October 21, 2013

York University Launches Academic and Administrative Prioritization

At the May 2013 Senate meeting, Rhonda Lenton, Vice-President Academic and Provost and Gary Brewer, Vice-President Finance and Administration, provided a combined year-end report outlining York’s progress against the goals articulated in our University Academic Plan.

Significant successes in all six priority areas were highlighted, including increased research intensification and success in Tri-Council funding, expanded comprehensiveness in target areas, innovation in teaching and learning, and student success programs such as the YU START orientation program for our first-year cohort. It is important that we celebrate these critical benchmarks and acknowledge the contributions of all members of the York community.

At the same time, it is clear that if we are to realize the full potential of our Academic Plan, we must address the issue of financial sustainability. We are facing the most difficult budget situation in York’s history in an uncertain higher education context. The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has indicated that substantial new investment by the government at levels comparable to the previous decade is not feasible. Differentiation has been introduced as a strategy for enhancing innovation and productivity in an increasingly competitive international education market.

If we are to continue to advance York as a leading research-intensive, comprehensive university, we must draw from our strengths, and also be prepared to contemplate change where needed. Among other important steps being discussed at Senate, Faculty Councils and other forums, we will be undertaking an Academic and Administrative Prioritization (AAP) exercise to review our programs and inform our future decision-making. AAP will be fully integrated with existing initiatives such as the University’s Process Reengineering and Service Enhancement program (PRASE), the new budget model (SHARP) and our Integrated Resource Planning (IRP) framework.

I have asked Provost Lenton, in collaboration with Vice-President Brewer, to lead this review and to provide further detailed and timely communications about opportunities for consultation and input throughout the process. We expect to complete the review by the end of 2013-2014.

As I indicated in my remarks to Senate in September, we are committed to broad consultation and collegial decision-making in this process. Ultimately, the response to the AAP report will support an evidence-based approach to our work and what we need to do to advance our mission and core priorities, while also ensuring the financial sustainability of the institution.
I look forward to working with you as we build a stronger, more sustainable York.

Sincerely,

Mamdouh Shoukri  
President and Vice Chancellor