

Internal Memorandum

To: Members of Senate
From: Benoit-Antoine Bacon, Provost and Vice-President Academic Affairs
Date: March 10, 2014
Re: Academic Plan Update

To begin, we are finalizing the review process for the current round of strategic faculty hires funded by the Academic Plan. The University Research Committee received 32 letters of intent, and the committee was impressed by the scope and transdisciplinarity of the applications. We have funding for 6 positions, and at this time 7 letters have been retained. Next steps are being pursued and we will have final decisions by next Senate.

With respect to curriculum innovation, we are approaching the March 17 deadline for the second round of funding proposals. A complete list of the first round of award winners for both course and program innovation is attached. We have already profiled two of these projects, and we will be doing more in the months ahead to make curriculum innovation visible. It is critical that we continue to support faculty in creating next-generation learning experiences for our students.

One way we hope to increase the visibility of our Faculty is through the now-renamed resource Explore Concordia (previously Research@Concordia). This superb tool now aims at integrating teaching and learning expertise, providing an even more powerful way to facilitate faculty connections. This is also a great way for future graduate students to look for potential supervisors. We already have over 600 profiles and we encourage everyone to participate.

On the e-learning front, our second annual e.SCAPE conference ran from March 5-7 (program attached). Tony Bates, a widely respected author and expert on e-learning, headlined the event. The main purpose of e.SCAPE is to provide our faculty community with opportunities to learn about innovative and effective practices in online and blended learning. The event was very well attended and well received and congratulations are due to VPTL Cathy Bolton, Fellow Saul Carliner and their team of Faculty and Staff volunteers.

Two other Fellows have organized events of note this month. Rosemary Reilly hosted the first Concordia Women's Summit and Peter Stoett, sustainability fellow, hosted Partnerships for the Living City: Promoting Urban Biodiversity. Peter and I will also be co-chairing a new

sustainability in teaching and research committee, created as part of the new Concordia Sustainability Governance Framework.

As we just passed the March 1 deadline, I want to say a few words on enrolments. Our application numbers to date are in line with the average of the last 5 years. However it is clear that it is increasingly difficult to compete in some markets, notably the rest of Canada and Asia, and that unless we review and improve the way we recruit and admits students, we may one year be faced with a decreasing enrolment. One piece of good news is that we are increasing our graduate student ratio, which is a stated goal of the academic plan. This is an important accomplishment, at once signaling our continued development as a research institution and also helping us achieve the growth we need in weighted FTEs without necessarily increasing our total headcount.

On a final note, as we make our way to the end of this academic year, we continue to encourage and make funding available for departmental retreats.