

The Senate of York University

Memorandum

To: Chairs, Faculty Councils

From: Alison Macpherson, Chair, Senate

Date: 20 November 2020

Subject: Facilitated Council discussions of Fall/Winter 2021-2022 planning

I am writing to convey the request of Senate Executive and the Provost and Vice-President Academic that a facilitated discussion of planning for the delivery of academic programs in the Fall/Winter 2021-2022 academic year be held by each Faculty Council at their earliest opportunity.

In discussions about the pandemic and academic continuity, the Provost signalled to the Senate Executive Committee that early attention ought to be given to planning for the Fall/Winter 2021-2022 academic year. Applicants for FW'21 need to understand what the landscape will be at the University to help inform their decision-making. Arrangements for the necessary infrastructure, supports and safety protocols need to be defined accordingly. Turning our minds now to how and through what means programming can best be delivered next fall shifts us to proactive planning, rather than reactive as the hand of the pandemic has forced thus far.

The University is committed to returning to primarily campus-based, in-person delivery of the academic mission when safe to do so. At the same time, the shift to remote operations in 2020-21 will have an enduring impact. Faculty members and instructors have adapted their teaching and found creative ways to enhance access, educational value, and the student experience. The University is preparing safety protocols to enable a wide range of learning formats in Fall/Winter 2021-2022, taking into consideration the possibility of increased in-person opportunities as well as blended course offerings.

Careful thought needs to be given to options for course delivery going forward to balance instructors' and units' preferences, academic program needs, student expectations, Senate curriculum processes and public health regulations. The array of circumstances combines to make recovery-planning a complex exercise.

Gathering input from Senate and Faculty Councils at the outset on directions and intentions for program delivery in the mid-recovery and post-pandemic stages is critical to inform decision-making within Faculties and across the University on this important topic. As such, consultation with the academic community is being facilitated in part through a discussion at the November meeting of Senate on the following question:

As in-person teaching and learning gradually return to York's campuses, what pedagogical or curricular insights should be retained from the experiences of the pandemic, and how will these experiences shape the way that students learn, as well as the way that academic programs are designed and delivered in future?

Faculty Council discussions of the same framing question are sought so that the views and advice received are inclusive of the academic collegium. Reflections and recommendations arising from the Senate and Council dialogues will inform local and pan-University planning and decision-making as appropriate for the 2021-22 academic year.

Your support of this request is greatly appreciated, and Executive looks forward to hearing of the outcome of your Council's discussion. The University Secretariat is pleased to liaise with Council Secretaries on arrangements as necessary, through the Senior Assistant Secretary of the University, Cheryl Underhill (underhil@yorku.ca).

cc. Secretaries of Faculty Councils