April 11, 2014

Presidential Statement on Former Finance Minister and Osgoode Alumnus Jim Flaherty

On behalf of myself and the entire York University community, I would like to express my heartfelt condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of the Hon. Jim Flaherty, whose sudden and untimely death has left so many of us shocked and deeply saddened.

Jim was a great and proud Canadian. One of the longest serving finance ministers in the history of the country, he was a dedicated public servant, a champion of higher education, a passionate disability rights advocate, and a devoted husband and father.

An accomplished scholar and lawyer before entering politics, Jim graduated from our Osgoode Hall Law School at York University with the Class of 1973, after attending Princeton University on a hockey scholarship. Widely respected for his sharp intellect, tireless work ethic, and good humour, Jim will be remembered by his York classmates, friends and colleagues as an individual of tremendous integrity, principle, and candour.

While we are greatly saddened to have lost one of the most influential, committed, and compassionate of Canadians, we are comforted by our good fortune of having had him as a member of our Osgoode and York communities. Just two years ago this month, he was with us to officially open our renovated Osgoode building, which he helped to make possible by supporting Osgoode’s bid for funding through the Federal-Provincial Knowledge Infrastructure Program.

As a University president, it was an honour for me to know and to work with this gifted political and government leader, who did so much to advance research and innovation across the country, and who truly listened and responded to the needs of all Canadians. Jim Flaherty will be sorely missed, but his spirit and legacy remain with us here at York and will set a lasting example for our students of the profound impact one can have through service to society.

Mamdouh Shoukri
President & Vice-Chancellor