

NOTICE OF MOTION – Submitted to the October 24 Agenda for action by the Senate on November 22, 2011.

Motion for Approval of the Completion of the 2010-11 Academic Planning Cycle, and for the Institution of a Cyclical Annual Planning Process

by Jordan Morelli
(Queen’s Senator for Physics, Engineering Physics and Astronomy)

Given the objections to the draft plan as presented to FAS Faculty Board and Senate in September (see comments on the [APTF website](#), and [in Senate](#));

given that the objections are to material that was added to complete the plan on a rushed deadline after July;

given that as of late July the APTF had substantially completed drafts of several sections, sections that are demonstrably built upon and extensively reference both its consultations and the early unit reports;

given that these earlier sections fulfill the mandate of the APTF, which was to consult broadly on “specific key issues” and use those consultations to “inform the drafting of the corresponding section[s] of the plan” (Senate [Minutes](#), 25 Nov. 2010, p. 8);

and given the 14th of the APTF's own “Guiding Principles” that “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”;

I move that Senate strike a compromise:

- namely, that Senate reject the draft currently proposed by the APTF; and
- that Senate consider separately, and approve where it deems appropriate, those draft sections (most of which were *included in* the September draft) that were completed earlier in the year and that make documented reference to the consultative basis (unit responses, APTF consultations, and other expressions of the will of the community), specifically:
 - Guiding Principles
 - Pillar I:
 - “Developing Communication Skills and Fostering Students as Writers”
 - “On Virtualization, Blended Learning, On-line Learning, and the ‘Greater Differentiation’ of Ontario Universities”
 - Pillar II: “Disciplinarity and Interdisciplinarity”

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- Pillar III: “Reaching Beyond: Globalism, Diversity, and Inclusion at Queen’s”
- Pillar IV: “The Importance of Non-Academic Staff”
- Appendices:
 - 1. Acronyms
 - 2. Unit Responses
 - 3. Consultations
 - 4. Sources Cited
 - 5. UUDLES and GDLES
- And further that Senate endorse the process by which these draft sections were prepared - i.e., the process of targeted consultations, the posting of both consultative results and interim drafts on a transparent and interactive website, and the subsequent adjustment of drafts in keeping with community feedback; and
- rather than seek to approve a one-time academic plan addressing the whole institution in all of its branches and aspects, that Senate take this opportunity to institute an ongoing, annual process in which Senate specifies each fall a new planning issue or set of issues and strikes a task force of community members who are qualified to consult and draft an academic planning section for those issues, using the process established by the APTF.

Rationale:

The essential problem is that it is unrealistic to expect a small committee to complete a full Academic Plan addressing all branches and aspects of the university in a year. The present APTF consists of two students, one staff, one administrative, and three faculty members plus a Chair; it had from January to August to review over fifty unit responses and related documents, conduct its own consultations, and draft its reports. All of its members served on an overload basis, i.e., in addition to ordinary workloads, without considerations that might have enabled fully dedicated attention to the planning process; and several of them had to be absent from the process for periods, especially over the summer. Yet nothing is more certain than that to frame a comprehensive Academic Plan for an institution of the size and complexity of Queen’s will require careful research, consultation, and writing.

In most universities, academic planning results in documents full of truisms, bright slogans, and window-dressing. They are received with fanfare, shelved away, and too often forgotten. The most important reason for this is that a one-time global report is inadequate to the nature of the problem. Universities are complex organisms composed of highly specialized sub-units, each of which has different needs and challenges, and each of which experiences even the common needs and challenges in ways special to itself. Moreover, universities don’t stand still: they

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change every year in themselves, and in response to continual change in their conditions and personnel. For such organizations, the best way forward is not to seek to produce a global academic plan once every ten or twenty years, but instead to make academic planning an ongoing iterative process, a habit of the institution, and to target different pressing issues each year so that they can be addressed with the patience, the care, and the particularity they deserve. Instituting such a process at this point would enable Queen's Administration to declare the Academic Planning complete for this year's "cycle" and to boast, with thanks to its first Academic Planning Task Force, of having instituted the open, transparent, and genuinely consultative Academic Planning process that will sustain it in the years to come.