

Wilfrid Laurier University
Inspiring Lives of Leadership & Purpose

Goals and Objectives: 2012-2013

After several years of detailed thinking about the specific issues that the university needs to consider as it embraces its next century, the senior administrative team (“President’s Group”) recognizes that we are on the cusp of fundamental change in the foundational elements of the university. We are moving explicitly and knowingly from being a small undergraduate university to being larger, more comprehensive, and more influential in the Ontario system. We are also consolidating our changed identity from a single campus institution to one that is explicitly, proudly, and successfully a multi-campus university.

In addition to these Laurier-specific forces, there are also more general forces in the operating environment of the university that continue to demand response. Among these are, of course, the diminished capacity of the provincial government to support ever expanding demand for public objectives in health, education, social services, and many other targets. Capacity is greater at the federal level but the orientation of government is shifting increasingly to smaller public services.

With respect to the teaching and research missions of the university, the following factors require ongoing adjustments and response:

Teaching

Increasing numbers of students
Increasing variety of students
Changing modes of pedagogy
Expectations of “customers”
Relevance of what is taught
Focus on employability
Readiness of students for curriculum;
preparation in the K-12 system; maturity and
independence

Research

Fewer faculty being funded
More funding to targeted, focused areas
Increasing infrastructure gaps
Inadequate support for graduate studies
Reward team projects – forced collaborations
Push toward partnering with external entities
Societal and government expectations
concerning rapid economic mobilization of
research results

It was agreed that the direction of the university for the next number of years is set: enhance the fundamental values of the university with respect to teaching and learning excellence and outcomes, enhance the outstanding student experience that is a hallmark of the university, increase opportunities and support for aboriginal students, increase research intensity in focussed areas that will increasingly be associated with excellence at Laurier in the public mind, move toward a professional, efficient and sustainable multi-campus learning and working environment, and put into place the necessary resource allocation and operational structures to support these objectives within the operational landscape of the university.

Therefore the broad foci that were articulated last year (academic identity, multi-campus, resource allocation) remain current and vital. Our goals and objectives for 2012-13 are therefore to further advance implementation of the objectives that have been previously articulated.

More specifically this will involve:

- Sharpening the identity of the academic areas in which Laurier aspires to excel (for example: comprehensive student experience; leading edge, integrated and engaged learning; building Canada's best business school; water and related research; the intersection of global health with climate change and economy ...). Research strategic planning will be an important driver of a sharpened focus, as will integrated planning and resource management activities (see below) and the ongoing focus on fundraising campaign targets.
- Implementing the principles of multi-campus governance that were identified and endorsed by the Board (April 2011) and Senate (March 2011) based upon the operational model developed by the Presidential Task Force that was endorsed by Senate (May 2012). The operational model is symmetrical across the academic and administrative functional units of the university, and will require new working relationships and organizational entities to be developed with changes in some jobs.
- Implementing an Integrating Planning and Resource Management (IPRM) process across all aspects of budgetary consideration including capital, operating, endowment, and trust funds. The process consists of two parts; first, identifying widely agreed priority areas that the university must support, and second, allocating the necessary resources to responsibility centers with a schedule of expectations and follow-up accountability. Implementation will be through a highly inclusive, bottom-up consultative process that will enable every stakeholder to engage and to have voice in identifying specific priorities for university support.

This is an ambitious agenda at a time when Laurier, like other universities across Ontario and Canada, is experiencing significant strain. Therefore our goals and objectives will be complemented by a focus on capacity building and the identification of tactics and tools to support success in our rapidly evolving and challenging environment.

Successful and positive engagement in change will be supported by: (1) a combination of internal programs to enhance leadership, management skills, and professional engagement in work along with, (2) the engagement of third party experts and facilitators as needed. For example, the Human Resources team at Laurier is developing excellent programs to enhance the key success factors of our employees, to enable the development of new skills or to enhance existing skills, to network and learn among groups of employees, and to engage in learning delivered by external third party experts. As another example, the IPRM activities are being supported by external consultants whose focus is on training many individuals at Laurier to work in teams to clearly and objectively identify the specific priorities of the university. Therefore IPRM activities serve as both a strategic goal of the university and a capacity building activity with long-term benefits to employees.

Laurier is well situated for success in the challenging times ahead. We have a clear sense of where we are going as a university, what we are contributing to society, and what we need to do to embrace positively the demands that will be forthcoming. If Laurier is successful at anticipating and responding to the new future, we will be strongly positioned in realizing our vision of *Inspiring Lives of Leadership and Purpose*.