

Office of the President

To: All staff and faculty

From: David Johnston, President

Date: June 22, 2010

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

It is my pleasure to provide you with the third of four reports I will be sending to the members of our community this year. When the Board of Governors met on June 1, it approved the 2010-2011 operating budget and received several reports from various committees and departments. In this quarterly report I will focus on three issues I feel are of interest to the broader university community.

Sixth Decade Plan Update

We are four years into *Pursuing Global Excellence: Seizing Opportunities for Canada* and at the board meeting I gave our governors an overview of the progress made on the Sixth Decade Plan.

There are two questions that keep me up at night when I think about the Sixth Decade Plan. First, are we doing the right things; and second, are we doing the things right?

I believe we are doing the right things. Our plan is bold and ambitious, with comprehensive aspirations that go all the way back to our institution's roots: experiential learning, partnership and collaboration, academic and research excellence, and a desire to tackle the problems facing Canada, providing service to society while encouraging innovation.

So are we doing some of the individual things right? Well, the answer to that question is that our results have been mixed as we approach the plan's midpoint. I have summarized our progress in several key areas below:

Resource Diversification

I'll start by quoting the plan itself. "The University of Waterloo will continue to strive to improve its resources through vigorous fund-raising efforts, and to improve its financial stability through diversification of its sources of income and the continued building of its endowments."

We set out high expectations and our delivery so far has been a work in progress. On the one hand, our goal of raising more than \$1 billion for Campaign Waterloo by the end of the Sixth Decade is achievable: currently we have raised \$568.1 million as of June 2010, against the original 2007 campaign objective of \$260 million. However, our goal of seeing annual fund-

raising reach 20 per cent of our operating budget is at this point a bit of a stretch. In hard numbers, 20 per cent equals \$100 million a year in giving, which we managed to achieve in 2008 with \$112 million. This year our giving totaled \$53.8 million, down from \$57 million in 2009. Certainly the economic crisis has had an impact, but even in good times, the question remains: can we obtain the resources necessary to achieve our dreams? Additionally, what should we do to reinforce the effort?

Research

In some aspects we are doing well, but achieving our research intensity goals will require sustained, intensive efforts. Our trajectory year over year is in the right direction and we are gaining ground, but our progress has been incremental at best. Our midterm 2012 objective is to see research revenue stand at 40 per cent of our operating budget. Currently it accounts for 34 per cent. We saw an 18 per cent increase of research dollars into the university over last year. We are in the top 10 in Canada with the goal of being the top eight in per capita research intensity. Waterloo is in the top four or five in the country in terms of NSERC grants per FTE faculty. Sustaining this momentum will require imagination and creativity.

Graduate Studies

This is an area where we are doing quite well. We have achieved our goal of having international students comprise 30 per cent of the total graduate student population. We are also on track to have the graduate student enrolment be at least 25 per cent of the total student population, up from 10 per cent at the beginning of the plan. Our goal is to have 8,000 graduate students studying at Waterloo by 2017, with 5,000 students engaging in research programs and 3,000 course-based, professional or other non-thesis based Master's students. As of 2009-10 we had 4,294 graduate students. By 2017, we will likely see a greater number of professional Master's students making up the 8,000 total.

Internationalization

Our progress in this area has been satisfactory. As with other areas of our plan, our ambitions are easy to conceive but the execution remains a challenge. Our architecture campus in Rome, our Sino-Canadian College partnership with Nanjing University in China, and our satellite operations in the UAE all continue, and we are in discussions with one of the newest Indian Institutes of Technology to take an active role in its founding year.

The secret to our success thus far has been the visionary leaders at Waterloo who have made international expansion their passion. Internationalization is expensive, and takes innovative and tenacious people to bring it off. We've got our fair share of them here at Waterloo, and that bodes well for our future global aspirations.

Student Engagement

I have left this to the end of the summary because in many ways it's the most important facet of our plan. In terms of academic excellence, we have upped our game in recruiting and rewarding the very best faculty members available, competing with top North American universities for talent. We also succeed at attracting excellent students. This year alone even with increasing our minimum entering average in four of our faculties by two per cent, we still overshot our admission target by 500 students. That said, we are not doing as well as we should in the area of

student engagement once our students are here. Our scores in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) have not been stellar, though we are not alone in this. Canadian universities on the whole do not do as well as their public American counterparts. Our student support services are currently undergoing major revision, and we will appoint an Associate Provost, Students this year with a broader portfolio.

Another area of disappointment is our student to faculty ratio. In 2007, that ratio was 26:1. Instead of decreasing, it has in fact increased to 27:1 in 2010. The root of this situation is the two-decade decline in operating grants from the Ontario government. Obviously we are moving in the wrong direction, as our overall goal is to reduce that ratio to 20:1.

Executive Council Retreat Priorities

The discussions at our Executive Council's annual planning retreat at Kempenfelt Bay in May dealt largely with the above Sixth Decade Plan overview. Our focus for the coming year will be on two particular areas: total enrolment management and student engagement. They are two sides of the same coin.

Total Enrolment Management

Universities are facing an increasingly competitive student recruitment environment. As well, universities are now more than ever reliant on tuition revenue, both domestic and international. Therefore we must pay closer attention to our enrolment and retention strategies and centralize our activities. Total enrolment management (TEM), or central enrolment management, as it is sometimes called, is a strategy involving marketing, recruitment, retention, engagement, and admissions aimed at giving universities a greater capacity to respond to budgetary challenges through enrolment targets while improving services for students. Our first step will be to establish an Enrolment Management Committee consisting of the Vice-President Academic and Provost as Chair, the deans of each Faculty and the Director of Institutional Analysis and Planning, with other members added as needed. The committee will review our 2017 enrolment goals and set annual targets for the number and quality of incoming students at the undergraduate and graduate, as well as domestic and international levels.

This management strategy will be of great benefit to students as much as it will benefit the university's financial health. How so? Hand in hand with the idea of Total Enrolment Management is a renewed emphasis on student engagement.

Student Engagement

It is increasingly clear that while Waterloo excels at attracting high quality students, we face challenges in providing them with a high quality experience while they live and study here. Further engagement of and with our students is essential to achieving our Sixth Decade goals.

We need to ensure that we retain students from year to year; that they are well suited for the program of their choice, and that their ability to transfer from one program to another to find their best fit at Waterloo is as easy as possible. Simply put, we must do more to help our students succeed. When a student has a negative academic experience, both the student and the institution suffer. Dropout rates have budgetary implications, but they also speak to the institution's failure to respond to the needs of those students who choose to leave.

We must enhance our culture of student success at Waterloo, with the overall goal of transforming the student experience both in and out of the classroom. We will establish an Office of Student Success under the Associate Provost Students' portfolio, which will engage in transition, learning support, student development, career support, student entrepreneurship, applications management, and international student support programs, initiatives, and opportunities. Attracting the best and brightest to Waterloo, keeping them engaged while they study here, and maintaining a strong connection with our graduates are all key elements of our plan. Waterloo's well-rounded graduates are our proudest accomplishment. Working together, we will continue to enable the next generation of talent.

Warrior Football Suspension

By now you are likely aware of the one-year suspension from competitive play in our varsity football program, announced on June 14. Substance abuse, particularly among student athletes, is a very serious issue that cuts deeply across notions of safety, health, and the spirit of fair play, not only for our campus but also for university sport as a whole.

The safety of our students has been at the centre of our decision-making process since the police investigation first surfaced. We had, and still do have, an obligation to take the strongest possible stand against substance abuse, and in the wake of finding that nine of our players had been involved in using banned substances, we suspended the Warrior football program from competition for one year. This was a tough decision.

We recognize the frustration and disappointment being shown by the large majority of current players who tested negative in the recent full testing of the team by Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) and the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES). We remain committed to the Warrior football program. Even now, we are improving the turf and spectator facilities on Warrior Field, and I encourage our clean players to continue with training, practicing, and community outreach. A review of our football program as it relates to the use of banned substances has commenced, conducted by former Waterloo Region police chief Larry Gravill, and professor emerita Mary Thompson. We are also working with partners, including the Canadian Football League and the Taylor Hooten Foundation, to become a national leader in anti-doping education and awareness.



David Johnston
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