

The Rising Tide: An Enrolment Policy Paper from the Alma Mater Society

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Executive Summary

This document is constructed on the basis of a series of Principles, Concerns, and Recommendations relating back to the four core pillars of Student Life, Finances, Academics, and Kingston Community. Within this framework, the AMS has endeavoured to outline the many pressures and concerns related to enrolment planning, and has chartered a possible path forward for the University.

The Enrolment Policy Paper's key recommendations for the university, divided by fundamental area of focus, are as follows:

Student Life

- Ensure the recommendations of the forthcoming Campus Master Plan highlight the preservation of our campus' unique character and culture;
- Implement an entrance survey as a complement to the existing exit survey;
- Engage in an assessment of the operations of the Student Affairs Office in an effort to ensure it is providing optimal service to students;
- Prioritize the Physical Education Centre as a focus for deferred maintenance and renovations;
- Entrench key recommendations from the Library and Archives Master Plan in the forthcoming Campus Master Plan;
- Prioritize the inadequate infrastructure allocated to Health, Counselling, and Disability Services as a target for capital funding raised through the Initiative Campaign;
- Strengthen the relationship between HCDS and relevant community health providers;
- Continue to pursue the implementation of the *Spoke and Wheel Model* of counselling;
- Expand outreach programs to prospective students targeted towards underrepresented groups.

Finances

- Implement an enrolment strategy that promotes growth through distance and credential courses;
- Pursue opportunities to for the university to reduce its reliance on government funding in favour of more predictable and sustainable revenue streams;
- Phase in a strategy that provides preferential incentive for revenue diversification, as compared to domestic residential enrolment increase, under the new Budget Model;
- Continue to encourage donations directed towards the Capital Fund through the Office of Advancement;

- Undertake ongoing cost-containment exercises in conjunction with representatives from each stakeholder group;
- Investigate opportunities for partnership with other institutions;
- Support the efforts of the AMS, through the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, to drastically reform the Provincial Funding Formula.

Academics

- Look into implementing a class size cap for lower- and upper-year courses in all programs at Queen's;
- Expand recruiting efforts to better include students from historically underrepresented groups;
- Investigate the possibility of hiring teaching-focused faculty.

Kingston Community

- Ensure the Queen's Comprehensive Housing Strategy addresses the need for quality, affordable, and purpose-built student housing in and around the University District;
- Ensure a considerable portion of the beds being added to the system through the opening of the new residences are committed to housing upper-year students;
- Undertake an evaluation of the capacity of services providing housing support for students.

Student Life

Student life has long been a cornerstone of the Queen's experience, providing opportunities for learning and growth that extend beyond the confines of the classroom. As enrolment increases, Queen's should ensure the quality of student life remains a defining element of our university.

Principles

Principle 1: Queen's University should remain a mid-sized institution.

Over the past several decades, Queen's has sacrificed a lot of maintain its relatively small size in a climate of growth and expansion. Our system share of provincial funding has dropped from 7% to just over 5% in 12 years, and we have forgone funding opportunities to preserve something the university considered to be of greater importance.

As recounted in Principal Woolf's visioning document *Where Next*, "Our sixth principal, the Rev. William Snodgrass, described [the character of Queen's] to his successor George Grant as a 'potent and mysterious spell.' If we let this go, we lose a critical part of our identity, and the reputational advantage that continually gives us an edge in student recruitment."¹ The character or our campus is inextricably tied to the tight-knit community of people within it, and the current size of the university is an integral element of this.

As outlined above, Queen's reputation also holds close ties with its mid-sized campus. The sense of community and broader learning environment the university offers contribute greatly to the recruitment and retention of top students and faculty, and are some of our key differentiators within the sector. Any erosion of the campus environment through enrolment increase would also compromise the quality of students, academics, and extra-curricular activities at Queen's.

Ontario is moving into a climate of slowed system growth under which the demand for space will decline. Instead, priorities will likely shift towards the quality and differentiation of institutions. Under these conditions, Queen's will reap the benefits of its decision not to engage in astronomical growth. Moving forward, it will be critical that we do not expand beyond our means.

To quote Principal Woolf once more, "We are still 'midsized' and I do not believe that significant further growth at the undergraduate level can be achieved without further erosion of the sense of community."² This erosion of the Queen's community would impact the university at every angle, and the AMS believes it is fundamental to our success that it not be allowed to do so.

¹ Daniel Woolf. *Where Next?* (Kingston: Queen's, 2010).

² Daniel Woolf. *The Third Juncture*. (Kingston: Queen's, 2012).

Principle 2: Queen's should continue to ensure it provides a superb broader learning environment for its students.

It has long been recognized that what goes on outside the classroom is a defining element of Queen's University. The broader learning environment lies at the heart of our institution's identity, and, along with teaching and research, "is the major driver of our reputation... which continues to attract extraordinary young people to our campuses."³

Queen's is able to boast more clubs per student than any other university in North America with the exception of Harvard, and our student government is the oldest and perhaps most autonomous in Canada. Our varsity teams consistently excel, and students are able to take advantage of a wide range of opportunities to provide support, guidance, and leadership to their peers.

While Queen's strives to maintain its high academic standards, it is the broader learning environment that acts as the key differentiator setting us apart from other institutions. It is as a result of this unique offering that the university continues attract a competitive applicant pool and top faculty, and it is through this environment that students engage in a large portion of their learning.

It is the position of the AMS that the broader learning environment at Queen's must be supported and enhanced. As enrolment increases, student opportunity cannot be allowed to diminish; it is through these extra- and co-curricular opportunities that the university attracts, retains, and produces exceptional students and graduates.

Principle 3: Queen's has an obligation to ensure students have easy access to quality support services.

The Academic Plan recognizes the critical role of student support services at Queen's, acknowledging that the university "must continue to provide the many forms of support, formal or otherwise, that students need outside the classroom." (Academic Plan, p.63) This commitment recognizes the integral mandate of student support services, and the fundamental role they play in promoting the health, safety, and prosperity of Queen's students.

It is the position of the AMS that in the face of increased enrolment, the university must reinforce its commitment to student support. In order to be successful in any other area of its mission, Queen's must first ensure a priority is placed on the wellbeing of all students.

³ Daniel Woolf. *The Third Juncture*. (Kingston: Queen's, 2012).

Principle 4: Queen's should strive to increase and support diversity in its student body.

The AMS supports the university in its efforts to increase the diversity of students on campus. Lowering barriers preventing underrepresented groups from accessing higher education allows more equitable university participation, and will serve to enrich the Queen's community in a variety of ways. Furthermore, it is of benefit to the greater community to extend education to underrepresented groups in the population.

As Queen's works towards a more diverse student body, it must ensure the appropriate supports are in place. The capacity of services such as the Queen's University International Centre; the Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre; the Human Rights Office; the Equity Office; Health, Counseling, and Disability Services; and the Office of Scholarships and Students Awards must be well-equipped to meet increased demand. In an effort to accommodate more diverse groups, the university must be prepared to provide the support systems necessary to allow all students to thrive.

Principle 5: The new residence buildings opening in 2015 should be used to mitigate the current overflow in the university's residence system.

The mix of students to be housed in the two new residence buildings opening in the fall of 2015 remains uncertain. While the addition of 550 beds to the residence system opens the door for increased enrolment, it also provides a venue for mitigating the overflow that has repossessed common rooms, vending machine rooms, piano rooms, and Senior Don rooms in existing residence facilities.

The layout of the new buildings is deliberately flexible. The rooms are modeled after Watts and Leggett halls, ensuring the space is appropriate to accommodate first-year, upper-year, and graduate students.

Between 2008 and 2012, the undergraduate population at Queen's increased by nearly 1700 new students, a growth that was accommodated through the addition of more beds to existing residence facilities and the displacement of upper-year and graduate students⁴ from the residence system. Through this process, valuable common space was repurposed into triple, quadruple, or economy-double rooms in an effort to increase the density of residence housing. The combined impact of the reduced common space and the displacement of upper-year and graduate students has had a crippling effect on the sense of community the residence experience aims to foster.

The magnitude of the overflow in the current system has been recognized on several occasions by Queen's Principal Daniel Woolf, who has stated his confidence that the 550

⁴Graduate students are currently being housed in Confederation Hotel through a lease agreement between the hotel and the university.

new beds could be filled in their entirety without any increased enrolment. In a 2013 interview with the Queen's Journal, Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) Alan Harrison assured students that the new buildings would "eliminate overcrowding"⁵, a feat requiring a substantial proportion of new residence space to be earmarked for mitigating overflow.

While the AMS recognizes that the addition of 550 residence beds creates the possibility for enrolment increase, an appreciable percentage of these rooms must be committed to restoring the damaging deficit of community space in our existing buildings. As Principal Woolf aptly stated in his visioning document *The Third Juncture*, the "Queen's residential experience is ... crucial to our identity"⁶, and it is an identity worth preserving.

Concerns

Concern 1: Campus expansion and enrolment increase have the potential to fundamentally alter the character of our campus.

Currently, the university is undertaking a long-term physical planning process under the re-visitation of the Campus Master Plan. While the key recommendations of the document have yet to be released, there is a possibility that a proposed expansion of campus will be addressed in its pages.

While the AMS believes that adequate space must exist to accommodate all students, the unique character of the university cannot be compromised in the process. Our mid-sized, historic campus plays an important role in our recruiting efforts and the development of our community, and is an important part of our heritage and our future.

Concern 2: Enrolment increase has the potential to decrease the availability of extra- and co-curricular opportunities.

As stated in the university's *Academic Plan*, "First, we must ensure that everyone on campus gets similar opportunities to get involved and serve."⁷

The abundance of co- and extra-curricular opportunities at the university constitutes the defining element of a Queen's education, and the benefit of this involvement to both the student and the university cannot be oversold.

As enrolment increases, the availability of learning opportunities outside the classroom may be restricted. Already, positions have become increasingly competitive. A larger student body may mean the introduction of new venues for involvement, but it will also

⁵ The Queen's Journal, *Details on New Residences Released*. (Kingston: CCC, Jan. 2013). <http://queensjournal.ca/story/2013-01-11/news/details-new-residences-released/>

⁶ Daniel Woolf. *The Third Juncture*. (Kingston: Queen's, 2012).

⁷ Academic Planning Task Force. *The Academic Plan*. (Kingston: Queen's, 2011).

reduce the accessibility of many core opportunities.

The possibility for meaningful participation, both inside and outside the classroom, is integral to the Queen's experience. As such, the AMS believes that any reduction in the availability of these opportunities would be of great detriment to the university as whole.

Concern 3: Many student support services are currently at or over capacity.

Any proposed increase in enrolment must be accompanied by an increase in the capacity of the university's student support services. As it currently stands, many of these services are at or over capacity. This is an issue that must be addressed before the student body can undergo further expansion.

While wait times have decreased at Health, Counseling, and Disability Services, the space constraints imposed by the service's current location have made it difficult for it to grow in order to meet increased demand. As an example, the service is prepared to hire an additional 3 physicians, but is unable to do so as a result of minimal office space. The essential support provided through HCDS is fundamental to student health, wellness, and safety, and any increase in enrolment must be mirrored by a comprehensive increase in the capacity of this service.

The Queen's Learning Commons (QLC) provides assistance to students in their academic pursuits. As stated in the university's Academic Plan, "... staff shortages limit the capacity of the QLC to meet the needs of all the students who come to it for help... We believe that an expanded and fully integrated QLC will be a critical component of our objective to realize a true inquiry-based curriculum."⁸ Until the proposed expansion of the QLC can be realized, students will have limited access to the important academic support services it provides, posing a threat to academic success.

The university has also acknowledged that the residence system is currently over capacity. While 2 new residences are set to open in 2015, a large portion of the added space must be used to mitigate overflow and restore valuable common areas. However, current plans for enrolment growth suggested these spaces may be used primarily to house new first year students, only adding to the current strain.

Finally, while the opening of the Physical Education Centre has provided expanded athletics facilities, many deficiencies still need to be addressed. Namely, the availability of equipment in the ARC is lacking, a concern that has been exacerbated by the fact that gym equipment has been breaking down at 10 times the anticipated rate. In order for students to thrive, the university must consider the availability of athletics space and equipment before the student body grows, particularly considering the large mandatory fee the university has levied to fund these services.

⁸ Academic Planning Task Force. *The Academic Plan*. (Kingston: Queen's, 2011).

While the university has made many strides towards expanding the capacity of student supports on campus, the AMS feels that further action should be taken to ready these essential services before substantial enrolment increase can occur.

Concern 4: Enrolment increase is not an efficient or effective method of creating a diversified student body.

While the AMS believes in lowering access barriers which inhibit the participation of underrepresented groups looking to access post-secondary education, we believe that enrolment increase alone is not an effective method of increasing the diversity of our campus. While an increased number of students from historically marginalized groups may attend university as a result of expanded enrolment, the proportion of students will be unaffected; in order to pursue any form of meaningful diversification, the university must turn to other means of lowering the access barriers many prospective students face.

Concern 5: In light of the 2012 Proposed Mandate Statement written by Principal Woolf calling for an increase of 2000 undergraduate students by 2018, the 550 new beds being added will do nothing to alleviate the pressure currently placed on the residence system.

Should the university pursue an enrolment strategy targeted towards expanding domestic, residential spaces, a steady-state increase of 2000 new students over four years will correspond to 500 new additions to the residence system. When expressed relative to the space being created by the two new residences set to open in 2015, over 90% of these additional beds are already accounted for. This leaves a total of only 50 beds to mitigate current overcrowding, restore common rooms and common spaces, and inject a mix of upper-year and graduate students into the residence community. Considering the burden that has been placed on the system even since 2008, this falls about 300⁹ beds short.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Queen's should ensure the recommendations of the forthcoming Campus Master Plan highlight the preservation of our campus' unique character and culture.

The Campus Master Plan will provide a framework for the physical evolution of the campus over the course of the next 50 years, and will have a formative impact on the future of the university. The AMS believes that this report should highlight the need to preserve the

⁹Enrolment increased by approximately 1700 students from 2008-2012. This amounts to approximately 340 new spaces being added to the residence system before increases for the 2013-14 year are included. The final approximation used was 350 new beds.

unique elements of our campus, ensuring proposed changes are made with the objective of enhancing, rather than cannibalizing, the character and culture of the university.

Recommendation 2: Queen's should implement an entrance survey as a complement to the existing exit survey in an effort to identify the elements of the university that are fundamental to recruiting top students, and those areas where the university could better align itself with student needs.

Currently, Queen's administers a comprehensive exit survey to the outgoing class as a means of gathering data on their experience at Queen's. However, without any mechanism to quantify the expectations students have upon entering in their first year, it is impossible to know whether their expectations are being met upon their exit.

An entrance poll would lend invaluable data detailing the outcomes Queen's students are hoping to gain through their education, how the university can better tailor itself to supporting its student body, and which elements of the university are fundamental to attracting top students. This information would empower the institution to better meet the needs of its current students, and would also ensure it is optimally leveraging its resources to attract future learners.

Recommendation 3: Queen's should engage in an assessment of the operations of the Office of Student Affairs in an effort to ensure it is providing optimal service to students.

The support services provided through the Office of Student Affairs are instrumental in ensuring student health, wellness, safety and success. Given the integral role these services play within the Queen's community, it is necessary that they continue to function optimally.

In light of proposed enrolment increases, the AMS recommends the operations of the Office of Student Affairs be reviewed on a regular basis, with the first review occurring before 2015-16¹⁰. This process would ensure all services are equipped to serve an influx of students, and that capacity continues to expand to accommodate a rising demand. Particularly given the recent changes to the Student Affairs portfolio¹¹, the AMS would like to empower the Office to operate optimally under evolving conditions.

¹⁰ The proposed enrolment projections submitted to the Board of Trustees show the first marked increases in enrolment occurring in 2015-16.

¹¹ Most recently, the moving of the Office of the University Registrar under the umbrella of Student Affairs.

Recommendation 4: In light of its reopening as an auxiliary athletics space and examination centre, the Physical Education Centre should be prioritized as a focus for deferred maintenance and renovations.

The AMS recognizes the opening of the Physical Education Centre constitutes a first step in addressing the space deficit on campus. While the increased athletics and exam facilities are welcome, the Physical Education Centre requires a large investment in funding directed towards deferred maintenance and renovations to transform it into a utile and multi-functional student space. Further, the AMS supports the University in investigating the feasibility of housing a Health and Wellness Centre in the PEC.

Recommendation 5: Key recommendations from the Library and Archives Master Plan should be entrenched in the forthcoming Campus Master Plan.

The Library and Archives Master Plan, to be released in the coming year, offers many transformative recommendations that will ready the library and archives system for the future. A reduction in stack space contributing to increased availability of study areas and reading rooms, combined with a digitization of current resources and a sustainable collection paradigm, will ensure the system is equipped to accommodate and the demands of a growing and evolving student population.

The key recommendations from the LAMP should be incorporated into the Campus Master Plan to ensure they become an integral part of the campus planning process moving forward. Entrenching as many recommendations as possible into the CMP will empower this key support service to enhance the student learning experience for years to come.

Recommendation 6: The inadequate infrastructure allocated to Health, Counselling, and Disability Services should become a priority for capital funding raised through the Initiative Campaign.

The restrictions placed on Health, Counselling, and Disability Services by the inadequacies of its physical space must be addressed before any increase in enrolment can be entertained. Both the percentage of university students accessing services through HCDS and the average amount of support each student with a registered disability requires have been increasing over the course of the last decade. This is a trend that is occurring irrespective of enrolment increase; thus, when an expanding student population is also taken into account, the resultant strain on these vital services is acutely concerning.

The AMS recommends that capital funding raised through the university's Initiative Campaign should be allocated towards the provision of new infrastructure for HCDS. Until

the space deficiencies the service currently faces are adequately addressed, it will be impossible for it to expand to meet the needs of a growing student body.

Recommendation 7: Health, Counselling, and Disability Services should work to strengthen its relationship with relevant community health providers to ensure smooth transition for students as it moves towards the provision of short-term care.

The shift of HCDS's operations towards the provision of short-term care, with longer-range support being offered through specialized community health providers, has been classified as a *gold standard best practice* within the field. As outlined in the Principal's Commission's Report on Mental Health, the service is looking to operate primarily as a crisis centre, offering reduced wait times to students in need of immediate support and referring to the most appropriate professionals to provide exemplary long-term care.

Particularly in the face of increased enrolment, ensuring immediate support is always available to students in crisis remains a top priority, and the providers of long-term care must be robust and specialized enough to accommodate the needs of an expanded and diversified student body. The AMS supports the move towards the provision of shorter-term care through HCDS so long as it continues to provide the best support for our students.

Currently, the service has a strong relationship with various departments within the Kingston General Hospital and Hotel Dieu. Another important community health provider is Frontenac Community Mental Health and Addiction Services (FCMHAS), which provides exemplary long-term counselling services to students and community members. Currently, the university is in the process of negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding with FCMHAS to ensure they are prepared to accommodate an increased number of patients from the Queen's community.

While the AMS supports the university's decision to engage in active partnerships with community health providers, ensuring smooth transitions for all students as they move out of our direct care is a fundamental element of this best practice. In an effort to reinforce the relationship between Queen's and our Kingston partners, the AMS recommends that these transitions be supported through liaisons, working within HCDS to ensure students receive appropriate referrals and follow-up.

Additionally, the university should implement a codified case tracking system which students can opt-into to allow HCDS to track their progress across the system. Through these efforts, the university can ensure no student can fall through the cracks. It is critical to the health, wellness, and safety of our community that every student receives the support they require.

Recommendation 8: Queen's should continue to pursue the implementation of the *Spoke and Wheel Model*, as proposed in the Report of the Principal's Commission on Mental Health, to ensure students from every Faculty have access to specialized counselling services.

The needs of students in different faculties and programs of study at Queen's are diverse and specialized. As such, the AMS supports the university's initiative to implement specialized counseling services at the Faculty, School, and Program levels in an effort to meet the varied needs of our student body. The AMS recommends that this initiative be undertaken uniformly across campus to ensure all students have equal access to resources that promote health, wellness, and safety.

Recommendation 9: Outreach programs to prospective students should be expanded and enhanced as a means of lowering barriers for underrepresented groups looking to access post-secondary education.

As Queen's looks to enrol an increasing number of students from underrepresented groups, it must address the access barriers these prospective students face in participating in post-secondary education. The only meaningful way to ensure increased diversity in the student body is through targeted outreach programs to marginalized populations.

The barriers faced by these prospective students are not purely physical, mental, or financial in nature: they are also systemic and cultural. It has been demonstrated in many cases that outreach programs provide the only effective means of addressing these barriers, necessitating some programming of this nature to increase participation among these groups.

The outreach strategies Queen's is taking towards international and aboriginal students provide a strong starting point. These efforts should be expanded, and teamed with programs tailored to other marginalized populations.

Early-outreach programs should also be expanded. In many cases, the decision to attend university is made long before the end of high school. As such, programs targeted at middle-school or early high-school students, such as E=MC², should be enhanced to increase awareness surrounding higher education. These programs should also be extended into targeted populations, where the need to interact with students at an early stage is the greatest.

This effort should be paralleled by an expansion of support services for underrepresented groups. The capacity of services such as the Queen's University International Centre; Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre; the Human Rights Office; the Equity Office; Health, Counseling, and Disability Services; and the Office of Scholarships and Students Awards must be well-equipped to meet increased demand.

Any effort to increase the diversity of the student body at Queen's should extend past the recruitment and enrolment process. To create any meaningful change, it must involve support for students from high school through to graduation.

Recommendation 10: Queen's should implement an enrolment strategy that promotes growth through distance and credential courses that do not pose a threat to the university's core programs and residential campus.

An increased offering of credentials through summer and distance courses provides an ideal venue to generate new revenue without compromising Queen's residential campus or core operations. The AMS recommends the Strategic Enrolment Management Group reinforce the need for Faculties and Schools to undertake credentialing activities, and that this priority become a cornerstone of the group's upcoming 10-year enrolment plan. In addition, the 2000 new students referenced in Principal's Woolf's Proposed Mandate Statement should include many students enrolled in distance, credential, and summer programs.

Finances

The finances of the university provide the context for the entirety of its operations. The formative role of financial incentives, both provincially and institutionally, has the ability to shape the Queen's University of today and tomorrow.

Principles

Principle 6: Queen's should rely on predictable, consistent, and stable revenue streams to support its Operating Budget.

In order to engage in any level of short- or long-term planning, Queen's must first possess a firm understanding of the current and future state of its finances. In any case where the revenue supporting the university's Operating Budget is prone to substantial and unpredictable fluctuations, it will present a barrier to ensuring short-term consistency, and will undoubtedly cripple any efforts to chart a path for our future. As such, any meaningful reliance on uncertain revenue streams poses an immediate and long-term threat to the institution.

Principle 7: The diversification of revenue incentivized through the Provost's new Budget Model is an essential path for the university's future.

The Provost's new Budget Model provides incentive for Faculties and Schools to generate new revenue, with a stated emphasis on diversified revenue streams. In reducing the percentage of the operating budget that remains reliant on unstable government funding, the university is better prepared to ensure consistency and quality for its students and effectively plan for its future.

The offering of increased and stacked credentials¹²¹³ will afford Faculties and Schools the stability that other sources of funding cannot. The revenue generated through these course offerings will provide support for the core operations of the university, ensuring our core programs are able to run sustainably in future years despite inadequacies in tuition-related and government funding.

The opportunity to offer an expanded set of credentials across the institution provides an important path forward for Queen's, allowing us to preserve the fundamental tenants of the university mission while readying us for an emergently harsh fiscal climate.

¹² These are offered through summer programming and distance studies, and do not pose a threat to our residential university.

¹³ The Queen's University Proposed Mandate Statement proposed that, "by 2018, every [Queen's student] has the opportunity to pursue an expanded set of credentials." Queen's University. *Institutional Vision, Proposed Statement and Priority Objectives*. (Kingston: Queen's 2012).

Principle 8: A substantial portion of the university Operating Budget should continue to fund student learning and support services, particularly in a climate of increasing enrolment.

Queen's is part of an Ontario-wide trend that sees students becoming larger financiers of their education than ever before. In just over 2 decades, the percentage of total operating income stemming from provincial grants has declined from 80% to around 50%, and student contributions since 1988 have risen from 19% to over 40%¹⁴. Income from ancillary fees has also risen as a percentage of the Operating Budget in recent years. All told, students are financing an unprecedented portion of the cost of their education.

This trend is accompanied by a declining percentage of university operating budgets flowing directly back to students. Increasingly, faculty compensation and capital projects have comprised a greater share of institutional expenditures. On a per-student basis in Ontario, tuition contributions to academic salaries have increased from \$1839 to \$2252 between 2005 and 2010¹⁵ without any increase in the number of faculty; this saw compensation rise by \$20,000 per faculty member in 5 years¹⁶, without students reaping the benefits of smaller class sizes or greater interaction with a professor. The Operating Budget has also been increasingly instrumental in financing capital projects, diverting further funding away from core operations.

Ultimately, the reliance on enrolment increase as a means of generating new revenue is not a sustainable practice, and limits the proportion of the university Operating Budget spent on students. An increase in enrolment requires a paralleled investment in residences, instructors, support services, classrooms, and facilities as they expand to meet rising demand. Unfortunately, "total institutional operating revenue has remained roughly the same per-student since 2008, while university expenditures related to salaries¹⁷, student support services and merit-based scholarships have all increased per student. The result has been smaller portions of new system revenue available for the kinds of new investments needed to adequately support new students."¹⁸

It is the position of the AMS that a significant percentage of the Operating Budget should continue to be invested in our students' success. Particularly as enrolment increases, students must be provided with the quality in- and out-of classroom experience that is at the heart of the university's reputation. To ensure this, there is a requirement for a continued and substantial commitment from the Operating Budget to provide funding for new instructors, classrooms, facilities, and expanded support services. As we welcome in a growing number of students, this necessity only increases.

¹⁴ Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance. *System Growth*. (Toronto: OUSA 2011).

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ These salaries represented increases in compensation per faculty member, with no new faculty being added to the system.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Principle 9: The Provincial Funding Formula should be in tune with the needs of Ontarians and the path ahead for the post-secondary sector.

The Provincial Funding Formula dictates the distribution of operating grants to Ontario Universities¹⁹. The method of distribution of these funds is a formative force behind the entire sector; because universities respond so powerfully to funding incentives, this formula provides a starting point for shaping future trends in post-secondary education.

The current formula has been in place in some form since the late sixties, and provides a singular incentive for enrolment increase. This reflects a priority for the sector that has since passed; with population dynamics declining in the 18-24 year-old demographic, the discussion has shifted towards quality, innovation, and differentiation.

In light of its influence on Ontario universities, the incentives imbedded in the Funding Formula should be realigned to reflect the objectives and priorities of the sector, and the needs of Ontarians.

Concerns

Concern 6: Accessibility grants and the yearly risk of not receiving full provincial funding for enrolment pose long-term threats to our institution.

Through the nineties, the government distributed operating grants to universities through an enrolment-based model of *corridor funding* whereby universities would negotiate their share of the incoming cohort with the province, and enrolment would have to fall within a corridor +/- 3% of the negotiated target. Any enrolment over this corridor ceiling would receive no funding.

In the early 2000s, facing the looming double-cohort and an increase in the university-aged population, the province began to fund enrolment above the corridor ceiling through back-end *accessibility grants*²⁰. While this allowed universities to grow as they wished, it provided an unpredictable funding climate whereby grants were distributed after enrolment decisions had already been made, and the government had no obligation to provide full funding for growth beyond the corridor.

Nearly a decade and a half later, this uncertainty has grown. With population dynamics shifting²¹ and the province vowing to cap spending²², there is a very real risk that the government could elect to withhold funding for a portion of university enrolment.

¹⁹ Operating grants account for about half of Ontario universities' operating income.

²⁰ These are grants distributed throughout the year to make up for the shortfall in funding as a result of enrolment increase over the corridor ceiling.

²¹ The echo boom peaked among the university-aged population in 2013 in Canada.

²² With healthcare costs increasing by 3%-7% a year, education will likely lost funding.

At Queen's, nearly 95% of our Operating budget is made up of enrolment-based funding²³, with government grants comprising about one half. All budgetary decisions are based around the assumption that the government will continue to fund enrolment year-to-year. The result of them not doing so would cripple the university's finances, an impact that would ultimately be transferred back to students.

Concern 7: The reliance on enrolment increase as an "easy fix" for budgetary concerns creates a large downstream cost that is unsustainable.

In those programs where enrolment targets are not dictated at the provincial level, enrolment increase is often the easiest way to generate new revenue. Because provincial operating grants and tuition²⁴ are both enrolment-based, the addition of new students results in an influx of funding. To a certain point, this growth can be accommodated without an appreciable investment in an expanded faculty complement, capital expenditures, or central costs, providing an obvious avenue to balance the budget.

While enrolment may produce new funding in the short term, though, it is not a sustainable revenue stream for the university. Students require a variety of supports and facilities, and an eventuality of enrolment increase is the requirement for a new set of investments in buildings, professors, and expanded student services. The revenue generated through enrolment expansion will not provide enough subsidy to support these costs²⁵, and they present an increasing risk to the Operating Budget of the university.

Concern 8: In many cases, enrolment increase is the easiest short-term strategy to increase revenue at the Faculty or School level, allowing it to be employed as a short-term solution to budgetary constraints and failing to adequately address the need for differential revenue streams. This represents a perverse incentive in the Budget Model.

A stated objective of the Provost's new Budget Model is diversification of revenue streams resulting in a decreased reliance on government funding. However, due to the nature of the incentives within the Budget Model, revenue generation of any form is equally incentivized. As a result, increased enrolment of domestic, residential students is as effective a method of responding to budgetary pressures as offering increased credentials; in fact, because expanding enrolment is often easier than implementing new programming, it may be a preferential option.

²³ This is comprised of tuition and government grants.

²⁴ These two sources fund around 95% of the budget at Queen's.

²⁵ Provincial funding is being further eroded through efficiency savings, which are reducing the amount of funding the university receives per student. This trend will likely continue in future years with the government's spending cap and rising healthcare costs.

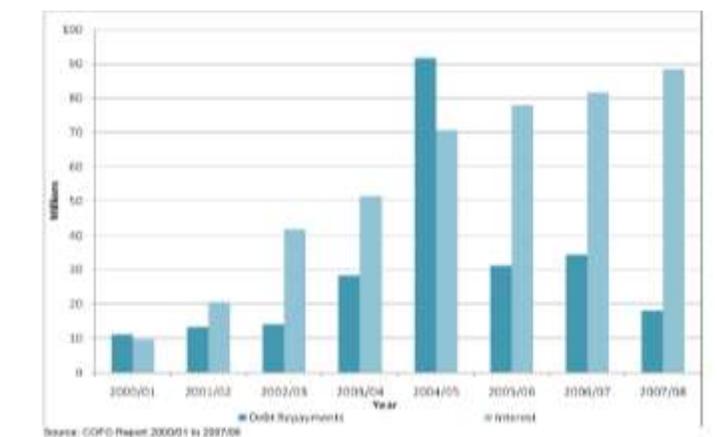
Increasing domestic enrolment is antithetical to the objective of reducing the university's reliance on government grants, but there is a danger it may be used as a substitute to revenue diversification through activities such as increased credentialing. This creates a perverse incentive within the Budget Model, which could see Faculties or Schools forgoing essential opportunities to diversify their revenue streams in favour of chasing dwindling enrolment-based funding from the province. This is a move that may balance their budget in the short term, but will undoubtedly compromise their long-term viability.

By the year 2019, the new Budget Model will be fully phased in, and there is no plan in place to provide revenue-generating units with any central support or cross-subsidy. At this juncture, government funding will likely have reduced to the point where it cannot support the operations of many Faculties and Schools; in many areas of the university, this has already become a reality. Thus, revenue-generating units will require the funding leveraged through alternative sources, built up through the incentives for revenue diversification in the Budget Model. The AMS believes that the danger of any Faculty or School responding to the perverse incentive for domestic enrolment increase in lieu of taking on these vital activities cannot be supported.

Concern 9: Transfers from the Operating Budget to the Capital Fund, which have only come into practice recently, see students paying for expenditures that have historically been funded by the university.

As the result of a precedent set through the *SuperBuild* campaign in the early 2000s, institutions in Ontario are permitted to use a portion of their Operating Budget to cover principal and interest payments on capital indebtedness. Since this regulation came into effect, the university Operating Budget has been increasingly instrumental in financing capital projects, diverting funding away from core operations. In 2013-14 alone, Queen's will be making a \$13.8M transfer from the Operating Budget to the Capital Fund.

Figure 1: The increasing reliance on the Operating Budget to fund capital payments across Ontario from 2000/01 to 2007/08.



Nearly 95% of the Operating Budget is derived from tuition or per-student funding from the Ontario government. Historically, this income supported the core operations of the university, providing investments in faculty, classrooms, library acquisitions, and technology that directly benefitted the student.

Under current circumstances, this funding has been diverted increasingly towards capital expenditures, largely in the form of principal and interest payments on capital debt. This practice sees students paying a greater share of capital costs at the same time as they are receiving fewer returns in the form of quality education.

Concern 10: The Budget Model does not create incentive for cost efficiencies within the Shared Services.

The incentives embedded in the budget model²⁶ drive cost saving and revenue generation through every area of the university with the notable exception of the Shared Services. As a result, these services will receive a steady stream of revenue from the Faculties and Schools through a taxation process, regardless of any cost efficiencies or revenue generation they undertake. As such, there is an imbalance of responsibility for increasing the financial viability of the university; while revenue-generating units must streamline their operations to remain financially viable, the Shared Services do not derive any benefit from streamlining their operations.

It is the position of the AMS that the burden of cost containment should not be shouldered in its entirety by the Faculties and Schools. While the Cost Containment exercise currently being undertaken by the Provost's Office provides a first step, there are few long-term checks or balances to incentivize cost-effectiveness within the Shared Services at Queen's.

Concern 11: Without increased enrolment, Queen's may be unable to benefit from economies of scale, placing an undue burden on the Operating Budget.

The cost efficiencies that have been, or could be, created through enrolment increase exist in many areas of the university. With increased enrolment comes savings through bulk purchasing; increased revenue through heightened research intensity; lower per-student faculty costs due to increased class sizes; increased administrative efficiencies; and a proportionately smaller portion of the budget needing to be dedicated to central operations. While Queen's is already able to take advantage of many efficiencies at its current size, forgoing future growth may limit us from further savings on a per-student basis.

²⁶ While the budget process requires the Shared Services to justify their budgets as an incentive for cost efficiencies, the budget model itself has no similar incentive.

Concern 12: Ontario operates under an antiquated Funding Formula with a singular incentive for enrolment increase.

The provincial funding formula dictates the evolution of post-secondary education across Ontario. With a sector that responds so powerfully to financial incentives, the embedded priorities in the province's grant distribution will dictate how the system will develop.

Currently, Ontario operates under a model that drives enrolment increase at each institution. This has had a profound influence on the sector since the formula's introduction in the late sixties, and it continues to drive system growth today. However, with changing population dynamics and government priorities, the funding formula is ill-equipped to serve the province in the decades to come.

Since the 1980's, the increase in the size of operating grants has fallen short of inflation every year. As a result, a decision to hold enrolment steady would make it impossible for an institution to cover the increasing costs of running a university. Thus, expanding enrolment is the only viable option to balance the budget under the auspices of the current funding formula.

Furthermore, portions of the formula, including the *basic income unit (BIU)*²⁷ weights and the *formula fee*²⁸, represent policy relics that the province has evolved past in recent decades. These have no relevance today, and only serve to limit funding opportunities for universities. Thus, many of the incentives contained in the formula are out of touch with institutional or system priorities, and create large inefficiencies in the distribution of funds. The second result is the creation of perverse incentives, which encourage activities such as the enrolment of students in programs with poorly estimated BIU weights²⁹.

The AMS believes the funding formula must undergo drastic reform to meet the needs of the university sector and its students, both today and in years to come.

²⁷ A *basic income unit (BIU)* is the measurement of relative program cost used to calculate the proportion of total funding one fiscal full-time equivalent student will generate in a given year. These numbers have not been changed since the sixties, and provide a poor reflection of actual program cost.

²⁸ The *formula fee* is an element of the Provincial Funding Formula once used to represent the tuition fee paid by students for a specific program. The logic behind this was as follows: assuming *BIU* values provide a good estimate of program cost, then the size of the operating grant received by an institution would provide exactly enough funding to run each program. However, as students also fund their education in the form of tuition, the tuition fee for a program is subtracted from the government grant. In theory, the result would be that, through a cost-sharing scheme between the province and the student, the cost of each student's education would be fully paid for. However, the formula fee has had not been equivalent to actual tuition fees in decades. As a result, it is currently purely a veiled deduction in the size of a university's operating grant

²⁹ Some programs have relatively low costs as compared to other programs receiving the same provincial funding. This creates incentive to enroll more students in those programs that expend a smaller portion of their income.

Recommendations

Recommendation 11: Queen's should actively pursue opportunities to reduce its reliance on government funding, generated through enrolment increase, in favour of more predictable and sustainable revenue streams.

The AMS supports the university in its efforts to decrease the reliance of the Operating Budget on government operating grants, administered on the basis of domestic enrolment levels. The diversification of revenue streams incentivized through the new Budget Model signifies an important step towards financial sustainability, and the AMS recommends this incentive be reinforced wherever possible moving forward.

Recommendation 12: Queen's should phase in a strategy that provides preferential incentive for revenue diversification, as compared to domestic residential enrolment increase, under the new Budget Model. This strategy should be phased in until 2019, in parallel with the phase-out of the Hold Harmless Payments.

In an effort to reinforce the university's dual objectives of reducing reliance on government funding and generating new revenue through expanded credentials, the AMS recommends that a preferential incentive for revenue diversification be embedded in the new Budget Model.

Currently, the Strategic Enrolment Management Group is able to mitigate domestic residential enrolment increase, encouraging Faculties and Schools to explore new revenue streams as an alternative means of generating new funding. However, the AMS believes that a similar incentive should be introduced into the Budget Model itself; this would provide a firmer and more permanent method of promoting diversification of revenue over traditional enrolment increase.

The AMS encourages the Provost's Office to investigate possible implementation strategies for an incentive of this nature, in consultation with relevant stakeholder groups. This would reinforce the critical objectives currently driving the budgeting process, and would have a positive impact on the long-term financial stability of the university.

Recommendation 13: The Office of Advancement should continue to encourage donations directed toward the Capital Fund.

Capital funding is a priority for Queen's through the ongoing Initiative Campaign. The AMS believes that no substantial portion of capital investments should be garnered through transfers from the Operating Budget, and supports the university in the continued prioritization of capital funding as an area of focus for private donations.

Recommendation 14: Ongoing cost containment exercises should be undertaken across the Shared Services; results should be revisited regularly with representatives from each stakeholder group.

Currently, a cost containment exercise is being undertaken through the Office of the Provost to review the budgets of the Shared Services.

The AMS believes that, so long as the Budget Model provides no incentive for efficiencies or revenue generation across the Shared Services, this initial exercise should be accompanied by a yearly review of proposed budgets for these offices. This review should be undertaken as a joint effort between representatives of all stakeholder groups, and should include members of the AMS and SGPS.

Recommendation 15: Queen's should look into opportunities for partnership with other institutions in an effort to reduce costs.

In an effort to take advantage of the cost efficiencies created through economies of scale, the university should investigate opportunities to partner with other institutions rather than drastically increasing enrolment.

Examples of such partnerships could include, but are not limited to, bulk purchasing of resources; joint contracts; partnerships with colleges³⁰; and further sharing of library acquisitions. The feasibility of such partnerships should be investigated through a task force, and results should be made publicly available.

Recommendation 16: Queen's should support the efforts of the AMS, through the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, to drastically reform the Provincial Funding Formula.

The AMS is proud to be one of the founding members of the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, a provincial lobbying group representing the interests of 140,000 students to the Ontario government on matters surrounding the quality, accessibility, affordability, and accountability of post-secondary education. Currently, OUSA is engaging the sector in a consultative process in an attempt to address the inadequacies of the current funding formula for universities in Ontario. One of these consultations will be held at Queen's, and will take place during the Fall semester.

In the Spring, this process will culminate in a policy paper, authored by the AMS Academic Affairs Commissioner in concert with the OUSA President, which will provide a series of recommendations to the province for a drastically reformed funding formula.

³⁰ The AMS recognizes that the university has already made strides in working with St. Lawrence College.

The AMS recommends that the university engage in the consultative process, both through informal consultation and through participation in formal consultative events being hosted at Queen's. Further, the AMS recommends that the university consider offering its support to the policy paper being brought forward by OUSA once it has become available in the Spring. The university should consider affording members of the AMS the opportunity to present this document to the Board of Trustees, where it can be received for information or ratification.

Academics

The core mission of the university centres on the calibre of its academic offerings. Moving forward, Queen's must ensure that the quality of the educational experience is not compromised as it works to realize the future of the institution.

Principles

Principle 10: Queen's should offer a first-rate classroom experience to all students.

Educating students is the fundamental tenant of any institution of higher learning, and is at the core of our university's identity. Principal Woolf articulates the role of the classroom experience in his document *Where Next* in recognizing, "At the end of the day, teaching students is the core reason why universities exist... We would be research institutes or industries without our students, and Queen's in particular has a vested interest in maintaining a reputation as a school that puts students first."³¹

It is the position of the AMS that teaching and learning should sit at the forefront of any discussion related to the path forward for our university, and that the quality of the classroom experience must remain the first consideration as Queen's embarks on a long-term enrolment plan.

Principle 11: Queen's should endeavour to maintain its high admissions standards across all programs.

Acceptance into Queen's is subject to a stringent admissions process focused on personal statements of experience, extra-curricular activities, and exceptional grades. Currently, Queen's has the highest overall admissions average of any institution in the country, accepting students who have demonstrated not only academic prowess, but also a strong commitment beyond the classroom through active participation in many extra- and co-curricular activities.

The caliber of our students is fundamental to our reputation and success, and empowers our faculty to offer a robust and challenging classroom experience. A strong student body also allows for interaction between similarly bright and driven peers, elevating the learning environment as a whole. Moving forward, Queen's should ensure its ability to recruit and retain top students is not undermined; it is these students that draw in donations and high-end faculty, and aid the university in fulfilling its academic mission.

³¹ Daniel Woolf. *Where Next?* (Kingston: Queen's, 2010).

Concerns

Concern 13: Increasing student-faculty ratios are eroding the quality of education at Queen's.

Since 1990, the student-faculty ratio in Ontario has climbed from 18:1 to 27:1³². Conversely, since 2005, the average number of faculty in the province has not increased, even in the face of unprecedented enrolment and a rising investment in faculty salaries and benefits. To exacerbate this trend, an increasing research demand has been placed on universities, affecting students both through the shift in faculty focus and the diversion of operating funding towards the indirect costs of research.

In an effort to combat these trends, the university has hired more part-time and contract lecturers to educate students. These individuals may possess fewer qualifications than tenured faculty, their hiring process is considerably less stringent, and they are not offered the same compensation and job security as tenured faculty members. In many senses, this is not a sustainable method of addressing current faculty shortages.

The university's Academic Plan acknowledges the "serious threat posed by financial pressures and increasing student/faculty ratios on the quality of the undergraduate learning experience."³³ The shift in the educational landscape towards climbing class sizes sees students increasingly removed from their educators, and the detriment to the overall quality of education at Queen's cannot be ignored.

Concern 14: Declining quality of education could pose a threat to the university's ability to attract and retain top professors.

In *The Third Juncture*, Principal Woolf articulates several defining features of Queen's faculty and the impact they have on the student learning experience. He remarks, "learning, an activity which we all do, [lies at the centre of the university's Academic Plan], and the faculty we attract here in coming years should be as committed to providing an outstanding learning experience for students at all levels... as they are to pursuing excellence in their chosen field of research."³⁴

It is clear that Queen's academic mission relies on an exceptional faculty complement. As a balanced academy, our success is dependent on teachers who are committed to educating students; this is integral to fulfilling the basic mandate of the university.

Any erosion of the in-classroom experience, though, brings about a parallel decline in the

³² Ontario Confederation of Faculty Associations. *OCUFA Briefing Note, Issue: Faculty Shortages*. (Toronto: OCUFA, August 2011).

³³ Academic Planning Task Force. *The Academic Plan*. (Kingston: Queen's, 2011).

³⁴ Daniel Woolf. *The Third Juncture*. (Kingston: Queen's, 2012).

university's ability to recruit those professors who are "committed to providing an outstanding learning experience". If left unchecked, this will produce a cyclic downturn in the quality of education at Queen's, extending to all areas of the academic mission.

Concern 15: With the echo-boom peak passing and first-year class sizes increasing, Queen's will struggle to recruit a highly qualified applicant pool in future years.

Between the years 1980 and 2010, the number of youth aged 18-24 dropped by 3% across Canada. From 2011-2020, this population is expected to decline by a further 10%³⁵. The *echo boom*³⁶ generation passing through the 18-24 demographic was estimated to peak in 2013 in Canada, and 2015 in Ontario. The result is unequivocal: moving forward, the number of students accessing post-secondary education in Ontario will shrink.

As a university falling outside of the ever-expanding Greater Toronto Area, Queen's will likely see a reduced applicant pool in future years. Even without enrolment increase, this poses a threat to our ability to recruit an abundance of qualified students across all programs on a yearly basis. If incoming class sizes continue to grow, this challenge will be compounded.

Particularly in those programs with a lower yield rate³⁷, Queen's runs the risk of eroding the quality of its student body; for example, it is already becoming difficult to recruit first-rate students in Arts programs. With Arts and Science looking to take on some of the largest increases in enrolment³⁸, the threat to our qualified student body is real and acute.

Recommendations

Recommendation 17: All programs at Queen's should investigate the possibility of implementing a class size cap for lower- and upper-year courses.

Currently, the Queen's School of Business operates under a class-size cap of 75 students in first- and second-year courses, and 55 students in upper-year courses. This ensures that students are afforded meaningful contact with a professor regardless of fluctuations in enrolment levels.

The AMS recommends that all Faculties and Schools undertake an evaluation of the maximum capacity of their lower- and upper-year classes, and investigate the possibility of phasing in a similar cap. This need not necessitate uniform class sizes across the board; it

³⁵ AUCC.

³⁶ The *echo boom* refers to a second population boom corresponding to the children of baby boomers.

³⁷ A yield rate corresponds to the proportion of students accepting their offer of admission in a given program.

³⁸ The Faculty of Arts and Science has proposed an increase of 450 students in 2015-16, a trend that is likely to continue until 2018.

will simply set an absolute upper limit after which point the Faculty has determined the quality of the classroom experience would be compromised. An exercise of this nature would demonstrate a commitment on the part of the university to ensure the quality of education is not undermined as a product of enrolment increase, and would afford all students the benefit of reasonable student-faculty ratios.

Recommendation 18: Queen's should continue to expand its recruiting efforts in order to better include students from historically underrepresented groups.

Currently, the national scope of Queen's recruiting efforts is more extensive than the majority of universities in Canada. As population dynamics shift, though, Queen's must be prepared to expand even further.

In order to ensure our applicant pool continues to attract enough qualified students, Queen's must increase its outreach to groups that are currently underrepresented on campus. At the present time, the university is working to recruit more international and aboriginal students, an activity that the AMS believes should be accompanied by expanded outreach into other underrepresented populations³⁹. This comprehensive strategy will ensure our robust applicant pool and dynamic student body are maintained.

Recommendation 19: Queen's should investigate the possibility of hiring teaching-focused faculty in an effort to ensure all students have the opportunity to engage in meaningful contact with their instructors.

In his document *Where Next*, Principal Woolf acknowledges the challenges associated with the traditional distribution of faculty workload. He remarks, "We must ... re-examine and possibly even recalibrate the balance between teaching and research. As I suggested last year... perhaps it is time to revisit the traditional 40/40/20 model of faculty members' time split among teaching, research and service. What if it could be varied over the course of a career, as is now done to some extent in some Faculties? It has also been suggested in some quarters that universities should have more 'teaching only' faculty. This is a discussion which deserves to take place here."⁴⁰

The distribution of faculty time has evolved in a variety of ways. Currently, the premium the government has placed on research intensity has increased the research load of many faculty members. Further, rising faculty salaries have placed a burden on university operating budgets, but the number of faculty at institutions across Ontario has stagnated, contributing to climbing student-faculty ratios through enrolment increase.

As a result, the AMS believes the university should engage in a discussion regarding the

³⁹ See *Recommendation 9* for a more comprehensive overview of proposed outreach strategies.

⁴⁰ Daniel Woolf. *Where Next?* (Kingston: Queen's, 2010).

possible introduction of tenure-track, teaching-focused positions at Queen's⁴¹. These faculty members would take on larger teaching loads than current instructors, offsetting a portion of the teaching time lost to research intensity and providing a more cost-effective method of addressing rising class sizes. Furthermore, these faculty would perform research into pedagogy, a practice that would be of benefit to not only their own students, but also to the learning environment as a whole.

Finally, the AMS believes that teaching-focused faculty should undergo the same hiring, promotion, and tenure processes as traditional faculty, and should be offered commensurate job security and compensation. In order to espouse the values of the "quintessential balanced academy", Queen's must ensure its commitments to research excellence are parallel by equal investments in the learning environment.

⁴¹ Where necessary for the purposes of accreditation, instructor credentials must always meet the mandatory accreditation requirements for a program.

Kingston Community

A defining element of the Queen's community is its dual role within the greater City of Kingston.

Principles

Principle 12: The relationship between Queen's and the Kingston community is an integral element of the university's identity.

The geographical location of the Queen's campus places it at the heart of the City of Kingston. With our close proximity to the downtown core, Kingston General Hospital, the Kingston Collegiate and Vocational Institute, and the varying residential communities that border the university, we are truly integrated within the community.

Maintaining a positive relationship with the City of Kingston and its permanent residents is extremely important to the Queen's experience: our students quickly become immersed in the surrounding community, and the city offers a wide range of opportunities to engage our university. It is crucial to note the negative impact enrolment growth could have these relationships as we place a strain on city resources, housing availability, and rent prices. We cannot grow at the detriment of our community partners; ultimately, this will be to our own detriment as well.

Principle 13: Students require liveable and affordable upper-year housing.

Only 4% of Queen's students are from the Kingston area, and given the unavailability of upper-year rooms in residence, the vast majority of students seek housing in the area surrounding campus. The result of this trend makes it likely that enrolment growth would have a marked effect on our students even as compared to those attending other universities; with such a high proportion of students seeking housing in and around the University District, the negative impact of an influx of enrolment would have on the housing market would be greatly amplified. When combined with the relatively low number of commuter and local students in the system, the high property values and rental rates near campus, and the competitive rental market, a growing student body would simply serve to create logistical and financial challenges for students looking to secure housing.

Further, undergraduate students in Ontario are facing some of the highest tuition fees in the Country, and many are saddled with climbing student debt to cover the cost of their education and the cost of living. It is important that affordable housing options are available to these students to ensure quality of life can be maintained.

Principle 14: A substantial portion of beds in the Queen’s residence system should be reserved for upper-year students.

As a residential university with a first-year residence guarantee, Queen’s dedicates the majority of its beds to first-year students. However, there are many circumstances in which an upper-year student might benefit from, or require, access to residence housing. Ensuring these students are afforded space in the residence system may be necessary in providing adequate support at the individual level, but the benefits extend beyond this: by housing a mix of first-year, upper-year, and graduate students in residence, Queen’s has the opportunity to enrich the residence experience as a whole.

In a residence environment, students benefit from dedicated counselling services, trained support staff, easy access to meals and classes, and a variety of accessible rooms. In some cases, students may be in need of the specialized level of support provided by the residence community; as a university, Queen’s has a responsibility to ensure this can be realized. If an adequate number of beds are not set aside for upper-year students, this is first and foremost a threat to the health, wellness and safety of our students.

The residence community also derives immense benefit from housing a variety of students. At Queen’s, learning extends beyond the walls of the classroom, and the residence system provides students and student staff with unique opportunities for interaction and growth. The peer-on-peer environment that defines the residence experience is only enriched by increasing the mix of students in this system, creating organic opportunities for mentorship and support that may prove invaluable in fostering resilience, community, and discovery.

Finally, as enrolment increases, the availability of housing in and around the University District will face further constraint. In particular, the deficiency of quality, purpose-built student housing may require some commitment on the part of the university to ensure all students are adequately and appropriately housed. The new residence buildings, constructed with the stated objective of appealing to students at all levels of study, provide a perfect venue for realizing this goal.

Concerns

Concern 16: As the number of students attending Queen’s increases, it follows that the physical campus must expand in order to accommodate this growth.

The downtown, waterfront location of the University has constrained the availability of adjacent land for expansion of our facilities. However, should student numbers rise, the need for new buildings and increased space will increase as well. This will ultimately put the University in the difficult situation of searching for off-site locations, or attempting to purchase land in the near community for the purposes of re-zoning.

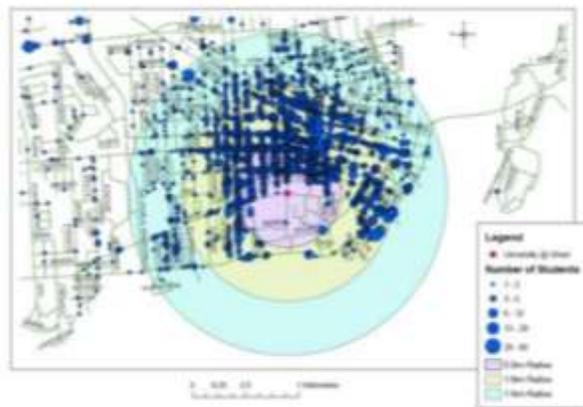
Many long-term residents in the surrounding community are already feeling “pushed out” by the growing demand for rental housing in the University District, and this concern will only be exacerbated the need for more facilities becomes apparent.

Concern 17: Increasing student demand is driving up the rental market in and around the University District.

While it is difficult to encapsulate the various economic, demographic and social factors that play a part in the Kingston Rental Housing market, several recent studies have established the impact of increased student demand on the rental market in the University District and Kingston’s downtown.

What is most obvious from an observational level is that students, particularly undergraduates, live in a highly concentrated area to the north of campus known as the University District. This is represented in the figure below.

Figure 2: Undergraduate student housing is an around the University District.



Source: Joe Berridge, “The Campus in the Community” Campus Master Plan Blog.

The vacancy rate for the Kingston rental market as a whole, at 1.8% in the year 2012, remains one of the most competitive in Canada⁴². More specifically, the vacancy rate for Downtown Kingston, in which the University District is located, has fluctuated from a record low of 0.7% in 2010 to 2.1% in 2012⁴³. The most recent CMHC analysis of Kingston’s rental market reports, the recent uptick in downtown vacancy rates was in part due to lower mortgage rates in 2011 enticing renter households’ to purchase and the weak

⁴² Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. *Fall 2012*. (Ottawa: Government of Canada 2012).

http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2012/schl-cmhc/NH12-71-2012-eng.pdf

⁴³ SHS Consulting. *Municipal Housing Strategy for the City of Kingston and County of Frontenac*. (Kingston: SHS 2012).

http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2012/schl-cmhc/NH12-71-2012-eng.pdf

employment growth among 15-24 year olds⁴⁴. The analysis continues to note, however, that, “an increase in student enrolment and household formation will apply continued downward pressure on vacancy rates within (the Downtown) zone”⁴⁵.

The implications of increasing student demand through enrolment are best seen directly through the rise of average market rents in the Kingston market. From 2006 to 2010, the average rent for apartment units with three or more bedrooms⁴⁶ experienced the highest increase, at 15.8%⁴⁷. By 2012, the average rent for an apartment unit with three or more bedrooms in Downtown Kingston was \$1426 compared to \$1413 in the metropolitan area of Toronto⁴⁸.

The current conditions of both the University District and the Kingston rental market in general demonstrate that an increase in undergraduates may have adverse effects on affordability of off-campus housing; in fact, it already has. This consequence threatens to harm the financial accessibility of Kingston housing for students. As a residential university, it is important to the Queen’s identity that this not be allowed to happen.

The student rental housing market is also difficult to access for non-students; for example a family of 5 may not be able to afford a unit priced at \$500 per bedroom that has been marketed towards student tenants. This is a clear deterrent for other sections of the community seeking housing in the rental market and is detrimental to achieving an ideal mix of student and long-term residents in the community.

Concern 18: The University District currently offers little purpose-built student housing, affording few housing options that are tailored and zoned for student needs and requiring the repurposing of family homes to meet the demand.

The demand for rental housing has thus far been met by the re-purposing of family homes into student rental conversions, whereby additional bedrooms are constructed to increase rental income. These types of conversions often make transformation back into family homes difficult, and can result in houses that have more occupants than originally planned. In these situations, it is not uncommon to find a significant a number of students on a single property, paying a high rental rate for a disproportionately low amount of space and amenities.

⁴⁴ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. *Fall 2012*. (Ottawa: Government of Canada 2012).

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ These are primarily student-occupied apartments.

⁴⁷ SHS Consulting. *Municipal Housing Strategy for the City of Kingston and County of Frontenac*. (Kingston: SHS 2012).

⁴⁸ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. *Fall 2012*. (Ottawa: Government of Canada 2012).

Private, purpose-built student housing is a relatively new concept in the Kingston rental market, and little has been developed to date. These types of rentals address student-specific concerns while reducing the need to convert family homes. However, while such developments have the potential to mitigate the effects of enrolment increase on the housing market, they remain a scarcity in our community at the present time.

Concern 19: Currently, a large portion of the housing available to students is substandard.

A large number of the houses in the University District are upwards of one hundred years old, and many are in poor condition due to the difficulties associated with maintaining an older home, the frequency of tenant turnover, and a lack of investment by absentee landlords⁴⁹. In many cases, landlords are able to take advantage of students due to the fact that they are first-time tenants and may be unfamiliar with their rights⁵⁰. Other issues faced by student tenants in the area include mould, flooding, poor insulation, and inadequate locks and windows. Moreover, there are a high number of break-ins over the winter and summer vacations as a result of the vacant appearance of the area, posing a large safety risk to tenant property and, in some cases, to the tenants themselves.

Unfortunately, due to the competitiveness of the housing market and the need to pay an affordable rental rate, a “take what you can get for the best price” mentality has been widely espoused, whereby students feel the need to secure housing early in the year for fear of not finding a home or of paying an unreasonably high rent.

An increase in enrolment, which would inject many new students into the rental market, would worsen this already apparent problem.

Concern 20: Currently, inadequate capacity exists for upper-year students looking to access housing in the Queen’s residence system.

Currently, the number of upper-year, international, or exchange students in the university’s residence system represents a very small proportion of total residence beds. While the first-year residence guarantee is an important facet of the Queen’s experience, the lack of space reserved for other students is detrimental in several ways.

⁴⁹ City of Kingston. Waterloo: Moving Forward Together. (Kingston: CCC Sept.2013). http://www.cityofkingston.ca/documents/10180/800831/NearCampus_WaterlooMovingForwardTogether.pdf/70b7e593-7d8a-42fd-8d8d-955c5a0ad429

⁵⁰ As an example, it can often be seen that landlords will advertise student rentals as “(so many rooms) + den,” to insinuate that the den can be used as a bedroom. In actuality, these rooms legally should not be bedrooms due to the fire safety hazards associated with not having a window.

As many of the barriers that once prevented students from university participation have been broken down, a more diverse student body is accessing higher education. Of these students, an increasing number require some form of specialized support, and upper-year housing can be an integral element of this. The increasing portion of the Queen's population looking to access upper-year residence would place a strain on the system even without increased enrolment; should the Queen's population continue to grow, this need will only be exacerbated.

Housing in University District will also face further shortages as the university population grows, creating a greater need for purpose-built space on campus. As more students look for adequate housing in and around the University District, Queen's must be prepared to ensure some upper-year space is available to accommodate any overflow.

In maintaining an overwhelmingly first-year population in residence, the university is also forgoing on opportunity to provide unique peer-on-peer interaction and support. Housing upper-year and graduate students in residence would enrich the community ecosystem, promoting mentorship, leadership, and growth amongst a diverse group of peers. This would extend the reach of the broader learning environment, and foster a culture of resilience and support across the undergraduate population.

Recommendations

Recommendation 20: The Queen's Comprehensive Housing Strategy should address the need for quality, affordable, and purpose-built student housing in and around the University District. It should also address the demand placed on the housing market by increased enrolment.

Given the abundance of substandard rental options on the market and the principle that students should be afforded access to housing in close proximity to campus, it is integral that some purpose-built student housing be developed to meet the demands of increased enrolment without pushing long-term residents out of their homes. Purpose-built student housing would not only alleviate pressure on the owner-occupied homes in the University District, but would also provide some relief on the market in terms of affordability. However, while some purpose-built student housing is required in the University District, it is important to ensure that this style of housing is suitable for tenants that are not students as well; in this manner, students are not segregated from the rest of the community.

The Comprehensive Housing Strategy should address this need by providing a practical model for developers to follow in constructing purpose-built student housing. This should be informed both by student needs and through consideration of the interests of the greater Kingston community. It is crucial that the university take greater responsibility in working with these private partners, particularly as enrolment levels grow.

Recommendation 21: A considerable portion of the beds being added to the system through the opening of the new residences should be committed to housing upper-year students.

In the fall of 2015, two new residences will open at Queen's, adding 550 new beds to the system. A key structural feature of these residences is that the rooms have been tailored to fit the needs of first-year, upper-year, or graduate students. This affords the university the flexibility to house any mixture of students in this space.

The AMS recommends that the university allot an appreciable number of these beds to upper-year housing in an effort to ensure proper support is available to all students who rely on it. This will enrich and diversify the residence experience, and will produce gains for both the individuals accessing upper-year housing and the residence community as a whole.

Recommendation 22: Queen's should undertake an evaluation of the capacity of services providing housing support for students to ensure they are prepared to accommodate the demands of increased enrolment.

There is a variety of challenges facing students as they look to secure liveable and affordable housing. Considering the competitive rental market, varying quality of available rentals, and the fact that many Queen's students are first-time renters, it is crucial that the university provide adequate support to students through both the housing selection process and the duration of their tenancy.

Many Queen's services currently offer some form of support to students, including Community Housing; Queen's Legal Aid; Residences; and Town Gown relations. However, even with these supports in place, many students still reside on substandard properties, struggle with landlord-tenant relations, and remain unaware of their rights. An increase in the number of renters looking to access off-campus housing will only augment this issue, placing additional pressures on the support services the university offers.

It is critical that services providing housing support be evaluated to ensure they will have the capacity to meet an increased demand. The AMS recommends that the university assess the ability of these services to accommodate a growing study body to ensure their functionality is not compromised.

WHEREAS Queen’s University should remain a mid-sized institution.

WHEREAS Queen’s should continue to ensure it provides a superb broader learning environment for its students.

WHEREAS Queen’s has an obligation to ensure students have easy access to quality support services.

WHEREAS Queen’s should strive to increase and support diversity in its student body.

WHEREAS the new residence buildings opening in 2015 should be used to mitigate the current overflow in the university’s residence system.

WHEREAS Queen’s should rely on predictable, consistent, and stable revenue streams to support its Operating Budget.

WHEREAS the diversification of revenue incentivized through the Provost’s new budget model is an essential path for the university’s future.

WHEREAS a substantial portion of the university Operating Budget should continue to fund student learning and support services.

WHEREAS the Provincial Funding Formula should be in tune with the needs of Ontarians and the path ahead for the post-secondary sector.

WHEREAS Queen’s should offer a first-rate classroom experience to all students.

WHEREAS Queen’s should endeavour to maintain its high admissions standards across all programs.

WHEREAS the relationship between Queen’s and the Kingston community is an integral element of the university’s identity.

WHEREAS students require liveable and affordable upper-year housing.

WHEREAS a substantial portion of beds in the Queen’s residence system should be reserved for upper-year students.

BIFRT Queen’s should ensure the recommendations of the forthcoming Campus Master Plan highlight the preservation of our campus’ unique character and culture.

BIFRT Queen’s should implement an entrance survey as a complement to the existing exit survey.

BIFRT Queen’s should engage in an assessment of the operations of the Office of Student Affairs in an effort to ensure it is providing optimal service to students.

BIFRT the Physical Education Centre should be prioritized as a focus for deferred maintenance and renovations.

BIFRT key recommendations from the Library and Archives Master Plan should be entrenched in the forthcoming Campus Master Plan.

BIFRT the inadequate infrastructure allocated to Health, Counselling, and Disability Services should become a priority for capital funding raised through the Initiative Campaign.

BIFRT Health, Counselling, and Disability Services should work to strengthen its relationship with relevant community health providers to ensure smooth transition for students as it moves towards the provision of short-term care.

BIFRT Queen's should continue to pursue the implementation of the *Spoke and Wheel Model* to ensure students from every Faculty have access to specialized counselling services.

BIFRT outreach programs to prospective students should be expanded and enhanced as a means of lowering barriers for underrepresented groups looking to access post-secondary education.

BIFRT Queen's should implement an enrolment strategy that promotes growth through distance and credential courses that do not pose a threat to the university's core programs and residential campus.

BIFRT Queen's should actively pursue opportunities to reduce its reliance on government funding, generated through enrolment increase, in favour of more predictable and sustainable revenue streams.

BIFRT Queen's should phase in a strategy that provides preferential incentive for revenue diversification, as compared to domestic residential enrolment increase, under the new Budget Model.

BIFRT the Office of Advancement should continue to encourage donations directed towards the Capital Fund.

BIFRT ongoing cost containment exercises should be undertaken; results should be revisited regularly with representatives from each stakeholder group.

BIFRT Queen's should look into opportunities for partnership with other institutions in an effort to reduce costs.

BIFRT Queen's should support the efforts of the AMS, through the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, to drastically reform the Provincial Funding Formula.

BIFRT all programs at Queen's should investigate the possibility of implementing a class size cap for lower- and upper-year courses.

BIFRT Queen's should continue to expand its recruiting efforts in an effort to better include students from historically underrepresented groups.

BIFRT Queen's should investigate the possibility of hiring teaching-focused faculty in an effort to ensure all students have the opportunity to engage in meaningful contact with their instructors.

BIFRT the Queen's Comprehensive Housing Strategy should address the need for quality, affordable, and purpose-built student housing in an around the University District.

BIFRT a considerable portion of the beds being added to the system through the opening of the new residences should be committed to housing upper-year students.

BIFRT Queen's should undertake an evaluation of the capacity of services providing housing support for students to ensure they are prepared to accommodate the demands of increased enrolment.