

APPC's 2022/23 Budget Discussion

At both the November 10 and December 8 Council meetings in the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies, the Dean provided members with the 2022/23 University and Faculty budget updates. In response, at both meetings, Faculty Council members expressed considerable concerns related, broadly, to matters of bicameral/collegial governance, budgetary decision-making, and the future sustainability of LA&PS' academic missions. After a full, participatory discussion at the December 8 Faculty Council meeting on these issues, these questions were referred back to the Academic Planning and Policy Committee (APPC), for consideration and action, in consultation with the Faculty Council Executive Committee.

Guided by its mandate, which includes making "recommendations to the Dean on budgetary matters that affect academic programs" and advising "the Dean on the interplay of academic and budget issues in the development of the Integrated Resource Plan," APPC hereby requests that the Executive formally ask the President, Provost, and Vice-President (Finance) to prepare a presentation that responds to the following questions when they present the university budget to the LA&PS faculty council in January.

1. Consultation, Transparency, Decision-Making

In light of the fact that SHARP was supposed to bring transparency, but there is no information or input on how much money goes from activity-generating Faculties/units to the central fund nor how it is spent, we ask the following:

- (a) Who at the University is recommending the growth of the central fund, and with what consultations?
- (b) What strategic initiatives are being contemplated to justify such a dramatic increase in Faculty contributions to a central fund? Do these initiatives include a plan for a medical school?
- (c) The proposed budget bears many unsettling similarities to events/decisions/processes that occurred at Laurentian (e.g., centralizing funds that flow out to external consultants, capital projects, etc.), all of which have been condemned by the most recent Auditor-General Report on the Laurentian bankruptcy. Will the proposed budget be analyzed through the recommendations of the Auditor-General and be reconsidered in light of those recommendations? How does the proposed budget anticipate and address those recommendations?
- (d) If money is to flow from the activity-generating units to a central fund, what role will/should those units have in determining the allocation of the central fund? How will priorities be set for allocation of the central fund resources, and how will these be governed?

2. Collegial and Bicameral Governance

We are further concerned about the potential impacts of the new centralized budgeting model for collegial governance and, specifically:

- (a) In what ways will the proposed budget shift decision-making from "academic" to "budgetary" decisions? Will the resulting centralized fund mean that fewer decisions at

the University will be part of the collegial governance model? If so, what is the imagined role for Faculty Councils in the broader decision-making processes concerning our academic mission and mandates?

- (b) More generally, what are the implications of the proposed budget for broader collegial decision-making and bicameral governance?

3. LA&PS Autonomy and Academic Mission

Finally, we are concerned about the ways that the centralized budget model may affect the academic autonomy and decision-making capacities of the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies.

- (a) What are the specific benefits (or costs) for LA&PS in particular? How do the strategic initiatives imagined as supported by this new model directly affect LA&PS?
- (b) If revenue-generating Faculties such as LA&PS are put (back) in deficit, how do you expect Faculties to recover from or address these predicted deficits?
- (c) What are the implications of the proposed budget for resources and resource allocations in LA&PS, and how might the new budget affect Faculty autonomy?
- (d) Can York University establish a collegial decision-making body (i.e., inclusive of faculty) on budgets and resource allocation?
- (e) Is there still time, and a process by which, to change or impact (or even reverse) the current proposed budget? What are the implications of LA&PS members voting against the proposed budget, weighing in the answers to the questions above?

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