

Discussions with the Deans, Principal and University Librarian February – April 2015

University Academic Plan Suggestions

Overarching Themes and Concepts

- value imagination and creativity (the art of the disciplined imagination) and incorporate terms now missing from the UAP
 - imagination / imagine
 - curiosity
 - invention
 - experiment / Experimentation / Experimental
 - inspire / Inspirational
 - daring
 - pioneering
- mental health and resilience
- position York as the “People’s University” with renewed emphasis on student-centred services
- build on environmental mission and committee to projects including
 - greening of York buildings
 - development of programs
 - research opportunities
- promote excellence in research and student success
- recommit to social justice
- strategic internationalization
- augment grant and tuition income through fund raising and ancillary operations such as continuing education and professional development programs
- assert and concretize parity of graduate and undergraduate studies to define appropriate spaces and create interactions
- reiterate student success as a core priority through a comprehensive approach, from stepping up recruitment efforts and adopting effective advising and retention strategies to ensuring an appealing and innovative mix of programs and offering opportunities for experiential learning and skills development.
- impactful engagement through effective engagement with members of the public, opinion leaders and the media / external exposure of the institution, both by organizing events on campus that draw community members and high school students and by partnering with other organizations to feature York faculty members and students at off-campus events / capitalize on subway stations / more outreach programs, e.g., science fairs, as well as major conferences and performances on campus, raising its profile locally, nationally
- expand York’s local-global reach York University could position itself to draw upon a broader range of students who are geographically outside of the GTA, including international students. This would truly help to position York University as a global university
- satellite campuses in Markham and Brampton: Satellite campuses offer an excellent opportunities to defend catchment areas while better serving those of its students who otherwise have long commutes; York should think big, and consider submitting a second proposal, this time for Brampton, Ontario’s other large underserved market.; alternatively,

purchasing a downtown building and consolidating York's various downtown rented premises (which are rented at premium rates) would make fiscal sense; overcome the notion that growth has been too much, too fast; York did experience a period of overheated growth from the 1960s to the 1980s) but over the past 20 years it has been the slowest growing Toronto university

- dare to send some of our sacred cows out to pasture, overcome sclerotic decision-making / build sunset provision into new program approvals -- such as 10-year licenses to operate a program – after which the program closes unless the license is renewed through the usual collegial governance mechanisms (works well with the ORUs)
- enhance its emphasis on promoting excellence in research and student success
- strategic internationalization
- fund-raising and ancillary operations such as continuing education and professional development to augment tuition income
- ensure Libraries and graduate students / studies profiled

Enhancing the Pedagogical Foundation of the University

- plans needed to replace retiring faculty members and renew the faculty complement (hiring of CLAs is a temporary patch)
- greatly improve student / faculty ratios
- increase alternate stream appointments given finite resourcing / Humboltian model need not be privileged / mix of professorial and alternate streams is the most realistic way of getting more full-time faculty into the undergraduate classroom, and of making room within the academy for colleagues with a singular passion for teaching. Fewer contract faculty and more alternative stream faculty would be expected to improve teaching quality and student engagement and retention / can also free time for researchers if workload reduced to 2.0 (where applicable)
- use full potential of IT for learning and administration
- extend and profile French language services and resources

Building and Retaining York's Student Complement

- by far the absolute top priority for York University should be to address student recruitment and retention / regain our market share, invest in programs that support student success and satisfaction, and graduate loyal alumni
- more flexibility is needed for the Faculties to develop their sub-brands as a major tool for recruitment of students, faculty and staff (SHARP can help)

Graduate Education and Research

- York should redouble its research intensification efforts, and promote its visibility and impact as a leading research institution
- establish high-profile, internationally competitive postdoctoral fellowship will enhance the research enterprise, raise academic reputations and helping recruit top researchers as well as graduate students
- greater emphasis on communicating York's research accomplishments through national media outlets
- York also needs to make competitive offers for graduate student support and increase its graduate enrolment to be deemed a research-intensive institution
- research commercialization to foster reputation, financial incentives, and increase research funding

- collect and maintain research Indicators within the parameters of applicable collective agreements
- make more explicit the contributions of graduate students to research and innovation, better facilitate research and scholarship opportunities for graduate students; celebrate graduate student contributions to research and scholarship; fundraise for graduate student conference travel and field research costs; integrate professional skills development in graduate curriculum; and increase the number of post-doctoral fellows
- major investments are needed in infrastructure support and space (new buildings) / address gap the maintenance and quality of current buildings including labs

Enhanced Governance and Decision Making

- a renewed funding model: Financial resources underpin the attainment of any academic plan
- academic budgeting informed by the principles of transparency, equity and accountability / Faculty budgets have no correspondence to research or instructional activity and are instead historical artifacts, representing the accretion of past bases, cuts, increments and case-by-case negotiated adjustments / planned SHARP budgeting model will eliminate this historical baggage. / budget transparency should make each Faculty more responsive (and adaptive) to its environment, which is the essence of sound strategic academic planning.
- data-driven pedagogical decision-making
- devolution of FGS responsibilities to other Faculties
- develop a true data mining strategy
- promote inter-Faculty cooperation
- conduct major analysis regarding what would be a better (optimal) organizational structure for York University on both the academic and administrative sides with particular to the imbalance among the Faculties (where Liberal Arts & Professional Studies comprises half of the student population) / on the administrative side, lessons need to be learned from the AAPR regarding better integration of services and linkages with the various Faculties, as well as consideration of activities that no longer align with the University's core mandate might need to be discontinued or offered in a different format
- encourage careful assessment of existing programs and services to ensure they are responsive to the University's and each Faculty's mission and, as appropriate, restructure offerings and services to conserve and redirect resources