps have already been taken to improve cross-cultural communication and global-mindedness on campus. QUIC has launched a new intercultural training program to

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<sup>65</sup> Queen's University Library Response to "Imagining the Future: Toward an Academic Plan for Queen's University."

<sup>66</sup> He quotes Maurice Harari: "In short, what creates a genuine international ethos on campus relates in part to the curriculum and calls for the sustained attention of the faculty to the truly international content of their disciplines in particular, and the curriculum in general" ("Internationalization of Higher Education: Effecting Institutional Change in the Curriculum and Campus"). Wayne Myles, Response to "Where Next?" [16 February 2010], p. 4.

<sup>67</sup> QUIC Response to "Where Next?" [16 February 2010], p. 3.

<sup>68</sup> QUIC Response to "Where Next?" [16 February 2010], p. 3.

improve the way QUIC staff members support and interact with incoming international students and with domestic students planning to study abroad.<sup>69</sup> To enhance students' development of intercultural competencies, John Dixon recommends implementing a "Global Citizen Certificate Program" for undergraduate students, "perhaps modeled on the 'Victoria International Leadership Program' [VILP] at Victoria University of Wellington, NZ" (8).<sup>70</sup>

### 3. International Exchanges and the Role of Visa Students

The AUCC's 2007 publication *Trends in higher education – Volume 1: Enrolment* states that "the number of visa students on Canadian campuses has grown rapidly to approximately 70,000 full-time and 13,000 part-time visa students (17).<sup>71</sup> China has been the leading country of origin, followed by the United States, France, India, South Korea, Iran, Japan, Hong Kong, Mexico, and Pakistan."<sup>72</sup>

As the AUCC notes, "the internationalization of the curriculum makes the teaching process more relevant for international students on campus and provides an avenue for Canadian students to develop global perspectives and skills at home" (16). It also observes that among the challenges in this process is "academic recognition of students' international and intercultural experience."<sup>73</sup> Limited interaction between domestic and international students is another major obstacle. Incoming international exchange students commonly experience some difficulty engaging with Queen's students. Queen's needs to enhance their integration, e.g., by opening residences, by introducing buddy systems, by making more courses available to them, and by embedding students' international experience in academic programs. Students also have an important role to play in facilitating international learning for the campus community. At the University of Prince Edward Island, for example, a Global Citizenship Day, featuring films and presentations, helps international and domestic students to connect.<sup>74</sup>

Queen's community members involved with international student exchange programs agree that exchanges, however valuable, are not sufficient in themselves to educate students in global-mindedness and impart intercultural competence.<sup>75</sup> The following caveats have been voiced: exchange programs are cost and labour-intensive; a relatively small number of Arts and Science

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<sup>69</sup> Its new online pre-departure training for outbound Queen's students includes six modules on intercultural competence. Incoming international students can take part in orientation programs, socio-cultural competency training, and sessions that focus on cultural transition. See [QUIC web site](#) and "[Intercultural training improves international experience for staff and students.](#)" *QNC*, 22 Mar. 2011.

<sup>70</sup> See John Dixon's Response to "Where Next?" The first program of its kind, the VILP was launched in October 2008. It is an academically "oriented extra-curricular program" of seminars, speaker events, and experiential activities relevant to the themes of international leadership, cross-cultural communication, global connectedness, and sustainability. See <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/vilp/>

<sup>71</sup> "Canadian Universities and International Student Mobility" [August 2007], p. 5

<sup>72</sup> "Canadian Universities and International Student Mobility" [August 2007], p. 5

<sup>73</sup> "Internationalization of the Curriculum: A Practical Guide to Support Canadian Universities' Efforts," [March 2009], p. 16.

<sup>74</sup> P. 17.

<sup>75</sup> Marc Epprecht, Acting Head of Global Development Studies, Jenny Corlett, Manager of IPO, and Ben Whitney, Associate Director of the School of Business Centre for International Management, at the APTF Town Hall on "Global Citizenship," 29 March 2011.

students are able to participate in international exchanges;<sup>76</sup> and Queen's students going out on exchanges need to be better prepared. Surveys have shown that students often struggle adjusting to new cultures. Moreover, the university needs to optimize learning experiences that students gain from international exchanges by preparing them more adequately for their time abroad and by making debriefing/reflection seminars mandatory upon their return.

#### 4. Gender and Education

Carole Leathwood reminds us that “the historical and contemporary contexts of the post-secondary education sector are characterized by gendered patterns of access, participation and outcomes” (166).<sup>77</sup> According to the Queen's University student headcount from November 2010, as posted on the Equity Office website, women undergraduate students outnumber men students significantly. Of the total of 20,079 undergraduate students 12,227 self-identified as female and 7,852 as male. The figures for graduate students are more balanced: out of 3,949 graduate students 1,927 self-identified as female and 2,022 as male. In terms of women's access to higher education, these numbers are encouraging. However, while women students are well represented in some disciplines such as Cultural Studies, English, French, Gender Studies, and modern languages and literatures, they are underrepresented in Computer Science, Engineering, the sciences and even some of the social sciences. The reasons for this imbalance are complex. One of the most relevant questions is whether Canadian schools and universities need to do a better job of engaging girls in science and of creating the environment and conditions that would make the traditionally male-dominated disciplines equally as accessible and attractive for female students as any other discipline. As Leathwood points out, “attention to the different formations and patterns of gender inequity in different local, national and international contexts, as mediated by ‘race’/ethnicity, social class and other markers of difference, is important” (166). Furthermore, the notion that gender inequality has been dealt with in the West could desensitize faculty and staff to gender inequality and compounded inequalities at the intersections of race and gender, class and gender, disability and gender, age and gender, among others. These inequalities will become more prominent with increasing student mobility, growing diversity on campus, and globalization in general.

In recent decades, feminism and gender theory have made major contributions to the development of educational theory and to broader social theory. These studies as well as methodological insights developed in gender research need to be considered in curriculum development. In the same way as it is necessary to avoid seeing gender identities as fixed and treat girls/women as a homogenous group, pedagogical and methodological approaches need to be pluralized. Also, the University needs to strive for adequate representation of research on gender issues and women and monitor how “gender-research questions and data are framed, collected, and reported” (Marshall 74).<sup>78</sup> These are just some considerations on a very complex issue, which cannot be dealt with here in depth, but which will require further attention.

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<sup>76</sup> The School of Business has a participation rate of 80% in its one-term exchanges with approximately 90 partner universities. In 2010/11 the FAS participation rate in exchange programs alone was about 7%. If one were to include other study abroad programs like the BISC, department program and independent study abroad, the participation rate is closer to 14%.

<sup>77</sup> Carole Leathwood, “Gender Equity in Post-Secondary Education.” *The SAGE Handbook of Gender and Education*. Eds. Christine Skelton et al. London: SAGE Publications, 2006. 167-78

<sup>78</sup> See Catherine Marshall and Michelle D. Young, “Gender and Methodology.” *The SAGE Handbook of Gender and Education*. Eds. Christine Skelton et al. London: SAGE Publications, 2006. 63-78.

## 5. Diversity of Curricula and Inclusiveness of Community

While Queen's already has a strong program of international mobility and has recently succeeded in increasing the numbers of international students on campus and of linkages abroad, the APTF has been advised by the Queen's community that student mobility and international collaboration are not the only ways in which Queen's must engage a changing world. Although internationalization enhances diversity of ethnicity and race, we need to keep in mind that Canada and the Queen's community are already multi-racial and multi-ethnic and are composed of other minorities as well. As the Senate Educational Equity Committee (SEEC) emphasizes in its response to *Where Next?*: "while cosmopolitan internationalization adds a component to the diversity of an educational setting, it should not be conceived as displacing the importance of achieving equity and diversity in a domestic context."<sup>79</sup> Queen's must provide students with the educational tools to engage meaningfully and responsibly with an increasingly diverse society and globally integrated world. To quote again from the SEEC Response: "If international partnerships are to be meaningful and students to be prepared for international experience, they must be informed by an educated appreciation and knowledge of other languages, histories, cultures and their contributions to a shared modernity and humanity that allows our students to learn from others as well as to teach or assist." Global-mindedness is not just a prerequisite for meaningful internationalization; it is also its objective.<sup>80</sup>

Anver Saloojee, professor of politics and public administration at Ryerson University, observes that "in times of downsizing and retrenchment it is very easy to lose sight of the reality that one of the primary purposes of a post secondary institution is to 'serve students' by providing them with a quality education that meets their needs, and prepares them for their roles in public life. [...] If we are expected to 'serve students' efficiently and effectively, and if we are expected to do 'more with less', then it is imperative that faculty be prepared when they come into a classroom that comprises students from diverse backgrounds, to teach effectively to these diverse learners" (37).<sup>81</sup>

In its response to *Where Next?*, the SEEC recommends that Queen's define a clear set of "core educational competencies" for all undergraduates around the themes of "immigration and transnational diasporas; multiculturalism; the interplay of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, ability, and class in a changing society and economy; and aboriginal and indigenous affairs, history, culture, and experience."<sup>82</sup> Some departments have already integrated these themes into their curricula. The Department of Political Studies, for example, has made its program inclusive, not only of fields, but of approaches to the discipline. To quote from the department's Response to

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<sup>79</sup> "Senate Educational Equity Committee Response to Principal Woolf's 'Where next?: toward a University Academic Plan'" [21 April 2010], p. 2.

<sup>80</sup> Sabine Schuerholz-Lehr, "Teaching for Global Literacy in Higher Education: How Prepared Are the Educators?" *Journal of Studies in International Education* 11.2 (2007):180-204.

<sup>81</sup> "Creating Inclusive Learning Environments." *Creating Inclusive Post-Secondary Learning Environments: A Resource Funded by: The Post-Secondary Anti-Harassment and Discrimination Project Coordination Committee under the Auspices of the Ontario Council of Regents and the Ontario Council on University Affairs*. Eds. Gail Benick and Anver Saloojee. Toronto, 1996. 37-52.

<sup>82</sup> In a subsequent submission to the APTF, the Diversity and Equity Task Force (DET) proposes, more specifically: "In addition to the UUDLEs [. . .] Queen's has an opportunity, perhaps emerging from the Academic Planning Exercise, to articulate its own, more ambitious and specific QUUDLEs as [a] component of an articulated educational mission. The DET proposes two QUUDLEs: A meaningful understanding and experience of 1) social identity, difference, and justice[;] 2) global, non-western cultures" (DET, "Engagement with Academic Planning: Curriculum and Research"). The APTF endorses this suggestion and will seek to incorporate it in our recommendations.

“Where Next?”: “We teach subjects on most regions around the world, including North America, the Middle East, Europe, Africa, Latin America (but lack capacity in Asian politics because the University has not replaced a resignation who specialized in Chinese Politics). [...] We have also developed an undergraduate course on multiculturalism.”<sup>83</sup>

The development of an “Indigenous Policy and Governance Initiative” by the School of Policy Studies in partnership with the First Nations Technical Institute (FNTI) is an important curricular innovation.<sup>84</sup>

Although individual departments, programs, and schools have diversified their curricula and enhanced inclusivity, during our consultation with the Queen's community at large and with specific groups and experts, including representatives of the Aboriginal community and the Director of the Diversity & Equity Task Force, has reminded the APTF that Queen's curricula continue to under-represent Africa, South Asia, East Asia, the Middle East/Islamic World, Latin America and the Caribbean. The University must take meaningful steps to catch up with rapid developments in the non-European world. Approval of a proposed Minor in China Studies<sup>85</sup> and in Muslim Societies<sup>86</sup> respectively would take the University a step further in accomplishing this goal. These two Minors would draw on existing course offerings and faculty expertise.

Yet as Saloojee explains, a pro-diversity approach to teaching and learning goes beyond curriculum. It is an approach that:

- “Requires the transformation of the way in which educators conceive of teaching and learning;
- Seeks to make educators pro-diversity partners with students in the teaching and learning endeavour;
- Is about the development of a culture of teaching and learning that truly appreciates diversity, and values and legitimates the contributions made by diverse learners;
- Is about changing the culture of teaching and learning, such that students are empowered to take greater control over their learning objectives, and educators divest themselves of the notion that they are education banks where students make education withdrawals; and
- Is equally applicable in all courses regardless of discipline, because it is fundamentally about respect for and valuing students, such that they can learn and make contributions in an educational environment that acknowledges and legitimates their existence, and takes them seriously as partners in the teaching and learning project.”<sup>87</sup>

In addition to developing inclusive teaching and learning environments, education equity requires strategies to increase access and on strategies to make the campus environment safe and hospitable.<sup>88</sup>

Most importantly, Queen's also needs to raise consciousness of Indigenous issues across Canada and abroad. A proposed Aboriginal Studies Certificate, drawing on courses with Aboriginal

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<sup>83</sup> Response to “Where Next?,” p.4.

<sup>84</sup> School of Policy Studies Response to “Where Next?,” p. 6.

<sup>85</sup> Submitted by Emily Hill (History) and James Miller (Theological College).

<sup>86</sup> Submitted by Adnan Husain (History) and Ariel Salzman (History).

<sup>87</sup> Saloojee, p. 37.

<sup>88</sup> Saloojee, p. 39.



content offered by Art History, English, Gender Studies, Geography, Global Development Studies, Health Sciences, History, Law, Music, Political Science, Religious Studies, and Sociology,<sup>89</sup> could pave the way for a full-fledged Program in Aboriginal Studies, "built from collaborative vision".<sup>90</sup>

## 6. Indigenization<sup>91</sup> of Curricula and the Institution

Aboriginal concerns are currently underrepresented at Canadian universities. To become a national and global leader, Queen's needs to enter into an equal partnership with the Aboriginal Community, recognize Aboriginal history, culture, and ways of knowing as educational core competencies for all students, and make Queen's a welcoming place where "Indigenous values and knowledge are respected" (2). This is a key opportunity for Queen's. With the exception of the University of Toronto, which focuses on urban issues, few research-intensive universities in Ontario are key players in Aboriginal education.<sup>92</sup>

As Linc Kesler, Director of the First Nations Studies Program at UBC, suggests: "A curricular centre in a program or department that directly and specifically addresses Aboriginal issues gives Aboriginal students and others the opportunity for advanced study and also drives curricular development in other areas."<sup>93</sup> UBC's program offers a major and minor with a disciplinary and interdisciplinary research core emphasizing strategic approaches to Aboriginal issues.<sup>94</sup> Kesler observes,

Aboriginal concerns need to be accurately represented in many curricular areas. Canadian history, for example, must include a fundamental engagement with Aboriginal history, and a sociology course on Canadian society must be able to address Aboriginal topics in a way that is neither objectifying nor dismissive. Due to the failure of many K-12 systems to provide a curricular foundation on Aboriginal topics, students typically lack information that would allow a post-secondary level engagement even with basic issues.

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<sup>89</sup> The Proposal was submitted to the Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre and the APTF by Shauna Shiels, PhD student in Cultural Studies, in June 2011.

<sup>90</sup> See Aboriginal Council of Queen's University Vision gathering Process document, p. 29.

<sup>91</sup> Kiera Ladner, Dwayne Donald, Andrea Bear Nicholas, and D'Arcy Vermette cautioned their audience against using the term as reflective of yet another "fad" in higher education. The term indigenization and the desired transformative process that it encompasses have to be used and facilitated carefully. The panelists called for holistic approaches based on decolonization processes, i.e., Canadian institutions need to address their colonial roots, and the co-optation of attempts at indigenization by colonial agendas needs to be avoided. "Indigenous Knowledge and Indigenizing the Academy," Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, Fredericton, NB, 31 May 2011.

<sup>92</sup> Aboriginal Council's Response to "Where Next?" [15 April 2010], p. 6. It should, however, be noted that two of the other three research intensive Ontario universities, McMaster and Western, are ahead of Queen's in establishing themselves in this area. The Indigenous Studies Program at McMaster offers a three-year Combined Bachelor of Arts Degree in Indigenous Studies and another subject. Students have the choice of combining Indigenous Studies with a subject area from either Humanities or Social Sciences. The First Nations Studies program at the University of Western Ontario is an interdisciplinary program based in the Faculty of Social Science. The program crosses traditional disciplinary boundaries to explore the role of First Nations peoples in Canadian society, with special emphasis on the Hodenosaunee and Anishnabwe traditions of southwestern Ontario.

<sup>93</sup> Linc Kesler, "Curriculum Development and Retention," presented at "Indigenous Issues in Post-Secondary Education: Building on Best Practices," 12-14 June 2011.

<sup>94</sup> For more information see [fnsp.arts.ubc.ca](http://fnsp.arts.ubc.ca)

The Indigenous Foundations project developed at UBC is one way to address this deficit.<sup>95</sup>

A first-year course with Aboriginal content, taught by elders, knowledge keepers, and other members of the community, could be offered as a credit or a non-credit course. The Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (ATEP) of Queen's Faculty of Education, which offers several unique program tracks, provides opportunities for candidates to specialize in Aboriginal education and could serve as a model for programs elsewhere. Queen's should also reach out to Aboriginal elementary and high schools, run summer camps for Aboriginal students to introduce them to the university environment, and establish a transitional access program.<sup>96</sup>

As the Aboriginal Council recommends in its Response to *Where Next?*, Queen's should acknowledge that it is situated on Hodeñošauñee and Anishnabwe territories by integrating Aboriginal traditions and practices into all of Queen's ceremonies such as graduations and Orientation Week. To achieve "the common goals of both the Aboriginal Council and Queen's," the Council also recommends that

a holistic approach [be] taken to developing academic programs, providing Aboriginal mentors and support services, strengthening research opportunities, and building community relationships. Efforts need to be made to ensure that the strategies taken toward a common vision are not piecemeal, but are coordinated and complementary. Such an approach can only be achieved by Queen's in the presence of an equal partnership with the Aboriginal Council whose collective responsibility is to provide guidance and leadership on behalf of the Aboriginal community.<sup>97</sup>

The APTF endorses the Aboriginal Council's recommendation that Queen's "implement long-range plans to ensure that [current Aboriginal] programs can be operated indefinitely."<sup>98</sup>

## **7. The Role of Aboriginal Students, Faculty, and Staff**

To integrate Indigenous knowledge meaningfully, Queen's needs to promote the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal students and to examine ways to increase their participation in degree programs and activities across campus. The institutional obligation to ensure access to Aboriginal students to higher education is rooted in Canadian settler-Aboriginal history and relationship and thus differs fundamentally from its responsibilities for other equity seeking groups in Canada. Queen's must increase the numbers of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis undergraduate, graduate, and professional students enrolling in and completing degree programs. Aboriginal graduate students serve as role models, mentors, and ambassadors.<sup>99</sup> Supporting Aboriginal Graduate

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<sup>95</sup> Linc Kesler, "Curriculum Development and Retention." For more information see [indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca](http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca)

<sup>96</sup> The University of Calgary, for example, has developed the Aboriginal Student Access Program (ASAP) a transition year access program for Aboriginal students. ASAP offers two levels of study with core courses at the post-secondary level. As well, the program offers advising and includes cultural, peer and tutorial support. This is a full-time university program which may qualify for student loans and funding. The purpose of ASAP is to provide an alternate access route for Aboriginal students moving from high school or upgrading programs to post-secondary degree programs. The program is designed to give students the foundations they need, as well as assisting in the selection of relevant post-secondary option courses for each student's target program. See <http://www.ucalgary.ca/nativecr/asap>

<sup>97</sup> The Aboriginal Council's "Response to Principal's Vision Statement." [15 April 2010], p. 2.

<sup>98</sup> The Aboriginal Council's "Response to Principal's Vision Statement." [15 April 2010], p. 5.

<sup>99</sup> Paul Chaput, MA student in Human Geography.

Enhancement (SAGE) has contributed invaluable to strengthening and supporting the academic learning experience of Aboriginal post-secondary students. Queen's must create respectful and welcoming learning environments for all students and create inclusive curricula infused with Indigenous content and ways of knowing. As Margaret Kovach, College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan, observes, "a focus on graduate programs is critical because it is here that Indigenous research frameworks are being honed and practised. The growing critical mass of Indigenous graduate students is best positioned to define and sustain Indigenous methodologies in the academy. To do so, these scholars require a supportive (or at least knowledgeable) mentoring environment" (164).<sup>100</sup> To facilitate inclusive excellence Queen's needs to recruit more Aboriginal faculty and staff and expand its services for Aboriginal students. In general, Aboriginal faculty, students, and staff need to see themselves reflected in academic planning.

## 8. The Role of Modern Language and Aboriginal Language Training

Critical literature on internationalization emphasizes the importance of foreign language training. Although language training is also a valued skill for employment in many sectors, at Queen's the number of language courses offered in German, Italian, and Spanish has decreased over recent years.<sup>101</sup> While the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) recommends the introduction of language requirements for university entrance and graduation, it is quick to observe that "a university's local context matters: what languages it chooses to focus on depends on what is most useful and desirable in its own community."<sup>102</sup>

Queen's has recently introduced Arabic language courses at the 100 and 200 levels (Introductory Modern Standard and Intermediate Modern Standard), mainly driven by student demand. Considering the suggestions of Principal Woolf and Vice-Provost John Dixon for strategic regional focus, language training in Spanish (because of its importance for research and teaching in DEVS and other programs on campus) and Chinese (for demographic reasons and because of vibrant student exchanges and research and exchange activities at Queen's) should have strong support at Queen's.<sup>103</sup>

In recognition of the challenges facing foreign language instruction on Canadian campuses, the AUCC suggests the following best practices:

- teach discipline courses in a foreign language (HEC Montreal offers a trilingual bachelor of business administration: students take an equal number of business courses in each of three languages. Likewise, students who learn Chinese in the regular business program learn "business Chinese" as opposed to Chinese literature).
- leverage the languages of the multicultural student body
- link language learning to study abroad
- partner with other institutions to teach languages

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<sup>100</sup> See Margaret Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2009.

<sup>101</sup> The number of courses offered in Chinese and Japanese has been relatively stable over the years. The Jewish Studies Program at Queen's offers courses in Modern and Biblical Hebrew.

<sup>102</sup> "Internationalization of the Curriculum: A Practical Guide to Support Canadian Universities' Efforts," [March 2009], p. 11.

<sup>103</sup> Considering the significant number of departments with links to China, more resources need to be allocated to the Chinese Language Program.

(Laval and York send students to each other's campuses to broaden the array of language learning opportunities)<sup>104</sup>

Moreover, Queen's must articulate coherent goals for Aboriginal education with traditional cultures and languages as core elements and support Aboriginal communities in their attempts to revitalize Aboriginal languages. It needs to recognize the importance of teaching Indigenous languages within a coherent program of Indigenous Studies, operated as a collaborative, interdisciplinary program.<sup>105</sup>

## 9. Local Globalism

Global citizenship will both foster and be fostered by local citizenship, including responsible engagement and equal partnerships with the Queen's, Kingston, and other communities in Ontario and in Canada. At the APTF's meeting with some members of the Aboriginal Council and Community on 25 March 2011, and at the Town Hall on "Global Citizenship" on 29 March 2011, we were reminded that the "global" is not limited to what is far away. Frontier College, for example, offers summer placement opportunities for students to teach English to Mexican and Central American migrant farm workers in Ontario. The Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory offers work placement opportunities for interested students. In their Response to "Where Next?," the Human Rights and Equity Offices suggest putting more emphasis on Field Studies: "Field studies, allows for the integration and application of knowledge. Expanding opportunities for field studies will require us to take into account the needs of a diverse society and the barriers that may exist in terms of accessing these opportunities. Flexibility could be the key in ensuring that increasing the field studies component results in accessibility and broadening of the curriculum."<sup>106</sup> It has also been suggested that the University consider a community volunteer requirement.<sup>107</sup>

The Department of Geography has a long-standing tradition in innovative community and place-based learning. As a result, "the Department has been well-positioned to showcase student engagement in the local community and disseminate knowledge well-beyond the academic community for the benefit of a wider society." One of the three major streams of the Department of Geography, community-based learning and knowledge mobilization, "builds upon the substantive research expertise in both vulnerable ecosystems and vulnerable populations."<sup>108</sup> To quote from the department's Response to "Where Next?": "The Welcoming Communities Initiative CURA (Community-University Research Alliance) based in the department works with municipal government and service agencies to develop effective practices for the successful integration of new immigrants to Kingston. A great benefit of the community-based and regional approach is that we are increasing our student engagement in local projects, allowing the department to act as a conduit between innovative research and learning on the Queen's campus and the communities and ecosystems of Eastern Ontario."<sup>109</sup> The Department also "examine[s] the implications of climate change for vulnerable populations, in particular Aboriginal peoples in local communities and the way in which the social environment created by our educational

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<sup>104</sup> pp. 11-12.

<sup>105</sup> Aboriginal Council of Queen's University Vision Gathering Process: Sharing Voices for a Shared Vision of a Shared Future" [8-9 February 2011], p. 29.

<sup>106</sup> Response to "Where Next?," p. 4.

<sup>107</sup> This suggestion was made by Laura Marchese-Smith at the Town Hall on "Global Citizenship" on 29 March 2011.

<sup>108</sup> Geography Response to "Where Next?," p. 2

<sup>109</sup> Geography Response to "Where Next?," pp.2-3

systems can make such societies more or less vulnerable.”<sup>110</sup> Through engagements of these kinds, Queen's students could learn much about cultural diversity while strengthening Queen's relationship with its regional communities.

We make the following recommendations,<sup>111</sup> which are not listed here in order of priority.

### **Key Recommendations**

10. Queen's should develop an equal partnership with Indigenous and Aboriginal Communities by making the Aboriginal Council an integral part of the Queen's decision making structure.
11. Queen's should make the recruitment of Aboriginal students, faculty, and staff a priority, establish an Endowed Research Chair in Aboriginal Studies, and create an Aboriginal Studies Certificate, which might develop into an Indigenous Studies Program.
12. Queen's should consider the QUIC arguments for “internationalization at home” in order to improve the intercultural dimension of the Queen's campus proper.
13. Queen's should enhance the integration of visa students and optimize learning experiences that domestic students gain from international exchanges.
14. Queen's should promote the importance of foreign language learning as both a relevant academic and employment skill.<sup>112</sup>
15. Queen's should follow the SEEC's recommendation to define a clear set of “core educational competencies” for all undergraduate students around “the interplay of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, ability, and class in a changing society and economy” and include Indigenous history, culture, and methodologies in all appropriate courses.
16. Queen's should continue in its effort to attract and engage women students in science and engineering and to create the environment and conditions that would make the traditionally male-dominated disciplines more accessible and attractive for female students.

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<sup>110</sup> Geography Response to “Where Next?,” pp.2-3

<sup>111</sup> Throughout this discussion, we have also made a number of informal suggestions and pointed to areas which deserve additional attention and creative will.

<sup>112</sup> To quote from The Modern Language Association (MLA) statement on the importance of learning another language: “It is the obligation of educational institutions to provide all students with opportunities to acquire fluency in a second language. Studying a nonnative language gives students the tools to appreciate other cultures. It enables students to recognize how languages work and to gain a more thoughtful understanding of their native language: by pursuing a second language, students learn how to use their first language with greater precision and purpose. In addition, knowledge of a second language serves students well in the interconnected world: a second language opens the door to job opportunities in the global economy and makes more media accessible, enriching public discussion of current issues. Finally, language knowledge is critical to humanistic inquiry into the cultures and histories of the world” (<http://www.mla.org/>)

## **Pillar IV Health, Wellness, and Community**

The first requisite for students to have a successful and fulfilling academic experience is a safe, supportive, inclusive, and engaging community. Without an environment that fosters community values, students, staff, and faculty will never be able to perform to the best of their abilities, will be unable to take proper advantage of available academic experiences, and will not contribute their own unique perspectives and innovation to Queen's. We consider this need under four headings: safety, health and support, inclusivity, and women in academe.

### **Safety**

A university campus should combine the safety of a home with the stimulation of a learning community. It should be a space where students always feel safe, whether to study or relax on their own, or to interact with others. It should be a space where ideas, controversial or otherwise, can be discussed without fear of censorship or reprisal. This applies to the whole campus, the classroom, the residences, and the surrounding areas where students, faculty, and staff interact. In the past, Queen's has taken this message seriously; for example, we point to the blue-light program and the AMS walk-home service. Queen's must continue in these efforts and strive to eliminate all discrimination, violence, and harassment on campus.

Recommendations include:

- Queen's should continue to solicit feedback from students, faculty, and staff about how to make the campus more safe and welcoming.
- Queen's should continue to assess and develop strategies to deal with harassment of all forms in all areas on campus.
- Orientation programming around safety, anti-harassment, and anti-discrimination should be expanded.

### **Health & Support**

Queen's campus must continue to provide the many forms of support, formal and otherwise, that students need outside of the classroom. The tragic loss of three students to suicide this year has brought this urgent need to the forefront of our entire community's awareness. The response within the Queen's community has been excellent. Health, Counselling and Disability Services (HCDS), has done its very best to ensure that, despite budget constraints, counseling and community outreach continue to meet a growing and increasingly complex need. This includes working to ensure that counseling wait times are kept low and continuing to find ways to ensure that students are aware of and make use of counseling services before problems become severe. We must build on this strength. Queen's should be a place where no one ever loses all hope or resorts to extreme actions from a belief that there is no other choice. Ensuring this requires a combination of formal and informal measures.

Formal measures that should be protected and expanded include:

- Queen's must ensure that there is strong and well promoted academic support to help students get through unusually difficult periods or over tough academic hurdles. One component of this support is departmental: faculty, staff and TAs ensuring that students are supported outside the classroom. A second component is found in the formal, centralized services, which include essay writing help at the Writing Centre, study skills at Learning Strategies Development, assistance for students with disabilities at the Adaptive Technology Centre and research or information assistance at the Library. We cannot forget that these services not only help students achieve academic success, but also help them navigate periods of significant stress, anxiety, and self-doubt.

- Religion and faith are important elements of the lives of many members of the Queen's community. The support of one's religious community can be essential in overcoming times of stress, struggle, and tragedy. As such, Queen's should continue to be an institution open to all religious faiths and ensure that support and space — such as prayer rooms and places to conduct religious meetings — exist for students of all faiths. This will be particularly important as Queen's becomes a more diverse campus. Being proactive in this area could make Queen's a leader and help attract new students and staff.
- Financial support must continue to match student financial needs to ensure that money problems don't add stress to the learning process. This requires financial aid based on academic performance, as well as that based on financial need, as well as emergency programs to address unforeseen circumstances. It also means that Queen's must work to ensure that the essentials such as daycare, housing, and health and dental care are affordable.
- Related to this financial support element, Queen's must continue in their work, both internally and with the Kingston community, to ensure that students have access to affordable housing and effective transportation. This will become particularly important as the student body grows.<sup>113</sup>
- Queen's must provide and promote physical health services that recognize the importance of physical health to learning. Again, the approach here must be proactive, encouraging and enabling students to take responsibility for their health issues before they become impediments to academic success.
- Along the same lines, counseling services must be robust and proactive. The campus has an excellent emergency response service, but apart from that, students should not wait for longer than a week to see a counselor.
- All of this leads to the creation and maintenance, as HCDS has recommended, of a health and wellness framework to guide the University and coordinate efforts across health and wellness sectors.
- As recommended by Regional Coroner Roger Skinner in his recent report, Queen's is reviewing its policy on alcohol in order to address the culture around drinking on campus. Already it has banned alcohol in residence during orientation.
- When planning curricula, departments should ensure that academic demands allow students enough time to participate in other activities, and to engage in a holistically healthy lifestyle.

Among more informal measures, Queen's should encourage new initiatives for educating students about physical and mental health issues that may affect them and their peers during their time at Queen's and give them the tools to help themselves and support each other.

While the focus above is on students generally, specific groups, including visible minorities, international students, exchange students, faculty, staff, and students who face unique health challenges may also require more specific support.

### **Diversity, Inclusivity, and Social Justice**

Much work<sup>114</sup> has been done in recent years to investigate the ways in which Queen's culture and community has excluded particular groups and individuals. It is essential — as an institution devoted to creating responsible global citizens — that Queen's be a community from which all

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<sup>113</sup> The importance of housing and transportation was raised by undergraduate student Thomas Vaughn at the March 10<sup>th</sup> Under Graduate Experience Town Hall.

<sup>114</sup> Such work includes the report of the Diversity and Equity Task Force, initiatives by Student Services, as well as the work of the equity groups of the AMS and SGPS.

can benefit and to which all can contribute. No member of the Queen's community should feel excluded from the university or alienated on its campus.

*Where Next?* emphasizes the importance of creating an inclusive community at Queen's (p. 6), and the work of the Diversity and Equity Task Force, along with the growing number of equity committees in departments, societies, and other units on campus have contributed to this goal. The Law Equity Committee's response<sup>115</sup> to *Imagining the Future* argues that Queen's should recognize diversity as a core value. Ensuring that the reality matches this statement of values is also essential.

Where is improvement needed? Queen's must continue to combat both the perception and the reality of a "culture of whiteness" to ensure that all feel included in campus life. Staff from Queen's international exchange offices observed that many international and exchange students at Queen's live geographically and socially apart from other Queen's students.<sup>116</sup> Queen's also needs to improve accessibility for students, faculty, and staff with disabilities. The SGPS Equity Committee pointed out to us that the University lacks an accessibility coordinator and that funds for accessibility projects have been limited.<sup>117</sup> While the Equity Office has continued to work in this area, a more comprehensive, university-wide approach is necessary.

Indigenous students and groups on campus tell us they feel they lack visibility, acknowledgement, and respect on campus. The Aboriginal Council's response to the Principal's Vision Statement noted that, while there have been some successes in recent years, Queen's has failed to sufficiently respect Aboriginal issues and failed to make funding for physical spaces and resources a priority.<sup>118</sup> Some Indigenous students are afraid to self-identify; they do not see Queen's as a university that understands, values, or even accepts Indigenous people or ways of life. We have addressed many of the academic aspects of these concerns in Pillar III but here we make some additional recommendations focused on a sense of campus community:

- The equity offices in the AMS and SGPS must continue to have an active role in all elements of student life that have implications for inclusivity.
- All departments on campus should be encouraged to develop their own equity committees and plans. This sort of structure will ensure that broad university plans are implemented at the departmental level, and that overall university planning remains sensitive to the needs and experiences of individual departments and faculties.
- Queen's should create a university-wide inclusivity plan, drawing on the work already done by the various equity-oriented groups on campus.
- Inclusivity issues and education should become more prominent in orientation programming.
- Awards should be developed to honour the service of students, faculty, staff and alumni who contribute to the inclusivity and accessibility of the Queen's campus and community.
- Queen's should move to create more formal space, programs, and areas of recognition for Aboriginal students, staff, and faculty on campus. This could include the addition of an Aboriginal cultural component to the convocation of Aboriginal students. These programs should be aimed both at improving the sense of Aboriginal community on campus, and also at creating more positive interaction between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students on campus.

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<sup>115</sup> This document was prepared by the Law Equity Committee for the SGPS Equity Commission and passed along to the Task Force.

<sup>116</sup> APTF Town Hall on Global Citizenship, 11 April 2011.

<sup>117</sup> Meeting between SGPS Equity Committee and Iain Reeve, Task Force Graduate Student Representative.

<sup>118</sup> Aboriginal Council Response to the Principal's Vision Statement, 15 April 2010, pg. 1-2.



- Queen's must recommit resources and staff to the issue of accessibility. A new comprehensive plan and resources for projects to improve accessibility are essential. Among them should be an online portal to coordinate issues and resources and ensure compliance with regulations and goals.
- Departments and other branches of the University should engage more actively and consistently with the Equity Office in order to improve their practices around issues of diversity, equity, and social justice.

### **Women Working in Academe**

Deborah Sussman and Lahouaria Yssaad<sup>119</sup> have shown that while women's representation in Canadian academe has been increasing over the last few decades, the increase has not been uniform at all ranks of appointment and across all fields of instruction (1).<sup>120</sup> Although by 2002/03 one in three associate professors at Canadian universities was a woman as compared to one in five in 1990/91, women continue to have a weaker presence at the upper academic ranks. These trends are reflected at Queen's: 33.9% of the tenure and tenure-track faculty are women, and 24.3% of faculty with the rank of Professor are women.<sup>121</sup> Women are also underrepresented in academic leadership positions. According to Diane R. Dean, "women do not advance to top leadership positions in academe in proportions expected from the demographics in feeder positions. The growth of women in leadership positions has been considerably slow and has not taken place consistently among different types of institutions" (129).<sup>122</sup> Dean further argues that professional and psychosocial mentorship is essential in promoting women's success in academe.

Also, while women have made notable gains in tenure status, the effects of family formation have a much greater impact on women faculty members' careers than on those of their male colleagues: "the findings showed a consistent and large gap in achieving tenure between women who had started a family within five years after completing their doctorate compared with men in a similar positions."<sup>123</sup> In addition, women's "median salaries remain below those of their male colleagues, though the gap generally narrows when academic rank and field of study are taken into account."<sup>124</sup> These inequities inevitably affect the academic success and health of women faculty and that of their (female) students. According to Sussman and Yssaad, women's underrepresentation in university faculties, particularly at the upper ranks, resonates on several levels:

- women faculty provide role models for the growing number of female students;
- having women in prominent academic positions can encourage female students to consider a career in well-paid, high-status, male-dominated fields;
- it has been suggested that women make their classrooms more inclusive to their female audience.

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<sup>119</sup> Deborah Sussman and Lahouaria Yssaad are with the Labour and Household Surveys Analysis Division of Statistics Canada.

<sup>120</sup> Deborah Sussman and Lahouaria Yssaad, "The Rising Profile of Women Academics." *Perspectives on Labour and Income* 6.2 (February 2005).

<sup>121</sup> These figures are available from the Equity Office and are based on the 2010 headcount as posted on the Equity Office website.

<sup>122</sup> Diane R. Dean, "Resources, Role Models, and Opportunity Makers: Mentoring Women in Academic Leadership." *Women in Academic Leadership: Professional Strategies, Personal Choices*. Ed. Diane R. Dean et al. Sterling, Virginia: Stylus, 2009. 128-48.

<sup>123</sup> These findings are persistent across all disciplines and types of institutions, p. 8.

<sup>124</sup> p. 6.

The careers of women academics are also affected by the fact that the dominant university culture continues to be male defined. In their analysis of the working lives of women academics, Sandra Acker and Michelle Webber argue “that there is a disconnect between some of the typical qualities of women’s lives and the often regulatory practices of universities, especially in current conditions when globalizing tendencies have increased the work, reduced the budgets, and heightened the level of scrutiny and performativity expected of academics.”<sup>125</sup> Among other things, many women experience breaks in their careers that are at odds with the expectation of the “successful academic” having an uninterrupted forward movement in their career profile. Women thus not only face the challenge of competing commitments outside work, but they also have to negotiate a framework of traditional assumptions on which the university is built. Acker and Webber suggest that “both explicit expectations and tacit norms about what work women do in the university” be examined<sup>126</sup> as tenured and tenure-track women faculty, adjunct faculty, and administrative staff, most of whom are women, do much of what Joan Eveline (2004)<sup>127</sup> calls “glue work.” To quote Eveline: “Such face-to-face collaboration in everyday workplace practices, much of it tacit and often informal, involves skills of co-operation, facilitation and nurture, usually thought of as feminine.”<sup>128</sup> “Glue work,” although it sustains university processes and keeps the university functioning, is usually not adequately recognized (489-90). Some of this “glue work” also includes mentoring and counseling of students. We might want to ask if the University adequately recognizes the role of staff and faculty in mentoring students en route to their professional lives. There are two concerns around this issue: 1. a staff or faculty member’s mentoring role might be a hidden source of stress; 2. Queen’s needs adequate measures for assessing, recognizing, and rewarding this work.

These are just some considerations on a very complex issue, which cannot be dealt with here in depth, but which will require further attention.

### **The Importance of Non-Academic Staff**

Non-Academic staff members are professional employees who contribute very significantly to the success of Queen’s. As noted in the Queen’s University Staff Association’s submission to the Academic Planning process, staff bring to the University an important repertoire of professional skills, possess a wealth of institutional knowledge, provide essential resources, and work alongside faculty and administration in realizing the University’s mission. Many have served through several administrations and numerous leadership changes at the departmental level. This long-term experience gives them valuable expertise and lends consistency to the daily operations of the University. Their input and opinions are vital to many of our decision-making processes.

The contribution of non-academic staff greatly impacts the student experience at Queen’s. While faculty support our students academically, our staff make equally important contributions toward the success of Queen’s students through many critical support and operational services. Staff members guide our students through admission and registration processes, issue scholarships and awards, orient them to the University, facilitate residence life programming, monitor their completion progress, deliver innumerable non-academic learning opportunities and help prepare them for their next career stage. Staff members, serving in our academic departments or in our student-service units, are usually the first point of contact for numerous students who need assistance in one form or another. It goes without saying that there are perhaps very few students

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<sup>125</sup> P. 491.

<sup>126</sup> P. 489-490.

<sup>127</sup> Joan Eveline, *Ivory Basement Leadership: Power and Invisibility in the Changing University*. Crawley, WA: U of Western Australia P, 2004.

<sup>128</sup> P. 139.

whose positive experience at Queen's did not include the contributions of one or more members of our non-academic staff.

For this reason, and because implementation of new policies falls largely upon them, staff are often the first to see and feel the real challenges facing Queen's. This cuts two ways: strained financial resources, increasing enrolment, increasing regulation and accountability, innovations in technology, and the downloading of responsibilities all add to the workload and stress of staff members. But it also means that staff are positioned best to know where the stresses in the system reside. Not only can they identify what is broken and needs fixing; in many cases they have valuable insight into how it might be fixed. That said, their opinions are sometimes undervalued. Some feel they are treated as second-class citizens and are marginalized when important decisions are made.

In "Imagining the Future," the Academic Writing Team suggests, among other goals, that Queen's learn to value non-academic staff as crucial for the central missions of the university. It makes many recommendations that we endorse:

At any university, the non-academic staff performs a vital role in ensuring the smooth operations of the institution. Staff at Queen's are by and large enthusiastically engaged and dedicated to the overall mission of the university. We need to value this strength and enable staff to achieve maximum productivity.

This requires that the non-academic staff be supported as a crucial human resource for Queen's. Careful attention needs to be paid to the creation and maintenance of a healthy workplace. Career development should be fostered through advancement opportunities and training as outlined in our Educational Equity Policy. Internal mobility should be actively encouraged.

Efforts should be made to improve non-academic staff satisfaction through further engagement; they have an expertise and a knowledge of the university that should be used, where appropriate, to inform policy decisions.

We recommend that the university explore mechanisms for communication, both within the non-academic staff community itself, and between the non-academic staff and the university, that goes beyond the consultative mechanisms outlined by the Memorandum of Understanding between the university and the Queen's University Staff Association of 1997.

Valuing non-academic staff also requires the rational, transparent distribution of staff across units, and a careful consideration of their duties. Regular review of staff roles and responsibilities should be implemented. We recommend that a transparent formula be developed to determine how university-supported staff be allocated to academic and non-academic units, and at what salary levels.<sup>129</sup>

To this list we add the following:

Drawing on their experience and expertise, non-academic staff should be recognized as active participants in implementing the Academic Plan and all important Queen's initiatives. They should be empowered to make decisions for activities that fall within their scope and knowledge.

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<sup>129</sup> In December 2010, after the writing of "Imagining the Future," members of non-academic staff up to Grade 9 certified as a bargaining unit with the United Steel Workers. The APTF hopes that the spirit of these recommendations will guide the Collective Agreement for USW Local 2010.

As the University advances, it must take care to maintain necessary staff levels and skill requirements. Hiring and training plans must align with University objectives, and individual responsibilities need to be structured in a way that equips Queen's employees for success. These plans must also convey the University's steadfast commitment to working in partnership with non-academic staff to achieving a healthy workplace that reflects their many important contributions to the Queen's community.

Among the long-serving and knowledgeable staff members who have helped make Queen's what it is today, many will reach retirement age over the next 5 to 10 years. It is imperative that the University develop a formal succession planning process to manage this transition and mitigate the significant loss of institutional memory. We should not underestimate the degree to which large-scale staffing changes can unbalance the institution.

In sum, a culture shift is required at Queen's that will see non-academic staff valued as professionals and as full partners working alongside academic staff in achieving the University's mission. This can be achieved by actively engaging staff in planning and implementation, by empowering them to make decisions, by instituting comprehensive two-way communication, training, and career-development support, by cultivating a healthy workplace, and by improving access to wellness services. The University should initiate annual surveys to track employee engagement and satisfaction and should modify programs based on the feedback.

#### *Post-doctoral fellows*

Post-doctoral fellows are a highly talented fourth tier in the university staff hierarchy and over the past 10 years have become increasingly important components of a university's research and even its teaching enterprise. Queen's must continue to search for ways to bring them to campus and integrate them more formally into the university structure.

#### **Key Recommendations:**

17. Queen's should continue to solicit feedback about how to make the campus more safe and welcoming, create strategies to deal with harassment of all forms in all areas on campus and ensure orientation programming around safety and anti-harassment are expanded.
18. Queen's should ensure that there is strong and well promoted academic, health, wellness, and financial support to help students get through persistent issues and unusually difficult periods. This includes both formal measures, but also helping students learn to take care of and support themselves and each other.
19. A university-wide equity plan, in consultation with student and administrative equity bodies, should be implemented. In addition, all departments and faculties on campus should be encouraged to develop their own equity committees and plans. This sort of structure will ensure that broad university plans are implemented at the departmental level, and that overall university planning remains sensitive to the needs and experiences of individual departments and faculties.
20. Queen's should move to create more formal space, programs, and areas of recognition for Aboriginal students, staff, and faculty on campus. This could include the addition of an Aboriginal cultural component to the convocation of Aboriginal students. Programs should be aimed both at improving the sense of Aboriginal community on campus, and also at creating more positive interaction between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students on campus.

21. Queen's should address the under-representation of women and members of other equity-seeking groups at the upper academic ranks and in academic leadership positions.
22. Queen's should create a strategic Human Resources plan that addresses issues such as workforce planning, career development, succession management, and training.