

Dean's Report to Faculty Council

March 6, 2018

New Space is on the Way

I am pleased to report that at its meeting of February 26, the Board of Governors approved the Faculty of Health's proposal to expand the Sherman Health Science Centre, and fund part of the refurbishment of some of the space vacated in the Behavioural Science Building. Specifically, the Sherman expansion will include relocation of an existing special purpose research facility currently in BSB to a new 24,000 square foot facility which is directly related to the VISTA project. The approved proposal also includes and additional 30,000 square feet of office space which will be used to host clusters of faculty and students in (a) neuroscience, (b) neuropsychology assessment and rehabilitation, (c) sport, health and concussions, (d) biomechanics, injury and motor control, and (e) the psychology of physical activity and health. Since Sherman includes an MRI, and is located very close to the Pioneer subway stop and bus depot, it is also an ideal location to host two new clinics providing assessment and services related to neuropsychology, concussions, biomechanics, and sport psychology and fitness. Once architectural and construction firms have been chosen, faculty from the various teams will be invited to provide input into the building design. Our initial concept is to create clusters of offices which will host up to 40 faculty members, 10 post docs and visiting fellows, 90 students and 20 research staff. The existing Sherman building host specific research labs and equipment used by the various teams. The building is expected to be completed in about three years. Some of the people and facilities in the expanded Sherman building will be relocated from their current location in BSB. The approximately 8,600 square feet they vacate will be refurbished to create wet lab benches, as well as research labs to aid in nutrition and addiction related research.

Finally, I am pleased to say that we continue to make progress on our plans to refurbish parts of the second and third floor of Stong College. We completed accessibility and health and safety audits. I recently authorized CSBO to begin the process of finding contractors to do some demolition and removal, repair and paint walls, install new partitions, new carpet, new ceiling tile, new doors and hardware, new light fixtures, and lenses, new electrical switches and outlets, new air diffusers, some new plumbing, rebalance the HVAC system and undertake an airflow study. The project also includes new furniture and workstations, new chairs, new signage and assistance to help move in the buildings new occupants. The new occupants will be invited to provide input into some aspects of the design and in the assignment of offices. I am also pleased to report that the VPFA has also agreed to put Stong at the top of the priority list for a bathroom refresh. Stong will continue to be home for several faculty from Kinesiology, the Head of Stong College, as well as some members of the Deans office. New hires in global health will also be located in the refurbished space. Our dialogue with the School of Health Policy and Management is also continuing. I had a very helpful meeting with grad student representatives from the SHPM and am committed to examining whether we can find some common space for them in the building. When complete, the Stong refurbishment will provide the Faculty of Health with approximately 30 more offices than we currently have. Our initial plan was to have the renovations complete by July 1. However, due to events beyond our control, the current plan aims to have the space ready by the end of October, 2019.

Progress on Faculty Renewal

As you may recall, the Faculty of Health was granted approval to hire 52 new faculty positions with a targeted start date of July 1, 2019. So far, I have approved the short list recommendations for 30 positions. Due to a deferred retirement, one search has been temporarily suspended. On the recommendation of the hiring committee another search has been declared a failure because of insufficient qualified candidates. Finally, I have approved the hiring recommendations for five of the searches and am either awaiting approval from the Provost and JCOAA, or have received approval and have made offers to candidates.

Update on Student Applications

As you may know, the number of applications the University has received for our undergraduate programs is down this year compared to last year. Most worrisome is that the number of first and second choice applications we've received from domestic student is particularly hard hit. I relieved to say that the situation in the Faculty of Health is a little better than the university at large. It still a bit too early to project where our 105 applicants will land, but as of February 8th overall undergraduate applications are up over last year across the Faculty by about 1.5%, due mostly to a 16% in psychology and a surge in international students (up 22% over last year, including an increase of 18% from first choice applicants and a 25% increase from second choice applicants). Global health has rebounded, especially for first and second choice applicants. Kinesiology is down about overall 7% from last year, but again, we need to keep in mind that last year we experienced one of the highest demands for Kinesiology in our history. The greatest increases in international applications are associated with Psychology (up 37% among first choice applicants) with more modest increases in Kinesiology and Global Health. In summary, we're better off than many Faculties, and provided we make every effort to convert applications into enrolments, we believe it will be possible to meet, and in some cases even slightly exceed our enrolment targets.

Budget Update

I want to thank each of our academic units, particularly the chairs and directors for their efforts to help us find solutions to the budget challenge associated with a significant reduction in tuition revenue. Each unit has opted to make contributions in slightly different ways. I'll refrain from saying too much about our budget at this time because we present our budget plan to the Provost the day after Faculty Council. However, in general, I will be proposing a series of measures which include some targeted and modest increases in international undergraduate and domestic undergraduate enrolment for this September, utilizing the fact that that some of our faculty searches will almost certainly be declared a failure and that other candidates will request a slightly later start date, delaying the start of some new staff positions (many of which have never been filled to date), a few reductions in operating expenses, and thanks to a careful review of our course offerings and demand, a slight reduction in the number of sessional faculty we will require. All of these measures will still not be equal to our projected lost revenue. Therefore, I will be asking the Provost to allow us to run an in-year deficit for 2019-20. This will buy us the time we need to continue add more student through new programs such as neuroscience, athletic therapy, and benefit from major proposed revision to existing curriculum in Health Studies. These additional students, plus continued growth in international students will be an essential part of restoring a balance budget in 2020-21 and beyond. Our budget plan is subject to review and modification by the Provost, the President, and eventually the Board of Governors.

Despite a projected reduction in the Faculty of Health's budget of about five million dollars in tuition revenue, we should all be thankful that by working together to generate create solutions, our proposed budget will still allow us to move forward with the planned faculty complement renewal of 50 positions, and the creation of new space described in the first section of this report. New faculty, new staff, and new space are a foundation which will allow us to prosper in the future.

I will be pleased to try and answer any questions you may have about the foregoing when we meet at Faculty Council on March 6th.