

**Office of the President**

**To: All staff and faculty**

**From: Feridun Hamdullahpur, President**

**Date: December 16, 2011**

**Re: The President's Quarterly  
Waterloo Community Update**

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It is my pleasure to provide you with the fourth and final report I will be sending to the members of our campus community this year.

**Board of Governors Meeting**

The Board of Governors met on October 25, 2011. [I invite you to download my presentation to the board.](#)

During my report I took the board through a series of slides based on our institution's annual [performance indicators](#). I am indebted to our Institutional Analysis and Planning department for their diligent work in collecting and presenting this vital information.

The board approved a revised budget of \$8 million for the Health Services addition. The project is funded by an undergraduate and graduate student fee, approved by referendum, of \$10 per term for a maximum of 20 years. A shortfall in the project's final budget is being covered by our operating budget to fund the Occupational Health space in the building. Construction is now underway and I am looking forward to this much-needed expansion and what it will mean for the health and wellbeing of our students.

**Town Hall Meeting**

We held a town hall meeting on November 1. The [video of the event](#) is available for your review. This town hall was different than previous ones. For the first time, all questions directed to me, VP Academic and Provost Geoff McBoyle, and VPs Dennis Huber, George Dixon, and Tim Jackson came either from the floor or from emails sent by viewers watching our webcast. I was very pleased with the depth of the questions, the openness of our community members, and their willingness to participate in this ongoing conversation about the university. The VPs and I all listened to what you had to say and will be using the next town hall as an opportunity to report back to you as well as engage in further discussion.

## **Senate Meeting**

The university senate met on November 21, 2011. My [presentation to senate](#) is available for download. Senate approved a new Centre for Bioengineering and Biotechnology and new graduate programs including a Master of Peace and Conflict Studies at Conrad Grebel and a Master of Social Work at Renison. Senate also approved a name change for our School of Optometry – it will be known as the School of Optometry and Vision Science, a name that more fully reflects the school’s undergraduate and graduate program activities.

## **Maclean’s rankings**

The annual *Maclean’s* magazine rankings of Canadian universities were released on November 7. We have topped the reputational rankings yet again, with first-place finishes in Best Overall, Most Innovative, and Leaders of Tomorrow. In the Highest Quality category we finished third, behind McGill University and the University of Toronto. We have been named “Best Overall” university by reputation for 18 of the last 21 years, and we have been No. 1 in the Most Innovative and Leaders of Tomorrow categories for each of the past five years, and our streak as Most Innovative now extends to 20 years.

It is gratifying for me to see that corporate and academic leaders responding to the *Maclean’s* survey have once again given us top marks. A university’s reputation and ability to provide innovative programs is critical to successfully attracting the best and brightest students both nationally and internationally. It is very encouraging to see that Waterloo’s students, scholarship, and research are being recognized, and this makes us even more committed to continue to build on our tradition of academic excellence. Every part of our university community has played an important role in this success.

## **Recent activities**

This autumn was a season of building opening celebrations related to the Knowledge Infrastructure Program, a joint capital and infrastructure expansion initiative between the Government of Canada and the government of Ontario that was established in the wake of 2008’s financial crisis and designed to stimulate the economy.

Mathematics 3, opened on October 21, has provided a new home for Waterloo’s Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science, which includes one of the largest and most highly regarded actuarial science programs in the world, and it has provided a locus for the faculty’s growing roster of business-related programs.

Opened on October 28, Engineering 6 is the new home for Chemical Engineering, with 113,000 square feet of space for faculty and students, research and teaching. The building provides new facilities for research groups in Chemical Engineering, in important areas such as biochemical and biomedical engineering, green reaction engineering, polymer science and engineering, and nano-biomaterials.

Environment 3, the Faculty of Environment's newest building, was opened on November 18. This building is the new home of our School of Planning and the School of Environment, Enterprise, and Development, or SEED. Environment 3 will enable environment researchers and students to enhance their vital work in key areas

In early November I spent two weeks away from campus. I can truly say that there was never a single dull moment, except perhaps for the 55 hours I spent in mid-air, flying from event to event. That said, this trip was worth every minute.

My travels started in Ottawa, where I participated in a Canada-U.S. Innovation summit on November 2, hosted by the U.S. Embassy that featured a keynote address by the Governor General. Two Canadian research-intensive universities were paired with American equivalents for the panel discussion - the University of British Columbia with the University of California Berkeley, and the University of Waterloo with The Johns Hopkins University. This is good company to be in and fabulous recognition of the University of Waterloo's location in the higher education landscape.

Then I travelled to Hong Kong, where I had the pleasure of opening the University of Waterloo's first overseas office to support the very active, very engaged alumni community there. They display tremendous enthusiasm about our university while working hard to build contacts, raise funds, and engage in recruiting.

After that I was off to Singapore, and met with two universities – the National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technological University. We are talking very seriously about two important agreements with each university. I also attended a special reception that involved a large number of faculty members from those institutions who are Waterloo alumni.

Then from Singapore I travelled to the United Arab Emirates; first to Abu Dhabi, where I participated in the annual Festival of Thinkers. I have the lanyard to prove it – my nametag reads “THINKER.” Every year, this festival invites Nobel laureates and other experts who speak on topics of social relevance, and I participated in a very interesting panel on reframing higher education. It is really something to be sitting there between two Nobel laureates and knowing that you are there because of the reputation of the institution you represent. The world wants to know what we are doing in Waterloo – we were the only Canadian institution invited to participate.

Finally, I went to Dubai to take part in the second anniversary celebration for our satellite campus along with Deans Adel Sedra and Ian Goulden. Our campus there is doing very well, with nearly 100 students – a 75 per cent increase over last year. Our exceptional students are really enjoying their time, and I had a chance to speak with our colleagues who are teaching there, and they are impressed with the quality of students and their level of engagement. More than a dozen UAE campus students are already here in Canada, either on a work term, or getting used to their new surroundings before their next term begins.

I have also had the opportunity to represent the University of Waterloo in front of large audiences recently. In October I was invited to address more than 1,100 research administrators at the Society of Research Administrators International annual meeting in Montréal. The organizers wanted their members, drawn from hospitals, universities, nonprofits, and governments, to know more about Waterloo's specific approach to innovation. That I was asked to do so is a reflection on our university's reputation as Canada's innovation university.

On November 23, I delivered a keynote address at the 2011 Pollution Probe Gala dinner in Toronto to an audience of 400 thought leaders. Pollution Probe is one of Canada's oldest environmental organizations. Again, this was the result of the University of Waterloo's well-established leadership presence, this time in the area of environmental research and teaching.

It is a great privilege to represent the University of Waterloo at events like these and I look forward to future opportunities to showcase the successes of our community both at home and abroad.

### **Mid-Cycle Review**

This fall we launched a mid-cycle review of our Sixth Decade Plan. During this review, which runs until the spring of 2012, we will be considering our ambitious goals as stated in the 2006 document and reflecting on our progress towards those goals, with the objectives of realigning our plan for the coming five years and introducing an accountability framework with clear outcome measures.

The first phase of this review involved 40 face-to-face consultations. I met personally with over 60 groups at these consultation sessions, held from September to December, and spoke with 65 students, over 1,130 faculty and staff, and 26 alumni and donors. In addition, an online survey was sent all students, faculty, staff, and 67,000 alumni, and to date we have received more than 2,285 responses, with over 1,195 of those from undergraduate students, 220 from faculty, and 340 from staff members.

An incredible amount of effort was put into the scheduling, hosting, and set-up for these consultation sessions, and I would like to thank the members of Communications and Public Affairs, Institutional Analysis and Planning, the offices of the Provost and President, the Secretariat, and Housing and Residences for their efforts to co-ordinate this initiative. I would also like to thank the students, faculty, staff, and alumni who participated in the sessions. Your input is critical.

What happens now? We commence the second phase of the consultation process in the New Year with a series of focus group discussions. These discussions, building on the first stage of stakeholder consultations, will help us develop clear objectives and determine the indicators of success. The outcome will inform our planning and budgeting process. By March 2012, we hope to report back to the community with action plans and progress measures.

I have been inspired by the response from the campus community to this review initiative; with a high degree of interest and engagement being demonstrated by every person I have spoken with, and more importantly, learned from, during these sessions. As we move into the next phase I am filled with confidence in this university's future.

Feridun Hamdullahpur  
President

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