I am pleased to inform you that the search for a new Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts has reached a successful conclusion, and I invite you to share this news with your colleagues.

Last Fall, I established a search committee, comprising members of the Faculty of Fine Arts (faculty, staff and students), as well as a member appointed by me, and chaired by the Vice-President Academic & Provost, charged with undertaking a search for the next Dean. Following an extensive national and international search, the Committee recommended the appointment of Professor Shawn Brixey. I am very pleased to announce that Professor Brixey has accepted our invitation to take up a five-year term as Dean, commencing July 1, 2013. On my recommendation, on March 11, 2013, the Board of Governors Executive Committee, on behalf of the Board of Governors, concurred with the recommendation for the appointment.

Professor Brixey brings to York an outstanding record of innovative academic leadership and a commitment to interdisciplinarity and partnership development in the arts and media. He will join York University from the University of Washington, where he is an Associate Professor of Digital Arts and Experimental Media in the College of Arts and Sciences. From 2009-2012 he held U.W.’s distinguished arts award, the Floyd and Dolores Jones Endowed Chair in the Arts; and from 2006-2009 he served as Director of the Center for Digital Arts and Experimental Media (DXARTS) and the Center for Advanced Research Technology in the Arts and Humanities (CARTAH) at U.W., having previously served (2002-2006) as DXARTS’ Associate Director and its co-founder. In these roles, he was responsible for the development, with faculty, staff and students, of DXARTS’ strategic vision, creative identity, and research and educational mission, as well as for the creation of pioneering interdisciplinary BFA and PhD programs encompassing a wide range of the arts. Under his leadership, DXARTS’ enrolments and faculty complement grew significantly, and he fostered fundraising initiatives in support of faculty and student research and creative endeavours, including outstanding studio and laboratory facilities. His role also included responsibility for CARTAH, a major project-based creative technology research centre embedded in DXARTS and serving the entire campus.
Prior to his appointment at the University of Washington, Professor Brixey was founder and Chair of the Digital Media Program at the University of California Berkeley, as well as founder and Director of the Berkeley Center for New Media. While at U.C. he was a primary investigator for the system-wide Digital Arts Research Network, a large-scale, centrally funded, multi-campus organized research unit, and an architect of the system-wide PhD program in media, history, visual, aural and performing arts. He previously held appointments at San Francisco State University, the University of Kentucky, and the University of Michigan.

Professor Brixey has a broad interdisciplinary background. He is a graduate of the Kansas City Art Institute (Bachelor of Fine Arts) in interactive sculpture and experimental media, and of the Media Laboratory at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Master of Science in Advanced Visual Studies) in design, architecture, media science, and engineering. He has exhibited in art, design, performance, and media technology around the world. He also publishes in these areas and lectures widely on emerging issues relating to contemporary arts, higher education, arts administration, culture, and media technology. Critical writing and reviews of his thinking around these topics and of his artwork have been featured in diverse sources and media in the U.S. and internationally. He has served as the chair of the New and Virtual Media Directorate for the Canadian Foundation for Innovation, and is currently a member of the International Scientific Advisory Board for GRAND (Graphics, Animation and New Media), a centrally funded National Research Council of Canada Centre of Excellence.

I look forward to welcoming Professor Brixey to York University and to working with him, as he undertakes this important portfolio. I hope all members of the Faculty will join me in congratulating and welcoming him.

I would like to thank the members of the Decanal Search Committee for their contributions to this important process.

And finally, I am grateful to Barbara Sellers-Young, outgoing dean, for all that she has achieved over the years at York, and wish her well in all of her future endeavours.

cc: Rhonda Lenton, VP Academic & Provost and Chair of the Search Committee
    PVP
    UEC
    Members of the Search Committee
    Secretary, Fine Arts Faculty Council