

Ryerson University

Developing the next academic plan 2014 – 2019

Initial consultation paper

Office of the Provost and Vice President Academic

Introduction

The changes that have taken place at Ryerson University during the life of the current academic plan, *Shaping Our Future*, are nothing short of transformational. Our diverse community of energetic students, talented faculty and dedicated staff, collaborated, generated ideas and took the plan's aspirations well beyond expectations, establishing Ryerson as Ontario's leading comprehensive innovation university.

Today, Ryerson is challenging conventional approaches to post-secondary education, research and even, city building. Ryerson trusts students to learn; faculty's dynamic approach to teaching and commitment to experiential learning encourages deep understanding. Research projects, community and industry collaborations, and zone learning have fostered a hive of innovation and entrepreneurship. Ryerson's approach to innovation, which solves real-world problems by supporting and encouraging students and faculty to take risks and try new things, has attracted international attention and opened doors to new partnerships.

The university's city-building agenda – brought to life by the strong leadership of students, faculty and staff – has blurred the traditional boundaries between campus and its downtown neighbourhood: the Mattamy Athletic Centre brought an iconic building back to life and to Ryerson students including the Rams, giving us the ability to attract talented student athletes; the Ryerson Image Centre, home to the Black Star Collection, has garnered international recognition, and strengthened research and graduate education in a niche discipline; and the Student Learning Centre will transform not only Yonge Street but will provide a new learning platform for synergies between students from all disciplines.

It is from this auspicious position that we begin the next academic planning process. We can build on the phenomenal achievements of the past five years and develop a strategic blueprint to guide future action that reflects the aspirations of the community. This paper is intended to act as a springboard for the many consultations that will be undertaken during fall 2013, with the goal of having an academic plan ready for Senate's consideration in spring 2014. Upon its approval, as in previous years, each faculty, department and school, will develop its own plan by late fall 2014 as a vital part of the university plan.

We value and want your input; we want you to “think with us” – to contribute your ideas and vision on what comes next for Ryerson as it continues to shape its future.

Success of *Shaping Our Future: 2008 – 2013*

The success of Ryerson's academic plan is such that it is a challenge to categorize all of our accomplishments into the priorities that were articulated five years ago. Through the combined efforts of our students, faculty, staff, and the leadership of Senate and Board of Governors, external partners, government and the broader community, many of the priorities have been met and exceeded in various ways. Below is only a snapshot of that success. For more details, refer to

the attached table as well as to the academic plan updates available on the Senate website, and individual faculty and unit annual reports.

Priority 1: High quality, socially relevant undergraduate and graduate programs

- Ryerson continued to deliver responsive and relevant programs through the strategic expansion of graduate and undergraduate curriculum, and certificates; arts and science underwent a transformation with the growth of Arts programs and the establishment of the Faculty of Science; FCAD and FCS evolved through program development, renewal, and updates, and SRC enhancement; TRSM and FEAS experienced a maturation as many of their programs received or renewed accreditation (approximately two-thirds of all undergraduate enrolment is in professionally accredited programs); YSGS continued to drive the growth of graduate education; and with 38 new certificates, Chang School asserted its position as a national leader in continuing education.
- With a focus on greater flexibility and increased student choice, significant changes were made to the undergraduate tripartite curriculum model – a pilot begins fall 2013; a leadership niche in student-driven innovation and entrepreneurship has emerged through the highly-successful zone model of experiential learning at the Digital Media Zone (DMZ) and Innovation Centre for Urban Energy (i-CUE); the zones offer students a dynamic new physical and conceptual space for collaboration, team work and function as a new platform for learning; new minors and the multidisciplinary Master’s in Digital Media, an innovative graduate program, were launched.

Priority 2: Student engagement and success

- Ryerson demonstrated a strong commitment to student success and retention; first-year cohort entering averages have steadily increased. Investments in increased academic supports were made at the university and faculty levels, and the “Fresh Start” and “Get Clear” programs were accessed by just over 2,600 students who needed support in their academic careers.
- Spanning the Gaps: Access to Post-Secondary Education, at The Chang School, successfully established outreach and access programming for under-represented groups; the first cohort graduated in spring 2013.
- A vibrant, on-campus student life is emerging with over 145 clubs and social media networks to connect students to events and groups. Student teams are increasingly winning competitions at the national and international level. A new era of participation in athletics and recreation was realized with the opening of the Mattamy Athletic Centre, supported by a student referendum.
- Access for adult learners improved through the number and scope of courses offered online; over 320 distance education courses are now available.

Priority 3: Learning and teaching excellence

- Our learning and teaching culture has flourished; Ryerson, home to award-winning teachers including two 3M Fellows and two Ontario Council of University Faculty Associations awardees, launched the Teaching Chair program across faculties and the Library; the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Fund to support innovative classroom strategies; and popular programs and workshops. A record-breaking 500 faculty attended the 2013 annual teaching conference.

- New supports for graduate students were initiated: the Professional Skills Development Program, a popular, collaborative program facilitated by YSGS; and university-level TA and GA orientation sessions, workshops and a professional development in teaching certificate program.
- The university recruited 231 faculty from many of the world's best universities including Cambridge, Harvard, Yale, Heidelberg, Georgia Institute of Technology, UBC and McGill; this represents a remarkable expansion of 126 net-new tenure stream positions.

Priority 4: SRC intensity

- Over the last two years, Ryerson has led the province in research funding growth. Total funding has increased 50% from 2008 to 2013. Ryerson is a national leader in applied research programs and partnerships with more than \$10 million per year realized from research contracts, partners and matching funds.
- Support for students has increased as well – not only does 50% of Tri-Council funding go to students but new innovative programs to support student research, internships and start-ups have been developed and implemented.
- 14 Canada Research Chairs have been appointed including eight during the life of the plan; four more have been allocated as a result of strong research performance.
- Infrastructure and support for researchers has increased with a focus on grant facilitation, writing and editing services to enhance faculty success.
- Led by the Vice-Presidents of Research and Innovation, and Administration and Finance, increased collaboration between the Office of Research Services, Finance Services, Human Resources, and Computing and Communications Services has improved researcher access to information and management systems.

Priority 5: Reputation

- Demand for a Ryerson degree continues to rise: the increase in the number of undergraduate applications to Ryerson outpaces the Ontario average by a wide margin, master's enrolment grew by 16% and doctoral enrolment has more than doubled. The increasing number of Ryerson programs receiving or renewing professional accreditation contributes to the quality and reputation of our university.
- The university's external reputation is soaring: a 50% increase in print, online and broadcast mentions in the media was fuelled in part by student and faculty success, the opening of the Mattamy Athletic Centre and the Ryerson Image Centre and the Black Star Collection, and the success of the Digital Media Zone, named one of the top 25 world university business incubators in the UBI Index.
- Faculty research excellence is being widely recognized; six Ryerson faculty have been appointed to the Royal Society of Canada and many researchers across faculties have won prestigious awards.
- A hallmark of Ryerson, external academic and research partnerships with prestigious institutions and organizations such as St. Michael's Hospital, HydroOne and the Bombay Stock Exchange Institute, leading corporations and government continues to grow. Partnerships with over 100 universities in 30 countries have been established.

- The university launched the first-ever, community-wide survey of employee engagement called *People First* to help enhance the Ryerson work experience, and attract and retain top quality faculty and staff to achieve university goals.
- Ryerson's reputation as a diverse and inclusive campus continued to be demonstrated by the appointment of the university's first vice-provost/assistant vice-president, equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) to lead university-wide initiatives that enhance Ryerson's EDI.

Foundation for the plan

Ryerson's aspirations for the next five years should continue to take its distinctive and core mission – to serve societal need by providing professional and career-related education and research – forward into a world that is demanding innovative solutions for increasingly complex problems. This mission has guided Ryerson's transformation into a comprehensive university with an increasing reputation for high-quality academic programming and research. As a result, Ryerson is the most applied-to university in Ontario relative to available undergraduate spaces, has the fastest growing graduate school in the country, and is ranked first in Ontario and fourth nationally for research growth.

Academic planning at Ryerson is a meaningfully integrated process: the provost works collaboratively with all parts of the university to ensure the necessary linkages between the academic plan and the many complementary planning, decision-making and priority-setting exercises undertaken by different units. This approach underscores how research priorities, the Master Plan, space allocation and building programs, human resources, financial, information technology and other services, advancement, EDI, communication, government and community engagement align, integrate and ultimately harmonize to support the university's academic mission.

Planning for 2014-2019: external considerations

Students, technology and the 21st-century

Educational institutions face new challenges in the 21st-century. Today's students have grown up with information technology, social media and mobile devices as self-evident components of their daily lives at home, school and in the workplace. Students' expectations, and the technology available to meet a broader spectrum of learning styles and accessibility needs, are markedly different from that which existed in the past, and influence how we teach, design and use space, deliver services, and develop curriculum and programs.

Students and the innovation, entrepreneurial economy

Layered on the reality of rapidly changing technology and very diverse student profiles, is a highly competitive, global knowledge-based economy. Students want productive and marketable competencies – including digital preparedness and cultural competence – in order to succeed in their chosen careers and professional lives. Governments and universities around the world are looking to entrepreneurship and innovation as key drivers for keeping economies relevant and strong.

Continued demand for Ryerson programs

Ryerson is mid-way through its undergraduate and graduate program expansion, which is expected to continue through 2016-17. It is expected undergraduate enrolments in Ontario will plateau in 2015 or 2016. However, demand for Ryerson's programs is expected to remain strong due to its innovative program offerings and location in the GTA.

Public policy environment

DIFFERENTIATION AND STRATEGIC MANDATE AGREEMENTS

The provincial government is opening discussions across the post-secondary sector on differentiation as the primary policy driver to create improved student choice and greater efficiencies, and it will negotiate Strategic Mandate Agreements (SMAs) with each institution to further this goal. The current academic plan guided the development of Ryerson's initial published SMA submission and included priorities that addressed the government's focus on innovation and job creation, online learning, enhanced credit transfer, and better access for underrepresented groups.

While the academic plan is the key strategic document for internal decision-making, the SMA will be used by government to inform its operational decisions including program approvals, enrolment growth, graduate expansion and research intensity. While the timelines for submission of an updated SMA and the academic plan are very different, we are confident neither process will be compromised, and that the new academic plan will address the issue of differentiation.

E-LEARNING

The provincial government has announced its intention to fund the establishment of a centre of excellence to support online learning in the post-secondary sector; it hopes to see a joint proposal from Ontario's colleges and universities to this end. Colleges are strongly invested in their existing online learning consortium that supports the actual delivery of online courses/programs, and the university sector is developing its own consortium called Ontario Universities Online, of which Ryerson is a member. The university is very well placed as it is already a provincial leader in e-learning.

FISCAL AND REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

As the Ontario government works to reduce the provincial deficit, it has had to make tough choices. While it will fund enrolment growth until 2017-18, tuition fee increases are limited to three percent annually for the next four years, and ongoing funding constraints are anticipated in grant growth, capital expansion and sponsored research.

Universities and colleges are being asked to increase efficiencies and improve productivity in such areas as: academic program prioritization, course and program redesign, and administrative and service delivery transformation.

Building on our strength of strong fiscal management, Ryerson continues to deliver a balanced budget and responds to other opportunities for funding.

Launching our planning discussions

We want you to “think with us” – to contribute your ideas and vision on what comes next for Ryerson. Ryerson’s students, faculty, staff and external partners have demonstrated incredible commitment and passion for the university’s future, and are an integral part of the planning process.

To that end, below are 16 questions to start our planning discussions:

1. Priority setting:

What three priorities are of most importance to the future of Ryerson?

2. Program and curricula development:

How do we respond to ever-changing societal needs for innovation, entrepreneurship, digital preparedness, and global citizenship, while, at the same time, supporting programs that are already in existence?

3. Interdisciplinarity:

What needs to be done to advance interdisciplinary programs and research at Ryerson?

4. Quality:

How do we continue to ensure ongoing quality and improvement of academic programming in terms of curriculum, pedagogy, and student learning?

5. Experiential learning:

How do we advance experiential learning, particularly new modes, such as zone learning? How do we ensure that experiential learning is interdisciplinary and collaborative, involving all faculties, the Library, Student Services and other partners on campus whose expertise and engagement with students can enhance the experiential learning experience?

6. E-learning:

How can Ryerson maintain and increase its position as Ontario’s leading provider of online learning? How can Ryerson play a meaningful role at the global level? What additional or enhanced support services and resources are required to ensure a quality learning experience and a high-level of student engagement in a digital environment?

7. Learning and teaching excellence:

What steps should we take to ensure that our students continue to enjoy the best possible learning experience provided? How do we ensure that faculty at all stages of their careers have appropriate opportunities to evolve their teaching practices to meet the changing landscape of post-secondary education?

8. Access and transfer pathways:

Where are there new opportunities for transfer credit – not just with colleges but also with other universities? How can we support the success of transfer students? How can we better ensure access and success for students from under-represented groups?

9. Increasing SRC intensity: excellence and impact

How can we maintain our trajectory of research growth while recognizing the diversity and range of measures for SRC excellence? How do we meet the unique needs of graduate students and post-doctoral fellows?

10. Differentiation:

How should Ryerson differentiate given its distinct mission and the current provincial policy environment?

11. Student engagement and experience:

What else can be done to support undergraduate, graduate and continuing education students, enhance their engagement and experience, and improve their academic and career aspirations and outcomes? How do we prepare from an academic and service perspective for a growing on-campus student residence population?

12. Equity, diversity and inclusion:

How do we ensure we are meeting the needs of our increasingly diverse Ryerson community? What collaboration and communication do we need to further foster equity, diversity and inclusion within and throughout our campus community? What human resource practices can aid us in fostering a diverse faculty and staff that reflects our students?

13. Resource management and infrastructure development:

How can we mainstream innovation and entrepreneurship through the fabric of the university including our own processes and management of resources (human, financial, physical)? How do we reconcile a less resource intensive environment with a goal of better service delivery? What is our strategy to ensure we have the right infrastructure in place to support our academic priorities?

14. Talent:

What do we need to do to further attract and retain the best talent – students, faculty and staff? How can we create a workplace climate in which employees flourish and develop productive careers? How do we support the development of leaders (at all levels) to achieve Ryerson's objectives?

15. Partnership building and internationalization:

How can we solidify existing partnerships and forge new ones? What should the strategy be for internationalization?

16. External community engagement:

How do we ensure that Ryerson's engagement with the local, external community is kept clearly in sight while still expanding our role as city-builder and our reputation nationally and internationally?