

Faculty of Health
Dean's Report to Faculty Council

February 6, 2019

Colleagues,

To modify an old phrase, this report has some good news and some challenging news. The good news is that our Faculty continues to grow and perform well on multiple fronts.

Faculty Complement Renewal

Our 2019 complement plan is progressing nicely. I have received and authorized short lists for 22 of the 52 faculty searches. Several of the searches have attracted applications from some very talented people.

Potential New Space for Research and Clinics

Senior Administration has provided support for our proposal to build an extension on to the Sherman Health Science Centre and refurbish some space in the Behavioural Science Building. The proposal is being sent to the Board of Governors at the end of February. If approved by the Board, the Sherman expansion would include two components: (1) a 24,000 square foot special purpose neurophysiology research facility which is currently located in BSB, and (2) an additional 30,000 square feet of office and clinic space designed to host interdisciplinary clusters of faculty, staff and students in (i) neuroscience; (ii) neuropsychology assessment and rehabilitation; (iii) sport and health; (iv) biomechanics, injury and motor control; and (v) the psychology of physical activity and health. The expansion would also include two multi-purpose clinics to provide clinical services, clinical data collection, and a platform for training students. The aim is to complete the building in late 2021 or early 2022. In a second phase of construction, once the current special purpose facility is relocated to Sherman, approximately 8,500 square feet of space in BSB will be refurbished into research space to support clusters of faculty and staff working in: (i) human physiology for physical activity and health; and (ii) applied human nutrition for physical activity and health. The Sherman office expansion will increase the Faculty's net space allocation by approximately 15%. This does not include the new space we are refurbishing in Stong College.

Our plans for additional space in Stong College continue to progress, but at a pace slower than expected. A significant portion of the building is currently occupied by colleagues from the Department of English. However, the space they plan to move in to needs major construction, including the extension of an elevator. This work has been far more expensive and extensive than first realized. Originally, we had planned for the English Department to relocate to their new space in April, leaving two months for us to modify some offices, install various building upgrades such as new carpet, paint, ceiling tiles, etc. This would enable more Faculty of Health faculty and staff to take up residence by July 1, and join colleagues in Kinesiology already in the building. However, the latest information we have is that the construction required to move the English Department may not be completed until July, which means the upgrades in Stong may not be finished until September or October. My office has been working closely with the Provost, the Vice President of Research and Administration and CSBO to expedite the

construction process as much as possible. We are also trying to develop contingency plans on how to find temporary space to host our new hires. Some of our colleagues have recently expressed concerns about the suitability of the new Stong space. To address these concerns, I commissioned health, safety and accessibility reviews. I'm pleased to report that there were no health and safety issues, and that we will be able to address acute accessibility issues as part of our planned refurbishment. We are working with the VPFA to see how a handful of other issues, such as washroom improvements, could be made in a timelier manner.

Research Funding Success

Over the past six weeks a number of faculty members had research projects funded. Here is a list of the projects and their PI.

CIHR Project Grants

- Ali Abdul-Sater (Kin) - Dissecting the role of TRAF1 in regulating linear ubiquitination and the impact on inflammatory diseases
- Mary Fox (Nursing) - Optimizing hospital-to-home transitional care to promote functioning in older persons with dementia in rural communities
- Michael Rotondi (Kin) - Indigenous Health Counts: Advancing Meta-analysis Methods for Respondent-Driven Sampling and Urban Indigenous Children's Health

It is commendable that members from the Faculty of Health submitted 10 CIHR Project grant proposals. This means that 30% of applicants were successful which is nearly double the national success rate.

SSHRC Connections Grant

- Michaela Hynie (Psych) – Interrogating Integration

CFI Infrastructure Operating Funds

- A total of \$97,497 was awarded to 8 Faculty of Health researchers to ensure the maintenance and repair of shared research equipment.

SSHRC Exchange, Explore, and Conference Grants

- Iris Epstein (Nursing)
- Nazilla Khanlou (Nursing)
- Myriam Mongrain (Psychology)
- Magdalena Wojtowicz (Psychology)

Other

- James Orbinski (global health) received \$150,188.73 from Artsen zonder Grenzen for his project in partnership with MSF.
- Ruth Rodney (nursing) is part of a team led by CAMH, that was awarded \$20,000 from CIHR in support of her research into gender-based violence in Guyana.

- Several other colleagues have been busy preparing new funding applications. Three PIs submitted applications to the **New Frontiers in Research Fund**: Lora Appel, Heather Edgell and Ingo Freund. This is a new competition for which new faculty can apply.
- The Faculty of Health submitted 8 applications to the **SSHRC Insight Development Grant Deadline**. Results will be available in June 2019.

We are expecting results from Fall grant competitions to start arriving in late February or early March. Fingers crossed for more good news!

When asked how he managed to score 92 goals in a single NHL hockey season, Wayne Gretzky simply replied, "I shoot at the net and I have great teammates." The lesson here is simple, you need to apply to get a grant, and teaming up with strong collaborators, and using available faculty resources in our research office are indispensable to success. The list of people above are a testament that this approach works. So, start now to find collaborators and give yourself lots of time to write and benefit from the support available.

...and now for the challenging news.

The Impact of Government Policy to reduce Tuition

As most people know by now, the provincial government is requiring universities and colleges to reduce tuition for domestic students by 10 per cent and hold tuition levels at this level for at least the following year. This will bring welcome relief to many of our students, although the tuition savings will be offset in many cases by changes to OSAP. For the University it means a significant reduction in anticipated revenue for the next few years. Our previous budgets assumed that provincial operating grants would remain stable (which will probably be the case again this year), and that tuition would rise by three per cent per year. Although final numbers won't be available for a few more days, preliminary estimates are that the Faculty of Health will need to find a way to cope with five million dollars of less revenue than expected this year, plus another couple million or so more next year. We also need to be mindful that beginning in 2020 the Strategic Mandate Agreement version two comes to an end and that future funding formulas may change and be partially based on performance metrics. In other words, our provincial funding may go up or down depending upon whether we achieve our objectives in areas such as student success and experience, research, student access, and community engagement.

I have asked each of the Associate Deans, and School Directors/Department Chairs to develop ways we can grow new income and reduce our costs while protecting our mission and academic integrity to the best of our ability. In turn, they have started to consult with faculty and staff in their units.

Regrettably, a reduction in revenue of five million dollars will not be easy to cope with, particularly because we are already among the most efficient Faculties at York. Simple reductions in operating expenses such as office supplies or travel will not help us achieve our new targets. We cannot just cut our way out of this without seriously impacting our mission and the quality of programs. We need to balance more cost efficiencies with new sources of revenue. For example, we must find ways to ensure that we meet and ideally exceed our undergraduate enrolment targets by one or two per cent. Every 10 domestic students over our enrolment target generates approximately \$72,000 for the Faculty. International undergraduate

student enrolments are particularly critical. Every 10 additional international undergrad students over target we enroll and retain next year would generate up to \$140,000 dollars of revenue for the Faculty (the precise amount depends upon the program, and how many courses they take outside our Faculty). Although the number of applications we received for our programs this September is down slightly from last year, we are up overall from two year ago and in better shape than most other Faculties at York. Based on this, most of our programs have the capacity to meet or even slightly exceed their enrolment targets.

The long-term solution will require us to expedite various new and revised programs that many units have already been discussing. Kinesiology and Psychology have been working with Biology to create an exciting new undergraduate program in neuroscience. Kinesiology has had discussions about the possibility of expanding Athletic Therapy and potentially a professional masters program in Kinesiology. The School of Health Policy and Management have been working diligently to renew and improve their undergraduate programs and have mused about the idea of a critical disabilities program for undergraduates. Our colleagues in nursing have been discussing ways to improve the quality of their programs (although their enrolment numbers are capped). There are opportunities for us to think about developing collaborations with other Faculties. For example, the Schulich School of Business has established a 4+1 program which essentially sets aside admission to a masters program in management after the successful completion of some undergraduate degrees. All of these initiatives will help improve our academic mission and reputation and generate additional revenue (which will allow us to continue growing our faculty and staff complement while we also offset revenue losses from tuition reductions). The key is to move these proposals forward as soon as possible. For the moment, I am asking academic units to focus on ways to grow and/or expand our cadre of undergraduate programs and/or professional masters programs, especially those which will attract international enrolments. There are also other ways we can meet our latest fiscal challenge.

We need to find ways of improving our retention rates. Improving retention and graduation rates by one per cent could bring in several hundred thousand more dollars. To this end, I hope to make some new investments in student recruitment and student retention. Ensuring graduate students finish their degree requirements on time is not only helpful to students but it also saves us thousands of extra dollars because we continue to incur costs for supervision, graduate support etc., after students are no longer eligible for provincial funding. Incorporating graduate student RA funding into external grant proposals could save us thousands of dollars per year, while providing students with beneficial research experience. Most of our costs are related to faculty and staff salaries and benefits, as well as student support – which are critical to our mission. Rather than reduce tenure stream appointments and full-time staff, it might be necessary to temporarily delay some hires. For example, instead of starting a new faculty or staff member in July, we may need to defer their start date until January. The key is that we must find a way to do this without having to increase sessional instructors. It is imperative that we examine the utility of all our electives and eliminate both small grad and undergrad courses or course sections. This will help us meet our current year budget while giving us time to find ways of developing new programs and revenue, and ultimately continue our plan to renew our complement.

We will have to make some very difficult decisions. We will be asked to reduce or delay investments in some areas we are passionate about and important to our mission. We need to

be honest – some of the short-term changes may temporarily have a negative impact on some of our academic programs. Our task isn't to avoid making decisions; rather, it is to make the decisions which enable us to do the best we can in the short term without sacrificing our ability to develop and grow our mission, reputation and academic integrity in the future. Our creativity will be challenged as we, once again, try to figure out how to do things differently and better. I have already heard of some very creative ideas. For example, Kinesiology has initiated a conversation with an international university who may wish to "license" part of our world leading curriculum. It's a different way of thinking about what assets other people or organizations are willing to pay for. Kinesiology has also taken significant steps to alter their student practicum courses (PKins) in ways that will save us thousands of dollars. Every unit and every program will feel the impact and will need to contribute solutions. Putting off decisions increases the risk that even larger, more painful changes will be required in the future. It will be all too easy to point to another program, another unit, or another Faculty and ask them to make sacrifices, so we don't have to. But we must avoid this temptation. Rather, let's stay focused on how we can meet our new fiscal reality and each commit to doing our part. We don't have much time to make these very difficult decisions. The Office of Finance is not expected to provide details of precisely how much revenue loss we can expect and its net impact on areas such as interfaculty teaching and service costs until at least February 8. The Provost's office requires us to submit the three-year rolling budget for the entire Faculty of Health on or before February 28 – which will give us less than three weeks to prepare our budget. So, we need your ideas within the next two weeks.

Colleagues let me thank you in advance for your help and understanding. It is times like these that I am so grateful to have the privilege of working with such dedicated and talented people.