



Alan Harrison
Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic)

Report to Senate
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Preamble

Early in August, and a few days into my new role as Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) at Queen's University, I sent a brief communication to the university community. In it I explained how my year at Queen's as a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Economics, when, in 1976, my wife and I first came to Canada, led me always to use Queen's as the point of comparison for universities in Canada where I subsequently worked. I expressed the view that Queen's "set the bar high then, and still does today". The more I meet with, and listen to, members of the Queen's community, the more this view is reinforced. Our students, staff and faculty are smart, talented and dedicated, and all want to do their part at sustaining and nurturing this institution.

The integrated planning and financial sustainability so central to my role as Provost must also sustain and nurture the university's academic mission, paying particular attention to what Queen's is so renowned for. With this in mind, my written reports to the Senate, though inevitably they will often focus on operational issues, will also endeavour to ensure that the academic context for decisions is clear.

In addition to these written reports, I shall also report orally at Senate meetings as and when this is necessary, and I look forward to your questions, whether submitted in advance (by e-mail to provost@queensu.ca) or at the meeting.

Quality Assurance

As of September 1, 2011, Queen's University has moved into the implementation stage of its new Quality Assurance processes. The new Queen's University Quality Assurance Processes (QUQAPs), replace the former approval processes that included Queen's Internal Academic Review (IAR) processes and those of the Ontario Council of Graduate Studies (OCGS) for new programs and review of existing programs. QUQAPs will improve the University's ability to

maintain, enhance and monitor the high quality of the academic programs for which this institution is known. Dr. Susan Cole, Deputy Provost, has led this initiative, working with a core academic group, including colleagues in the School of Graduate Studies, over the past 14 months. This group has had the responsibility for drafting the QUQAPs, securing ratification by Senate and the Council of Ontario Universities Quality Council, and developing the associated templates needed for its implementation. I encourage all Senators learn more about Quality Assurance by visiting <http://www.queensu.ca/provost/responsibilities/qualityassurance.html>, and to contact Peggy Watkin, Senior Associate, ext 75322, or watkinm@queensu.ca, if you have any questions about the implementation phase.

The Queen's 2012-2013 University Budget

The preliminary 2012-2013 budget currently includes a deficit of \$6.3M, labeled as “other reductions in expenditures or increases in revenue”. The Board of Trustees has made it clear that it expects us to eliminate this deficit. Additionally, we need to deal with a deficit for 2012-2013 of \$8.6M related to increased pension costs, the originally announced solution for which was to institute a budget cut of three percent, applied to pensionable earnings.

There is a strong argument for considering options other than across-the-board cuts, whether applied to pensionable earnings or entire budgets, but whatever options we choose, finding \$14.9M is not a trivial task, and recent events in financial markets suggest this figure may be a conservative estimate of our target. I will be reporting to Board of Trustees at its meeting September 23 that work is already well underway on our plan to eliminate the deficit. As requested by the Board, the final plan will be presented at the March 2012 meeting.

Planning and resource allocation (i.e., budgeting) are two sides of the same coin, which means that the instructions we provide to budget units for the preparation and submission of their 2012-2013 budgets will be contained within a request for a comprehensive plan addressing such issues as staffing levels, enrolment targets, and planned strategic investments. This information will assist the university in developing a multi-year planning and budgeting framework that is tied to strategic activities and is supported by a sustainable financial model. This will be a difficult process and will benefit from broad community input.

Enrolment Planning

As a continuation of the process initiated by my predecessor, Bob Silverman, we are establishing a group charged with the task of strategic enrolment management, the process by which a university determines its right size and program mix, and puts in place and monitors the structures to achieve these goals. The group's role will also be to link enrolment to planning and resource allocation, recognizing that enrolment growth, properly managed, is a net revenue opportunity that will contribute to the university's financial sustainability.

Real Estate Review

Vice-Principal (Finance and Administration) Caroline Davis and I have established a working group to focus our efforts on the various aspects of our real estate planning. In particular this group will focus on an analysis of Queen's owned real estate with the objective of maximizing financial returns consistent with university objectives. This will also include an assessment of student residence expansion.

Labour Relations

The successful conclusion of negotiations with three locals of CUPE, QUFA, PSAC and ONA means that, for these groups at least, our focus now turns to the administration of these collective agreements. Additionally, the contingency planning that occurred in conjunction with these negotiations has provided lessons for our preparedness for other eventualities, and has also revealed some gaps in our processes, which we shall attend to over the coming months. We will also begin collective agreement negotiations with United Steelworkers, who represent our academic assistants and general staff, with PSAC, who represent our Post-Doctoral Fellows and with OPSEU, who represent the allied health professionals employed at our Family Health Team clinic.

Senior Staffing

Since the Senate last met, the search process was concluded for the University Librarian. With the unanimous support of the advisory committee, Martha Whitehead has been appointed to a five-year term beginning July 1, 2011. Martha served as Interim University Librarian for the 2010-2011 academic year, prior to which she was Associate University Librarian for six years.

Decanal reviews for the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science and the School of Graduate Studies will commence this fall. The reviews will be accompanied by a thorough examination of each unit's activities.