MOUNT ALLISON UNIVERSITY
MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

September 12, 2017, 4:00 p.m.
Tweedie Hall

Present: M. Ahmady, C. Brett (Secretary), R. Campbell (Chair), S. Camus, A. Cockshutt, S. Currie, G. Desmarais, J. Devine, J. Dryden, B. Evans, A, Fancy, N. Farooqi, N. Fry, A. Grant, O. Griffiths, R. Hanakowski, T. Holownia, R. Howlett, R. Inglis, A. Irwin, G. Jollymore, P. Kelly-Spurles, L. Kern, J. Lilburn, W. Lundell, S. MacIver, J. Martinez, D. Mawhinney, K. Meade, M.E. Messinger, L. Michaelis, A. Moreira, K. Morse, G. Nichols, A. Nurse, J. Ollerhead (Vice-Chair), C. Parker, E. Patterson, B. Robertson, J. Rogers, V. St. Pierre, K. Stel, E. Steuter, M. Truitt, N. Verret, N. Vogan, J. Waller, B. Walters, E. Wells, B. White, A. Wilson, W. Wilson

Regrets: G. Cruttwell

Observers: M. Herriot, R. Polegato, P. Steeves

00.09.12   Acknowledgement of Aboriginal Lands and Introductions.

R. Campbell acknowledged the aboriginal lands and called on Senate to reflect on the knowledge of the aboriginal custodians of the land.

Senators then introduced themselves and their constituencies.

01.09.12   Approval of the Agenda

Motion (E. Wells/M. Truitt): that Senate adopt the Agenda as circulated

                                                                                          Motion Carried

E. Steuter asked if there could be a discussion of the decision to hire an outside contractor to administer student course evaluation surveys. R. Campbell answered that such a discussion could take place under Other Business.

02.09.12   Approval of the Senate Minutes of May 11, 2017

Motion (M. Truitt/A. Cockshutt): that Senate adopt the Minutes of the meeting of May 17, 2017

                                                                                          Motion Carried

C. Brett noted that E. Verret had spotted some typos in the circulated minutes. These were corrected prior to posting the approved minutes.

03.09.12   Business Arising from the Minutes

C. Brett informed Senate that the Board of Regents approved Senate's request to amend the University By-laws so as to require attendance at Senate Meetings. He informed Senators that three consecutive absences from Senate (without making a provision for an alternate where allowed) would result in a seat being declared vacant. He then reminded Senators of the importance of making sure they record their attendance at meetings, and the need to check that the minutes accurately record their attendance. C. Brett

promised to inform any Senator who had missed two consecutive meetings that their next absence would result in a vacancy.

04.09.12   Report from the Chair

R. Campbell thanked those involved in what he termed a successful start of the academic year: Natasha Kochhar and the Orientation Committee, Student Life, Residence Life, Admin Services, and MASU. He also acknowledged the work of the Registrar's Office, the International Office, the Meighen Centre, Facilities Management, and Faculty in getting everything up and running. He also thanked those involved in completed campus life events.

R. Campbell highlighted initiatives that will unfold over the year relating to The Year of Indigenous Action, including:

1. the President's Speakers Series;
2. the Indigenous Advisor Council, a shared initiative of the university and local indigenous communities;
3. the now-live Indigenous Web Page;
4. course development;
5. an increase to 53 in the number of indigenous students.

R. Campbell then outlined his presidential objectives for the year: to ensure continued financial viability and sustainability; to work on physical sustainability; to help ensure and enhance program quality; to engage in relations with the new provincial Minister and Deputy Minister; and to work on succession planning for the President. He expects the search for a new President to wrap up by February, 2018.

R. Campbell concluded by updating Senate on negotiations over funding with the Government of New Brunswick. He noted that agreements are yet to be reached, and that he continues to emphasize university autonomy during negotiations.

K. Meade then thanked MASU and student leaders for their work on Orientation. She said that she had received positive feedback on the new Academic Orientation.

K. Meade reported that the number of incoming students is lower than had been projected, due mainly to a lower percentage of uptake on offers. Final numbers will be available in October. K. Meade also gave updates on recruiting and retention initiatives.

With regards to the upcoming year, K. Meade noted that a new Early Alert Initiative is being piloted, with a view to helping student retention. She asked Senators to encourage members of their departments to take part in the initiative. She identified the following areas of focus for the upcoming year: peer tutoring and academic support, mental health training, anti-racism education and response, anti-oppression and social justice.

R. Inglis reported that projected revenues are below budget targets, both for tuition and for residences. Final student numbers will be available after October 1. One of this year's priorities will be to draw lessons for future recruiting efforts from the experience of this year.

J. Ollerhead invited Senators to attend an information session on new procedures for conducting student surveys, to be held on September 13.

G. Jollymore reported that University Advancement is about to enter into a new campaign. It has identified three broad themes: Interdisciplinarity, Experiential Learning, and Health and Well-being. She informed Senate that these themes were arrived at by studying the various university plans that have been circulated in recent months. She invited Senators to share their ideas with University Advancement.

L. Michaelis asked for more details on student numbers. K. Meade answered that the budget target was 700 incoming students, but the expected number is likely to be slightly above 600. The 2016 incoming class had 641 students.

B. Walters welcomed the increase in indigenous students, and asked where they are coming from. K. Meade answered that they primarily from communities in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, for example, Elsipogtog and Eskasoni. B. Walters also asked whether there had been an increase in applications from the United States. K. Meade answered that there were more applications from and offers to American students, but that there was no increase in the number of students from the United States.

05.09.12   Report from the Committee on Committees

J. Dryden gave the report.

Motion 1 (J. Dryden/V. St. Pierre) that Senate approve the following changes to the Terms of Reference of the Academic Appeals Committee:
                                                                                     Motion Carried
Terms of reference
This committee will be the final appeal body for all matters arising from decisions of the Academic ~~Judicial~~ **Integrity** Committee.

Motion 2 (J. Dryden/ V. St. Pierre) moves that Senate approve the following changes to the Terms of Reference of the Teaching and Learning Committee:
                                                                                     Motion Carried
Membership
The Teaching and Learning Committee has eight members.

Two ex-officio members:
the ~~director of the Purdy Crawford Teaching Centre~~ **Purdy Crawford Professor of Teaching and Learning**
the computing services educational technology consultant

Three faculty, one from each of the three Faculties, elected by the Senate
One librarian, elected by Senate
Two students, elected by the Senate

Motion 3 (J. Dryden/ V. St. Pierre) that Senate appoint the following student to the Academic Integrity Committee for a term beginning immediately:
                                                                                     Motion Carried
One ex-officio member:
        the Academic Dean (AIO) - Academic Dean delegated by Provost as the Academic Integrity
        Officer (Chair) — Nauman Farooqi

Two faculty or librarians, elected by the Senate:
     Mark Hamilton (2015-2018)
     Andrew Nurse (2015-2018)
One alternate faculty or librarian, elected by the Senate:
     Geneviève Desmarais (2015-2018)
Two students, elected by the Senate:
     Andrew Moreira
     Everett Patterson
One alternate student, elected by the Senate:
     Nigel Verret

Motion 4 (J. Dryden/ V. St. Pierre) that Senate appoint the following students to the Ad Hoc Committee on the Fall Break:

                                                     Motion Carried

A representative from the Registrar's office
     Christiane Major
 A representative from the Wellness Centre
     Cindy Crossman
3 faculty, representing each of the three faculties. The three appointed should have among them expertise in program evaluation, assessment and survey construction.
     Carla Van Beselaere
     Kathleen Lord
     Irena Kaczmarkska
 2 student representatives
     Kiera Stel (2017-2018)
     Rachel Howlett 2017-2018 (continuing on from 2016-2017)

Motion 5 (J. Dryden/ V. St. Pierre) moves that Senate appoint the following nominees to the Ad hoc Committee to Consider the Status and Future of the Anthropology Department and Anthropology Programs at Mount Allison University:

                                                     Motion Carried

 Membership - 7 members:

 4 faculty members or librarians, including at least one representative from each of the Faculties of Social Science, Sciences, and Arts;
     Mark Fedyk (Arts)
     Laurie Ricker (Science)
     Patricia Kelly Spurles (Social Science)
     Anne LePage (Library)

· 1 representative from the Registrar's Office or from Student Life;
     Chris Parker
· 2 student representatives, at least one of which is from the Social Sciences.
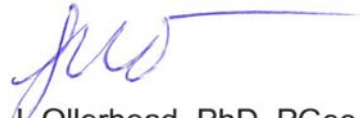   **Rachel Howlett**
     Nigel Verret

06.09.12   Report from the Academic Appeals Committee

J. Ollerhead gave the report. There were no questions. The text of the report is reproduced below.

Members of this committee in 2016-2017 were: J. Ollerhead, chair, R. Moser, B. Walters, Sarah Murphy, student and Tierra Stokes, student.

The Academic Appeals Committee met on May 12, 2017 to consider one (1) appeal. The appeal was denied.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Ollerhead, PhD, PGeo
Provost and Vice-President, Academic and Research
Mount Allison University

07.09.13   Report from the University Planning Committee

J. Ollerhead informed Senate that information relating to completed departmental reviews has been posted on the Provost's website.

J. Ollerhead then asked for comments and questions about the Academic Plan that had been circulated. He noted that it is not a strategic plan, but a framework to make decisions. In response to a question from R. Campbell, J. Ollerhead stated that there is no formal process to accept the plan, but he sees it as a guiding document to inform the decisions of Senate and the University Planning Committee.

S. Currie asked about the process by which departments could advise the Committee about vacancies and apply for positions. J. Ollerhead answered that there will be no formal call, and asked departments to advise the Committee as needs arise. He said that the Committee will develop and circulate a document advising on the information it would like to see from departments requesting a positon.

R. Campbell said that we was impressed by how last year's hiring circle helped to strengthen the Women's and Gender Studies Program. He expressed a hope that something similar could occur for Indigenous Studies.

L. Michaelis asked if there would be opportunity to discuss parts of the plan in detail. J. Ollerhead answered that, for example, there will be an opportunity at the next meeting of Faculty Council. He also entertained the possibility of meetings pertaining to particular themes in the plan.

L. Michalis expressed concern with the particular way that interdisciplinarity is framed within the document. She noted that the Department of Political Science and International Relations has significant experience with different models of interdisciplinarity, and would like to see that experience reflected in the document. J. Dryden added that interdisciplinarity is possible from faculty members who work within a single department. J. Ollerhead responded that the model of interdisciplinarity reflected in the document is one that resonates with students, and that it reflects a desire to hire broadly-trained faculty members.

L. Michaelis expressed concern over the reporting of enrollment statistics in the document. In her view, the document painted a picture of long-term decline in enrollments, whereas the numbers could be interpreted a as return to historical averages from a brief period of higher-than-normal student numbers. O. Griffith shared L. Michaelis' concern with the presentation of enrolment numbers. He also argued that the use of aggregate student-faculty ratios does not reflect typical student experience.

J. Ollerhead responded that current student numbers are below a benchmark set by the revenue needed to maintain programs and infrastructure. A. Fancy added that if the abnormally high enrollments represented

a long-term target, then today's lower enrollments are a problem. He suggested that departments consider how they might help to increase student numbers. B. Evans, R. Campbell and J. Ollerhead spoke in support of A. Fancy's suggestion. R. Campbell also emphasized that moving to an enrollment target of approximately 2400 was intentional, and done with a view to generating sufficient revenue to ensure program quality.

The Academic Plan is appended to these minutes.

08.09.13   Other Business

L. Michaelis expressed concern over the university entering into a contract with eXplorance Blue to administer online student surveys without consulting Senate. She noted that Senate Policy 5310 on the Evaluation of Teaching contained specific reference to paper-based surveys, so that the new arrangement may be in conflict with Senate policy. J. Ollerhead responded that some change to current practice was required under the Collective Agreement between the Mount Allison Faculty Association and the University. He added that alternative local arrangements would be costly, difficult, and prone to errors.

There followed a discussion of the contract for administering student surveys in which the following points were raised.

1. O. Griffiths and L. Michaelis argued that the administration of the surveys is an academic issue. Therefore, Senate should have been consulted prior to the decision being taken. J. Ollerhead characterized the decision as an administrative one, taken to ensure timely compliance with the Collective Agreement.
2. J. Rogers and E. Stueter asked questions about the nature of the contract and the service being provided by eXplorance Blue. Is it a software tool or an outsourcing of the entire process? Who owns the data? Who would answer third-party requests for data disclosure? J. Ollerhead responded that the service is a tool and that all data remains the property of Mount Allison. The University alone would answer requests from third parties.
3. L. Michaelis expressed concern that online delivery would lead to low response rates. J. Ollerhead acknowledged that a pilot done at Mount Allison some years ago did show low response rates to online teaching evaluations, but he cited recent evidence that online response rates are trending upward.
4. L. Michaelis asked whether faculty would be able to opt out of the online surveys or customize its availability. J. Ollerhead deferred those questions to the upcoming information session on eXplorance Blue.
5. L. Michaelis suggested that Senate visit the issue of updating the guidelines for student surveys, given that the current ones apply to paper-based questionnaires.

R. Campbell ended the discussion, stating that the issue could be discussed further at a subsequent meeting.

09.09.13   Adjournment

There being no further business or announcements, the meeting was adjourned at 5:55 pm (A. Cockshutt/E. Wells).

Respectfully submitted,

Craig Brett
Secretary

ACADEMIC PLAN

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

a. Preamble

These are challenging times for Canadian post-secondary education. Enrollments are down and long-term demographic trends present a discouraging picture in many parts of the country for the coming decade. In New Brunswick, economic stagnation and outmigration have forced the provincial government to make difficult choices about funding critical sectors such as education, health care, and infrastructure. University revenues – whether in the form of tuition or provincial grants – are flat at best and in real terms declining. Meanwhile, costs for faculty, staff, maintenance, equipment, supplies, and library collections have increased year after year. The value of the Canadian dollar has fallen precipitously against the United States dollar, straining budgets yet further. The predictable consequences have been annual rounds of budget cuts, project deferrals, and repeated efforts to do more with less.

Mount Allison's situation is hardly unique. Our challenges are echoed in every other post-secondary institution in Atlantic Canada and across the country. At the same time, we have the opportunity to tackle these challenges from a position of relative strength. We have a long history of providing high-quality education. We are well regarded nationally for our academic programming, co-curricular and extracurricular programming, and experiential learning opportunities. We do well in national surveys of education quality and reputation (e.g., National Survey of Student Engagement – NSSE, Maclean's Magazine, The Globe and Mail Report Card, etc.). Compared to the national average, we have a low full-time student-to-faculty ratio of 17:1. Seven of our professors are 3M National Teaching Fellows and we have four Canada Research Chairs. We value the inherent and important link between academic programming and the pursuit of research and creative activity. There is much to celebrate!

However, to sustain these successes, of which we can all be proud, we need to be constantly evaluating our challenges and opportunities. We need to be prepared to change when this makes sense; we need to be equally prepared to stay the course if a given change does not make sense (i.e., we should not chase fads).

Some institutions in the region have chosen to address their situations by increasing debt or adopting recruitment strategies that are difficult to sustain. Mount Allison has chosen the path of fiscal responsibility and sustainable recruitment practices designed to maintain the character of our institution. This provides us with the opportunity to change in a planned and decisive manner; we can avoid sudden

changes driven by moments of crisis. Although increased competition for students compels us to adopt new approaches for recruitment and retention, and decreasing sources of revenue force us into creative and sober thinking about finances, we can avoid rash decisions that might jeopardize our core values and mission.

The foregoing environmental considerations form the context in which we, the members of the University Planning Committee, offer this academic plan for Mount Allison University. It is to form one key pillar of the comprehensive Integrated Plan currently under development.[1] Acknowledging the difficulties expressed above, we nonetheless feel we have the opportunity to enact positive and forward-looking changes that will strengthen Mount Allison in the years ahead.

This plan does not include a comprehensive review of current programs or procedures. However, it does offer a brief review of previous academic strategic plans. In short, we found much of the *Academic Renewal Plan, 2009-2016* to be still relevant. Indeed, reviewing the societal and economic forces that shaped that document reveals that those same forces, detailed below, continue to affect the university. Some initiatives that evolved from that plan, such as redesigning our distribution system, have now been realized. In some cases, we advocate to implement aspects of previous plans that have not yet been realized but are still considered desirable. Overall, this plan reflects a sober consideration of two pressing issues that, while of significant concern when previous plans were prepared, have intensified in recent years.

i. Enrolment, recruitment and retention

Mount Allison's enrolment has declined by some 300 students over the last few years. While the reasons for this are likely many, they certainly include a declining regional demographic, which has seen levels of students graduating from high school in New Brunswick drop by half since 1990. This has affected all of the universities in the region, not only through declining applications and enrolment, but also through increased inter-university competition and the resultant increase in recruitment costs. The University also faces a related revenue challenge: regulated tuition and modest operating grants from the province of New Brunswick, which itself is facing significant ongoing financial stress.

While we cannot significantly affect these provincial issues, we can and should plan and take actions, beyond what we are currently doing, that are designed to attract and retain qualified students. This concern is a central theme of this document.

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[1] This plan was prepared by the Senate's University Planning Committee in consultation with the University President (15-16) and Provost and VP Academic & Research (16-17). It is intended to be a living document and as such it will be modified and revised from time-to-time as necessary.

ii. Skills development and experience

It is widely held amongst the faculty that core skills that are essential for students' academic success and to enhance their capacity for full and effective participation in career and community beyond the academy, need greater attention. In addition, the expectations that society, government, students and parents have of universities have changed significantly in recent years, with a pronounced focus on applied education, preparation for the job market, including practical and experiential learning, skills development, and measurable learning outcomes. While it is not necessary to abandon our core values to respond to this focus, it would likewise be unwise to ignore it.

b. Assumptions

Based on available data and our recent experiences, it is expected that the university can optimistically anticipate a student population of 2100-2250 in the coming years. Our core competency and historic associations rest with liberal education, and we believe we should seek to modernize and remain relevant while staying within our proud tradition. Considering the mission and values statements adopted by the Integrated Planning Group, we believe that the university should continue to offer a wide scope of academic programs including Humanities, Social Sciences, Sciences, Commerce, and Fine and Performing Arts. We conclude that it is neither wise nor practical to attempt to transform the university into a technical, applied, or online school. Nonetheless, we believe that increased attention to core skills development such as critical reading, writing, and thinking skills, as well as the accelerated development of applied, experiential learning, is both desirable and essential.

We are aware that our desire to maintain our scope of offerings in the present climate of stagnant or decreasing enrolment and modest revenue expectations may necessitate difficult decisions of substantial consequence to people and programs. As stated above, we have not initiated a comprehensive review of the shape of the university, and find that this cannot and should not be done within the limited time and knowledge base of the Planning Committee.

Yet some such planning must be attempted. While enrolment **may** stabilize or decrease further and revenue **may** stagnate or decrease, costs will **always** increase. We therefore believe it is our responsibility to plan for a variety of contingencies so that as we move forward we are guided both by general principles and by specific procedures that will allow us to make difficult decisions without causing internal discord or compromising the integrity of our educational programs and the soundness of the institution.

c. Conclusions

In light of the concerns and constraints outlined above and guided by the mission, vision and values statements released by the Integrated Planning Review Committee in 2016, we have identified objectives, suggestions and recommendations regarding our academic programs. We have aggregated these objectives, suggestions and recommendations into three sub-sections that flow from each other, and present them as follows:

- The first-year experience

- Academic support

- Academic strategy (including 3-4 year tenure-track hiring plan)

With this document, we seek to open a dialogue with the Mount Allison community that will result in a thoughtful and powerful academic plan for our future. The content of this plan should promote excellence and be implemented so as to contribute to attracting qualified students. Our academic programs should be designed and carried out in a manner that retains students, provides a consistent, high quality academic experience, provides substantial skill development, and provides research and experiential opportunities that apply and test students' academic development.

d. Accountability

No plan is likely to succeed unless there are clear goals, timelines, and members of our community who are accountable for implementation. Ultimate responsibility for implementing this plan rests with the Provost and Vice-President Academic and Research (hereafter Provost). Others who will be accountable include:

- Academic Programs – Academic Deans, University Librarian, Senate and its committees, etc.

- Academic Support – Vice-President International and Student Affairs, Academic Deans, University Librarian, etc.

- Academic Strategy (including 3-4 year hiring plan) – Academic Deans, University Librarian, Senate and its Planning Committee, etc.

An annual work plan must be developed by the Provost, Academic Deans and the University Librarian with a listing of key objectives and dates. An example for 2017-2018 is included at the end of this document as Appendix A.

2. Recommendations

a. The First Year Experience

For most students, the habits and identities that form in their first year at Mount Allison govern how they think and work for many years to come. Therefore, we believe our students' first year is critical to both their academic development and to their connection with the Mount Allison community. Their academic experience should comprise all of the elements that Mount Allison wants and promises to deliver – a high-level academic program, delivered in a small community with personal attention, with a high degree of contact between students and faculty, a strong sense of community, and active student engagement on and off campus. If well designed and implemented, with appropriate resources to support it, then a number of important objectives and outcomes can be linked to the first experiences a student has of and at Mount Allison.

i. Goals
1. For the students:
   - Develop high academic standards and good academic skills: reading, writing, research, computation, and critical thinking.
   - Become adept at using university resources such as the library and academic help centres.
   - Develop a strong sense of connection to Mount Allison, and to its faculty, staff, and fellow students.
   - Develop a connection to the local and regional community through civic engagement, experiential learning, and research.

2. For the institution:
   - Develop a clearly differentiated and well-articulated program that will attract students of the caliber and in the numbers desired for sustaining both excellence and the size of the institution.
   - Retain first year students through realization of the above goals, a focus on small group learning, and careful faculty oversight.

ii. Possible models for achieving the goals
We recognize that there are many possible models for delivering and tracking the objectives summarized as the First Year Experience. Below are two possibilities. We welcome the participation of the full Mount Allison community in crafting something that fits best with and identifies our institution.

1. **Model based on a style of Course Delivery**
   First year courses within each academic program would be adapted to provide students with weekly opportunities to read, write, talk and compute (if appropriate) in a consequential way, with regular feedback from instructors. In order to affect this approach we would:

   - Adopt an introductory course delivery model that sees weekly large lectures complemented by weekly small group seminars, tutorials and/or labs. Alternatively, use technology to deliver content to large groups complemented by weekly small group seminars, tutorials and/or labs. This approach need not be one-size-fits-all; there will be variations across courses, disciplines and faculties. The goal is not to save resources but rather to reallocate them to provide maximum benefit for students.
   - Conceptualize, construct and cost out this model department-by-department, with the aim of having the resources saved in the large lecture format used where possible to finance the small group weekly meetings.
   - Encourage imagination, experimentation and innovation of approaches to small-group teaching: by time, by function, by faculty members.
   - Examine upper year course delivery and modify where appropriate to re-distribute resources to first year courses in an effort to provide a more balanced experience for students. For most situations, we should perhaps adopt a minimum class size (e.g., 7 using a rolling average over 2-4 years) to ensure that teaching resources are distributed well across all year levels.

2. **Model based on a first-year seminar or course**
   It was recommended in the Academic Renewal Plan 2009-2016, that a first year initiative attempt to address the need to acclimate students to university life and academic rigor, educate them about and connect them to support services, encourage the development of close relationships with other students, faculty and staff in order to foster a sense of belonging and community, assess, develop, and monitor students' skill levels in reading, writing, research, and speaking, and possibly address the liberal ideal of broadening students' areas of knowledge and interest. While there are many possible methods of delivery, two basic styles are:

   a. First-year seminar
      All first year students are divided into small classes that are assigned a faculty member. The subject of the class may be common to all first year students, like our interdisciplinary President's Speaker Series themes, it may reflect the interests and expertise of the instructor, or it could be determined by specific departments. Students could be allowed to choose their class, or it might be assigned.

b. First-year course
This model uses the large lecture and tutorial format described above to deliver a common curriculum, perhaps based on a single theme. It allows the university to carefully and consistently include the skills development we desire within an interesting content-based class. It has the advantages of economy of resources and of unifying the first year with a common academic experience. Given Mount Allison's current enrolment and classroom facilities, this would likely require four sections of approximately 180 students, with tutorial sections of about 20 students.

Note that this is not the first time this issue has been discussed within our community. As part of any process to address the first-year experience, the *Report of [the] Vice-President's Advisory Committee on the First-Year Experience (11 May 2006)* should be read for context.

b. Academic Support

The achievement of the academic and institutional goals articulated elsewhere in this document requires enhancing or redesigning some existing support structures and creating some new ones. The guiding principles for such changes include supporting student academic achievement both for success and retention, and differentiating our academic programming for quality, depth, and recruitment.

Rationale: An academic program that is highly differentiated from those of other comparator institutions, easily identified, and more coherent will be a powerful recruiting tool, particularly if it offers both high quality classroom and personal and professional experiences outside of the classroom. Moreover, to the extent that our academic programming is engaging, attractive and successful, then student *retention* should increase.

Part of the challenge in differentiating ourselves from other schools is the fact that we offer a broad liberal arts and science education in a small school; this can limit both program variety/differentiation and program depth in particular areas. So, while we provide a quality experience that is well appreciated by our students, the experience may look generic from outside our community. We propose below a number of initiatives to ameliorate this situation.

i. Suggestions to enhance skills development (supporting student success)

In order to ensure the best possible use of any coherent first year model, and to better serve our entire student population, we must take steps designed to increase student success. What follows are some *possibilities* to consider.

1. **Develop a for-credit first-year course**
This would introduce students to techniques and strategies for university success: from personal skills such as time management, motivation and

personal development, academic essentials like reading, research and writing skills, to thinking through the objectives of a university experience. This course could be designed and delivered by faculty or by professionals in this area. Once developed, tested and perfected, the university could consider whether it should be mandatory. Best practices should be studied before any such course is developed, so that resources are not wasted on such an initiative.

2. **Develop a Student Learning and Success Centre**
   This centre would have a professional director and parallel the work of the Meighen Centre. It would comprise an academic skills centre and appropriate programming; academic advising and support; research advice and skills development; group learning and work opportunities and facilities. It could be centered in the Bell Library and function in cooperation with Library professionals.

3. **Evaluate students**
   Students could be encouraged to be evaluated on their core literacy, numeracy, language and other skills on arrival and regularly throughout their time at Mount Allison. As an incentive, the university could offer a certificate of advanced core skills development upon successful completion of a program/test. Once developed, tested and perfected, the university could consider whether this should be mandatory. It would obviously be necessary to begin by documenting and agreeing upon key learning outcomes and core skills for different degrees and programs within those degrees (i.e., Honours, Majors and Minors).

4. **President's Academic Programming and Recruitment Committee**
   We recommend the creation of a standing *President's Academic Programming and Recruitment Committee* to be chaired by the Provost. Membership might include 2 members from the Planning Committee, 2 members from Academic Matters, the VP International and Student Affairs, and the Director of Recruitment, Admissions and Awards. Terms of reference would have to be created but the main goal of the committee would be to regularly consider academic initiatives and developments to ensure that Mount Allison's differentiation is powerful enough to continue to attract students.

ii. **Suggestions to enhance research and experiential learning**
   Note: two other committees have provided reports on research and on experiential education.

   1. **Research**
      One of the great differentiators for Mount Allison is the fact that so many of our students are offered the opportunity for hands-on research activity throughout

their time at the university. We recommend that this feature of the Mount Allison experience be substantially increased and extended. The development of student research skills should be considered a core competency and priority of the Mount Allison experience.

To this end, we recommend the development of a university-wide student research strategy (with complementary policies, programs and resource support) that sees these student opportunities central to our mission.

2. **Other experiential learning**

A more recent feature of the Mount Allison experience has been the increasing number of student opportunities to take on internships, work placements, travel experiences, leadership initiatives, organizational roles, and so on.

We recommend that the university commit to substantially expanding and extending experiential learning opportunities as a core feature of academic programming.

Both of these initiatives will address and advance the issue of skills development, as well as the expectation that our graduates have preparation for and expectation of success in the next stages of their lives – whether in careers or further academic or professional study.

3. **Implementation**

Below are some ideas that will help facilitate the expansion of student research and experiential learning. We feel that such developments would likely increase both student success and faculty professional satisfaction.

a. **Centre for Student Experiential Learning and Research**

In order to enact a student research strategy and expand experiential learning – we should create a professional *Centre for Student Experiential Learning and Research.* This centre would coordinate, develop, and work with University Advancement and Alumni in order to promote and implement the research and experiential features of the Mount Allison experience.

b. **Course structure and valuation**

Reconsider the definition and valuation of a 'course' and encourage the development of more flexible and innovative definitions of teaching loads:

- consider a variety of weightings for these sorts of experiences and encourage greater flexibility in degree design, as students' research and

experiential learning experiences may not fit neatly within a three or six-credit course format;
- consider a variety of workload weightings for these sorts of experiences and greater flexibility in workload design, as existing workload models may not lend themselves to the large lecture/small seminar model that we have recommended, nor to the research and experiential initiatives.

iii. Suggestions to enhance interdisciplinarity

The 2009 Academic Plan identified interdisciplinarity as an important objective of academic renewal, and it remains so. A far more aggressive interdisciplinary academic strategy will address the problem of having a broad array of offerings yet lacking the variety and depth within an area that would allow for greater differentiation from other institutions. The university should encourage and seek to provide for greater program horizontality rather than disciplinary verticality. Some ideas to this end:

- There are cross-cutting currents that presently inform the research and experiential initiatives presented above: these include entrepreneurship, creativity, leadership, and innovation. These are themes that should inform program design and development.
- Related themes that were identified in the existing strategic statement include Culture and Creativity, Global Perspectives, Environment, Science and Discovery, and Public Service. A deliberate effort should be made to identify, create, and encourage the development of these themes across different courses and programs.
- Examine the current Academic structure of three Deans and multiple departments and assess whether combining into fewer departments/faculties would promote interdisciplinary activity.

1. Principles for interdisciplinary programs

In order for interdisciplinary programs to be successful, they must be properly resourced. For example, participating departments cannot be allowed to staff necessary courses last in favour of their own disciplinary courses. After some deliberation, the Committee adopted the following principles to apply to the development of interdisciplinary programs:

- These programs need to be truly interdisciplinary (not multidisciplinary). For example, it must be possible for students to take included courses without a prohibitive number of prerequisite courses. We should avoid a series of interdisciplinary silos.
- These programs need to be staffed by multiple faculty members, perhaps all cross-appointed, so there is a 'depth' of support for them.
- There must be a commitment to offer courses for students in these programs on a regular basis (i.e., at least every second year).

- Multiple instructors should teach the eponymous courses in a program.
- The program director should be a tenured faculty member who can bring a depth of experience to the position.

c. Academic Strategy

In order to deliver our academic programs, we must have faculty and staff to deliver them. This necessitates a plan to replace faculty and staff who leave the university for whatever reason(s). As noted in the Introduction, the combination of declining enrolment and fiscal pressures suggests that 1:1 replacement is unlikely over the coming 3-4 years. Thus, the Planning Committee has worked on a hiring plan that seeks to maximize the use of cross-appointments to foster the sharing of resources and, in time, the development of more interdisciplinary curriculum. In order to guide the process, the Committee developed some metrics to assess program viability.

i. Metrics to assess program viability

In arguing to fill an academic position, program viability is often raised in proposals received by the University Planning Committee as a factor that should be considered. Assessing such arguments is often challenging. If one accepts that presenting a variety of raw faculty/student ratio statistics is not a sufficient condition for authorizing a position, or that an argument framed from the perspective of always having had X positions is not a sufficient condition for authorizing a position, one needs a variety of metrics to assess such arguments. What follows are some metrics for assessing program viability at Mount Allison. These are presented in no particular order and their relative importance is likely to be context specific. Moreover, some factors may not apply in a given case and thus it is not intended that all factors be addressed in a given proposal.

- Factors or characteristics that would likely affect our viability in the marketplace (e.g., factors that would make high school students want to come to MTA or the absence of which would cause them not to want to come). Are there factors or characteristics in a program that, if lost, would jeopardize one of our more unique or signature academic programs?
- Factors or characteristics that relate to the integrity and interplay between courses (e.g., not offering calculus would affect far more than mathematics students).
- Factors or characteristics that affect job futures and long-term citizenship futures (i.e., factors that would qualify or disqualify people from being capable, or seen as capable, to undertake certain duties / live a fulfilling life). Examples of this might include effective communication skills or an appreciation of gender issues in our society.
- Factors or characteristics that relate to current strategic direction(s) which, necessarily, change from time to time (e.g., help us get where we want to go with experiential learning or expose our students to Indigenous issues).
- Factors or characteristics that make us more interdisciplinary. For example, a department could argue that a potential hire that could teach courses in more than one academic program would increase our interdisciplinary.

▪ Faculty/student ratio statistics carefully considered (i.e., placed into context).

ii. Tenure-track hiring plan – 2017-2020

What follows is a tenure-track hiring plan for 2017-2020. As of this date, we have budget room to move forward with the hires identified for 2017 and 2018. By necessity, this plan is part of a living document and it will have to be revised as circumstances change. However, this **does not mean** that the planning process should be restarted each academic year. The broad outlines of the plan should be respected at least until 2019.

There are elements in the plan that require more discussion. For example, the idea of creating a *Centre for Indigenous and Canadian Studies* (or some name like this) has been discussed by the Committee but not with other stakeholders. The idea is to ensure that our treatment of Indigenous curriculum is interdisciplinary and pan-university. No department would 'own' it. We would seek to appoint the next Director of *Indigenous and Canadian Studies* at the Associate level with tenure to guide us into this realm. The hire could be as early as 1 January 2018 if the budget can sustain it. Thus, the plan provides the foundation upon which to have these important discussions.

Likewise, the notion that the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry and the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science could share a position in bioinformatics or 'big data' has not been tested. The position is in the plan to signal that perhaps a discussion between these departments would be fruitful. In fact, the Committee has discussed the merits of holding a campus-wide discussion this summer about our digital strategy for the coming years with respect to everything from hiring, to research infrastructure, to curriculum development. What will the intersections be between our computer scientists, our colleagues in the digital humanities, and efforts in the Library to support data and digital services?

In summary, the plan that follows is to provide us with a high-level roadmap of where we are headed between now and 2020. It balances identified needs to the extent possible, given what we know. The Committee therefore *recommends* that we start immediately to refine the plan to meet our academic objectives within the constraints we face.

1. **Table A: Plan summary**

Goals (not mutually exclusive and in no particular order)	• Make more interdisciplinary hires; achieve as much flexibility as possible. • Increase the diversity of our faculty complement. • Support our initiatives in Indigenization, experiential learning, enhancing the first-year experience, creativity, and innovation. • Maintain program viability (which will necessitate choices).
Areas of Emphasis (in no particular order)	• Indigenization (cutting across all disciplines) • Fine and Performing Arts • Our Digital World (including digital humanities) • Our Environment • Social Justice (including gender) and Citizenship
1 July 2017	1 position: Classics (digital humanities) 1 position: Commerce and WGST (management) 1 position: Mathematics and Computer Science [MACS] (applied mathematics) 1 position: Sociology and WGST (mental health) 1 position: Women's and Gender Studies [WGST] (cognate in Humanities)
1 July 2018	1 position: Biology (botany) 1 position: Indigenous and Canadian Studies (new Director) 1 position: Social Sciences (Indigenous focus)
1 July 2019	1 position: Chemistry and Biochemistry and/or MACS (bioinformatics) 1 position: Library (data and digital services) 1 position: Music (music education) 1 position: Fine Arts (photography)
1 July 2020	1 position: Commerce (finance) 1 position: Humanities (Indigenous focus) 1 position: ? 1 position: ?

Assumptions: This is a living document which will be revised as circumstances change (e.g., budget).
As retirements are known, additional positions may be added in any given year.
As of this date, we have budget room to move forward with 2017 and 2018.
All available positions will be allocated in accordance with our strategic goals.
Cross-appointments are not 50/50 but letters of appointment do not specify a ratio.
All appointments, including cross-appointments, identify a home department.

Appendix A: Listing of Key Objectives and Dates – 2017-2018

Date	Key Objectives
August 2017	• Initiate formal discussions about creating a *Centre for Indigenous and Canadian Studies* (or some name like this) by 1 January 2018
September 2017	• Provide this report to Senate for its information and comment
September 2017	• Review the *Report of [the] Vice-President's Advisory Committee on the First-Year Experience (11 May 2006)* to see what parts of it are still relevant and useful
October 2017	• Initiate tenure-track searches for 1 July 2018
October 2017	• Establish a *President's Academic Programming and Recruitment Committee* and hold a first meeting to develop terms of reference
October 2017	• Seek 1-2 courses to try using technology (purchased or licensed) to deliver content to large groups complemented by weekly small group seminars, tutorials and/or labs • Ideally this will be tried in the W18 term by 1-2 instructors
October 2017	• Consider a recommended minimum class size (e.g., 7) to ensure that teaching resources are distributed well across all year levels; consider using a rolling average over 2-4 years
November 2017	• Initiate formal discussions about enhancing our *Student Learning and Success Centre* (or some name like this) by 1 September 2018
January 2018	• Initiate formal discussions about the merits of creating a *Centre for Student Experiential Learning and Research*
January 2018	• Initiate formal discussions about the merits of creating a for-credit student success course
Other?	