

President's Monthly Report December 2009

PSE Partnership Development

Trent University is one of the most successful universities in the province, and perhaps the country, in developing strategic partnerships with other post-secondary institutions and other collaborators. For example, there is widespread recognition that the Fleming/Trent relationship is a model college-university partnership in the province. Trent enjoys many such partnerships, and new discussions are possible in the coming months with interested colleges and universities, as part of the integrated planning process. A few recent highlights in the college-university sector are presented here.

Fleming College

Continued discussion with colleagues and senior administration at Fleming College has been productive in identifying the successful existing and potential collaborations – with a clear view to strengthening our interactions and expanding capacity in areas of mutual interest and student need. Currently, there are 14 articulation agreements, 4 joint programs, and 7 agreements in progress between Fleming and Trent. One area, in which my personal participation might be possible, is in geomatics, GIS, remote sensing, and spatial analysis – especially, but not only, in the environmental sciences. Another possible area of mutual benefit and interest between Fleming and Trent encompasses the broad area of the health sciences.

UOIT/Durham College Strategic Partnership

Several meetings with the senior administration at UOIT and Durham College continued in December, with an understanding that progress has been significant and will be documented in new agreements or MOUs between the institutions in the New Year. Such agreements are likely to identify innovative academic programming and delivery logistics, including some interesting space implications of the new Trent-in-Oshawa campus at Thornton Road, and UOIT's evolving strategy to develop a downtown campus at Simcoe and King. Currently, there are 7 articulations in place between Durham College and Trent, with a similar number of agreements in progress. One new idea has emerged that could involve PSE development on the Seaton Lands in North Pickering. And overall, a general sense has developed that the great strengths of these three institutions continue to provide a strong foundation for a strategic collaboration that provides a competitive advantage and unique positioning opportunity for the region.

George Brown College

A meeting with Anne Sado, President of George Brown College, was held on 17 December in Toronto in which the strategic planning activities at the two institutions were highlighted. George Brown is in the midst of developing a College strategic plan for 2020. A key goal is likely to be focussed on student mobility and expansion of student choice. George Brown College is also interested in developing increased college-university collaboration where appropriate. Overall, a general sense was confirmed that any further discussion, collaboration or partnership between Trent and George Brown College would be developed from the 'ground-up', for example, as part of the upcoming integrated planning activities at Trent, and with wide consultation and understanding of implications. The current collaboration in Nursing between Trent and George Brown College will begin with the first cohort in January 2010.

Council of Ontario Universities Executive Heads Meeting

On 10 December, as part of the COU Executive Heads Roundtable, the new President of COU (Bonnie Patterson) presented a brief that outlined COU strategy for government as part of the 'Reaching Higher 2' consultation and the upcoming budget process. Several themes emerged, including, for example, the importance of multiyear planning, the quality improvements needed with base funding, the full funding of student growth and cost escalation. Generally, the role of PSE in the economic recovery is accepted and well-understood, and earlier priorities remain (such as overall system growth and in the GTA, improvements in credit transfer/mobility, international student recruitment, and accountability). The pension issues continue to represent a significant challenge to individual institutions and to government.

A new book entitled *Academic Transformation: The Forces Reshaping Higher Education* (by Ian D. Clark, Greg Moran, Michael Skolnik and David Trick) has garnered significant attention with controversial conclusions related to:

- Ontario's fiscally unsustainable undergraduate education model
- Research/teaching nexus challenge
- Workload/productivity challenge
- Provincial intervention in system design, differentiation, and credit transfer
- Role of 'quality councils'

Vision and Renewal of Planning Processes

Vision renewal activities involved literally hundreds of people over the course of the fall discussing a variety of themes including the Trent experience, big picture overview, core values, primary purpose, differences, and challenges. The final *Vision Renewal Workshops* were held on 11 December. A full-day retreat on 15 December was then held by the *Vision Renewal Review Committee* to analyze and interpret the feedback received. Members of the *Special Advisory Committee on Changing Academic Structures* and the *Strategic Directions Advisory Committee* attended for part of the day to share findings and inform these mutually-supporting review activities. Certain 'elements of vision renewal' were identified and will be the focus of a written presentation anticipated to be circulated and widely discussed in early January. An additional engagement strategy is being developed for the New Year – leading to a recommended structure, vision renewal, and strategic directions document that will be helpful in unit-level integrated planning scheduled to begin in March 2010.

Administrative Organization

Senior administrative searches continued, or are being developed, for the following positions: Dean of Graduate Studies and Head of Trill College, Provost and Vice-President Academic, Registrar, Director of Institutional Planning, and Director of Information Technology.

Major Consultative and Administrative Activities

Some members of Trent's senior administration attended the Innovation Cluster board meeting and retreat at Alumni House in early December. Discussion was focussed on the major successes of the Cluster and partners, such as Fleming and Trent, and a further session was organized around identifying new challenges and opportunities in the community and the region.

Internal and External Relations (December 1 – 31, 2009)

Internal Meetings

Trent University staff and faculty meetings (9)
Trent University students and student groups (3)
Trent University Board members and committees/subcommittees (5)
Trent University senior administrators (11)
Academic and administrative department/unit meetings (8)
Integrated Planning Committees, Information Sessions, and Workshops (4)
Faculty Board
Senate
President's Open Forum for Staff (2)
President's Office Hours for Students (2 December)
Provost and Vice President Academic Search Committee
Former senior administrators (2)
Extended Management (3 December)
President's Advisory Committee on Human Rights (16 December)
Facilities and Grounds Committee (16 December)

External Meetings

Post-secondary presidents (Fleming, George Brown, UOIT, Durham College, Ryerson)
Trent Radio call-in show (2)
Chief of Police and several police officers and staff
Mayor of Peterborough
Peterborough Hospital and Regional health care officials
Teleconference participation on PhD Comprehensive Examination at University of Saskatchewan
Local community groups (2)
Search consultant firms (3)
Local political leaders (2)
Innovation Cluster Board Retreat
Council of Ontario Universities Executive Heads Roundtable

Events

President and College Heads' Holiday Reception
Gzowski College Holiday Dinner
Otonabee College Holiday Reception
Humanities Research Day
Trent University Association of Retired Persons Christmas Reception
Dinner and informal discussion session hosted by Trent University professor emeritus
Dinner and reception for members of the community hosted by former Board Chair
Events hosted at the President's residence (1)

Warm wishes to all for a happy and relaxing holiday season.

The President's Monthly Report is available on the *Office of the President's Website* at http://www.trentu.ca/administration/presidentsoffice_reports.php. Questions or comments are welcome (sfranklin@trentu.ca).