

Lakehead University
Special Meeting of Senate
Monday, May 2, 2011
Notes

Dr. Brian Stevenson called to order the Special Meeting of Senate to discuss the Academic Plan.

Dr. Moira McPherson introduced the members of the Academic Planning Committee and reviewed the process to date. The Academic Planning Committee has spent the past few months reflecting on strengths and opportunities in light of the challenges that must be faced by the University. The consultation stage, which was launched in March, is designed to include members of the University community on both campuses

The purpose of the Special Senate meeting is to provide Senators with an opportunity to discuss the vision, and proposed priorities and strategies outlined in the consultation documents, and to help define action items for the Academic Plan.

Highlights of the Discussion:

Research:

- Request for a balance between the section describing teaching and learning vs. research in the Setting the Stage part of the document.
- Consider using different measurements to emphasize the quality of teaching so that it does not seem inferior to research.
- Elaborate on Continuing Education and Distributed Learning and the trend towards online and telepresence learning.
- Inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary research should be emphasized without marginalizing basic research.

Resources:

- Our Instructional Development Centre has limited resources and additional resources should be invested if the Centre is to achieve its goals and objectives.

Recruitment:

- As the recruitment of Aboriginal students is addressed, so should the recruitment of other 'core' students be. "Ensuring the Conditions for Success" is a section that will be added later. This will be added when the plan is closer to completion and will examine what is needed to fulfill the identified priorities, strategies and

actions. The education of younger Aboriginal students needs to be addressed. Focus on the needs of the North.

- Alumni should be included under the section on expanding our international reach.

Additions and changes:

- The word “Northern” only appears once and should be emphasized more.
- There should be a historical summary of what has been learned from the 2006 plan. Dr. McPherson noted that the *Reports to the Senate Academic Committee on the Implementation of the 2006 - 2010 Academic Plan* are posted on the website. Senators agreed that reference to the previous academic plan should be included in the consultation document and should help act as the link between the old academic plan and the new one.
- There should be mention of the Writing Centre and the connection to the proposed priorities.
- It should be mentioned that we will need to review our policies and regulations to ensure they are updated and aligned with our goals - for example, double degrees, or Continuing Education admission requirements for mature and Aboriginal students.
- The multiple roles of graduate students should be emphasized not only the role they play supporting research.
- Differences in program directions between Orillia and Thunder Bay will be addressed when specific action plans are written. The vision, and proposed priorities and strategies have been designed to apply to both campuses.
- The use of words in the document (such as explore, expand, improve, respond) may be interpreted to express the relative importance of specific priorities.
- Students should not be perceived as income but rather as investment.

Diversity / Social Justice

- Goals for diversity and social justice should be carefully developed. Diversity needs to include gender, age, and visible minorities.
- “Encourage and Support Social Justice” could be substituted for “Diversity”.
- Cultural sensitivity should be defined.
- On-line learning should not be included in the Diversity section.
- Expanding internationalization is one of the ways to increase diversity.
- Embedding Aboriginal world beliefs and anti-racism should be included.

Retention:

- Student and faculty engagement are reduced when class size increases.
- Limited seating poses a problem as class size increases.
- The Committee welcomes input on recruitment and retention of faculty.

- Retention of graduate students, and quality of student-life should be included.
- Students' debt-load should be addressed.

Continuing Education and Distributed Learning:

- Some graduate programs are Continuing Education programs and these should be given more attention by the University. Health programs delivered through distance education provides a service to the region and we may be able to build on these.
- Distance Education needs to be defined.
- Although there is potential for increasing enrolment through Distance Education opportunities, the quality must be kept at high and resources should be allocated for ongoing training and technical support.
- Lakehead University should examine the types of course learning environments that appeal to the students.
- Lakehead University should increase the use of social media.
- Distance Technology in the classroom can also be used to enhance the experience of campus learners. There is great opportunity for new teaching methods to be developed to accommodate students in Canada as well as abroad.

Consultations will continue until the end of May. Senators were encouraged to continue to forward actions or strategies and to express any additional comments. Please submit comments using the online survey on the dedicated website: <http://academicplan.lakeheadu.ca/> or email any of the Planning Committee members. Notes from the Consultation Stage discussions will be posted on the website, and in June the Academic Planning Committee will start to draft an Academic Action Plan.

Dr. McPherson thanked Senate for its input.

Adjourn.