

Memo

To: Rebecca Pillai Riddell, Chair, Academic Policy, Planning and Research Committee of Senate

Cc: Bob Everett, Assistant Secretary of the University

From: Sean Kheraj, Chair, Academic Policy and Planning Committee, Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies 

Date: November 6, 2015

Subject: Communication from APPC, Faculty Council, Liberal Arts & Professional Studies (LA&PS): 2015-2020 UAP Consultations

The Academic Policy and Planning Committee (APPC) of the Liberal Arts & Professional Studies Faculty Council met on October 21, 2015. It discussed the five questions regarding the 2015-2020 University Academic Plan (UAP) circulated by APPRC.

LA&PS is currently conducting its own planning process, which includes the Faculty's response to IIRP and the UAP. We expect to be able to provide further input to APPRC as this process moves further along.

APPC would like to highlight that the ideas below are not being submitted on behalf of LA&PS Faculty Council, but rather on behalf of its APPC, which is the relevant Council Committee responsible for providing feedback on Academic Planning.

What sets York apart from other universities and how is this advantageous?

APPC suggests that this question be better defined before it is addressed to the community. For instance, access and social justice are among York's important differentiators, but it is difficult to discuss such attributes as "advantages." Is "advantage" a good attribute for such a visioning exercise?

That said, APPC would like to propose the following as two characteristics that set York apart:

- A distinctive and vibrant tradition in the Social Sciences and the Humanities where scholarship, engagement, critical inquiry and professional education seamlessly coexist.
- A mandate of social justice which is embedded in our research, scholarship, creative activities and the teaching and mentoring of our students.

What should be York's academic priorities for the next five years? Please rank your priorities, if possible.

APPC would like the following priorities to be part of the overall discussion for the UAP (not ranked).

- Complement renewal: York should identify and operationalize a strategic approach that ensures the excellence of our graduate and undergraduate programs. A balance should be sought between new and existing programs, and growth within and between Faculties so as to maintain and enhance the comprehensiveness of York's academic offerings.
- Synchronizing workload with the expectations of a research intensive university so as to maximize the research potential of York's academic community
- Maximizing access among different groups (new Canadians, international students, mature students, students with disabilities, aboriginal communities)
- Enhancing graduate education – including better supports for domestic and international graduate students

What are the most pressing challenges facing York now and in the next five years that should be addressed in the next UAP?

- Arresting the decline in undergraduate enrolments given the anticipated demographic decline of direct entry students (101s) and difficulties experienced in recent years by York University in attracting non-direct entry students, as well as mature and part-time students (105s).
- Public policy towards post-secondary education
- Addressing the diverse and complex needs of international and ESL students to ensure their academic success and inculcate a sense of inclusion into the York community

What are the most compelling opportunities for York now and in the next five years?

- There is now an increasing awareness that professional education needs to be grounded in broader liberal arts foundations. York should take a leadership role in defining, in concept and practice, the relationship between a broadly envisioned liberal arts education and professional education.
- Markham campus and its potential to broaden the reach of York in a growing part of the GTA
- Completion of subway and expansion of York community to the city and GTA (however this may also pose a challenge as there will be greater access to the urban core)
- Increased community outreach at the local level
- Integrating new Canadians into the university community - accreditation, professional programs, internationally educated professionals

Do you have any other advice about the University Academic Plan 2015-2020 in terms of its organization and structure, specificity of objectives, indicators of progress and the like?

APPC is undertaking its own consultation process, which will provide an opportunity for more fulsome LA&PS faculty feedback. We look forward to sharing these results with you and to working with Senate to create a new UAP that represents LA&PS priorities and objectives.