

**Lassonde's Response to the APPRC's University Academic Plan (2015-2020)
Consultation Questions – November 2015**

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

- York's richness in diversity and advocacy for social justice is a prominent feature of the institution. York is recognized as having a dynamic environment for people to engage in very broad and limitless teaching, learning and research experiences. It's a community of acceptance that dares to ask hard questions and explore ideas outside the box.
 - Accessibility for students from diverse backgrounds -> diversity of perspectives leads to more informed outcomes.
 - Emphasis on the "value add" for our students - York makes a real difference to the futures of the student we educate.
- York continues to have a strong Interdisciplinary culture that is embedded across the curriculum and lives in all the Faculties. It's a true pan-university commitment. This environment also provides for a broad selection of specializations and unique combinations of study.
- York's Professional Schools have strong brands and recognition - Osgoode, Schulich, and Lassonde.
- York is home to unique academic programs in the province and across the country – e.g., Geomatics & Space Engineering.
- York's geographical location places it at "the hub" of all major highway intersections, with a massive transit spoke of buses and trains, and soon the subway to add to the colossus grid. York is at the hub of opportunities, not just transit. The opportunities of rapidly developing, diverse communities, with growing industry and social infrastructure at its doorstep. Transit supports York having multiple sites – Keele, Markham, Glendon, a downtown presence for both Osgoode and Schulich, with future expansion of these types of activity.

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

- Improving the experience for students in and out of the classroom:
 - By increasing access to open labs
 - Pioneering innovative teaching pedagogies to serve our students' better
 - Rethinking all our processes from a student viewpoint.
 - Standardizing supports for the faculty and staff who serve students
 - Providing more research opportunities for undergraduates
 - Simplifying degree requirements with "mandatory" learning outcomes and UUDLEs

- Maintaining and enhancing needed infrastructure to generate space for:
 - Student learning
 - Much needed research space deficit
 - Lab equipment & personnel
- Emphasis on attracting and increasing our graduate student population (quality & quantity) of students – with concerted efforts on the domestic pool
- Enrolment enhancement (quality and quantity)

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

- Improving the enrolment & retention of our undergraduate and graduate student population.
- Upgrading IT infrastructure for both e-learning and the systems supporting staff as it relates to effectively operating the academic enterprise (e.g., SIS, LMS, CRMS, Moodle, etc).
- The lack of research space and institutional vision for backbone research equipment. Research space is lacking and will cost more in SHARP for areas that are more resource intensive e.g., sciences & engineering.
- Designing an institution that really is focused on creating the best experience for our students – undergraduate & graduate. Creating a genuine cultural shift to ensure that more faculty and staff are engaged in making the student experience their top priority in contributing to achieving this goal.
- Improving our academic quality -> reputation follows -> this is an issue that needs to be fixed at its source, not an issue that can be overcome by advertising.
- Securing adequate resources to achieve our aspirations (in the light of static or declining student related funding and the ever increasing salary costs).
- How to liaise and engage industry & alumni = donations & research partnerships. Providing mechanisms to allow external partners to easily navigate our system.
- The implementation of SHARP and ensuring that Faculties have a say and influence in the decisions to the central services priorities that are being provided because they will be paying for them.
- Experiential education opportunities (including Coop & Internship) and how the priorities are respected and supported at both a Faculty and Central level.

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

- With the arrival of the subway – York should be primed to launch a campaign toward easy access and pathways to York. Leveraging the commuting aspect as the first inroads to York, juxtaposed to the various academic pathways into our programs at York. To be bold and map out the academic pathways to run parallel to the station and transit stops that we have available within our community. Maximize better use of our green spaces alongside our transit hub.

- Making the most of the opportunity in Markham to do something really innovative.
- Leveraging collaboratively all the areas of excellence that exist at York. Making York more than the sum of its parts, rather than less. Harnessing the research comprehensiveness that exists and is expanding. Profiling our faculty and the new hires that join our institution.
- Renewal of University Leadership – finding the best team to propel the UAP vision forward.
- The implementation of SHARP needs to be founded in promoting quality student education and service, with key performance indicators (KPIs) and a revised basic income units (BIUs) funding structure that supports and enhances the progress of York’s mission.
- To introduce a structured and effective implementation plan to promote and foster the routine practice of outcomes based assessment.
- To be genuinely committed to providing a better workplace and demonstrating good citizenship in placing value in all of York’s employees.
- To expand our global presence and international recruitment efforts in India & China.

5. 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?

- Establish meaningful metrics and set deadlines to mark measurable progress. Report back honestly about success or failure of these initiatives, investigate what happened & learn from it.
- Properly resource key initiatives and follow the UAP priorities consistently in practice.
- Stop penalizing overhead when funding from industry is leveraged many times over by government funds. Charge overheads only when there are straight up industry contracts.
- Provide the community with a one-pager that clarifies what the structure of the new UAP will be.
- How the institution is going to achieve its graduate growth ambitions and targets.
- Provide a meaningful context for how service and support units like Math, Physics, and Student Services are going to be valued or seen in the UAP as important contributions to the institution.
- Illustrate and identify how York will be committed to providing full income accounting for its units to adequately undertake thorough budget analyses.
- Ensure mechanisms are in place to provide timely allocations of research space to meet the needs of top researchers.