

Atkinson Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies Academic Plan 2003-2008

Executive Summary

The Atkinson Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies is a dynamic institution serving a large and diverse student body comprising part-time, mature, and working students as well as a growing cohort of full-time direct entry students. As a Faculty, Atkinson has always been distinguished by the flexible and creative approach it has adopted in undergraduate programming. Courses are mounted year round during the day, in the evening, and on weekends. We offer strong liberal and professional programs and a distinctive set of services which includes continuing education courses, distance education courses, technology enhanced learning and experiential based learning opportunities. We have established a wide range of interdisciplinary programs which complement our discipline-based degrees; and we work in collaboration with CAAT's and a variety of public and private partners on ventures that strengthen the programs we offer our students.

The Faculty was restructured in 2000, and now consists of eight academic units: the Schools of Administrative Studies, Analytic Studies and Information Technology, Arts and Letters, Health Policy and Management, Nursing, Social Sciences, Social Work; and the Department of Psychology. Over the next five years the Faculty intends to embark on a series of programming and administrative changes that will consolidate the Faculty's position and expand the unique opportunities available to the Faculty which derive from the integration of liberal and professional studies. These reforms are also intended to address issues associated with enrolment changes at Atkinson, including, the implications of secondary school reform, the increasing numbers of younger, direct entry students, pressures on classroom availability, and resource needs.

Concretely, Atkinson will be pursuing the following initiatives during 2003-2008:

- 1. Moving forward with Experiential Education**
- 2. Creating a Centre of Excellence in Distance Education**
- 3. Establishing Ourselves as the Leader in Health on Campus**
- 4. Continuing Business Innovation in the School of Administrative Studies**
- 5. Encouraging New and Creative Undergraduate and Graduate Programs**
- 6. Reinvigorating Part-time Studies**
- 7. Creating Greater Flexibility in Atkinson's Degree Offerings including the Development of Combined Programs and Minors**
- 8. Forming a Task Force on Student Learning**
- 9. Furthering Collaboration with Cognate Units in other Faculties**
- 10. Expanding Continuing Education Opportunities**
- 11. Building a Strong Infrastructure to Support the Research Agenda of Faculty**

In order to implement this progressive five year plan, Atkinson will have to secure adequate resources, while addressing problems such as the high student-faculty ratios. These challenges cannot be resolved internally through the transfer of resources among Atkinson programs since the workload in most of our programs is relatively high compared to similar programs across the university. The Faculty also faces a structural problem in terms of the costs of new appointments and the gap between those costs and the money returned to the Faculty from the salaries of those who have retired. Despite very real resource challenges, the Atkinson Faculty intends to move forward with an aggressive plan for growth, faculty and staff renewal, new and innovative academic programs, and student-centred teaching and research excellence.

14 March 2003

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Introduction

In the spring of 2000 the York Senate approved the renaming and restructuring of the Joseph E. Atkinson Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies. The collective process of revisioning focused the energies of the Faculty on creating a revitalized framework for teaching and research. Almost three years on, Atkinson has achieved a very great deal: it is administratively streamlined, fiscally sound, and academically diverse. The Faculty feels that the full potential set out by the original Atkinson Task Force in 1999 is still to be realized however, and it is therefore turning its attention to the integration of its Liberal Studies and Professional programming. To this end, the Atkinson Faculty will embark over the next five years on a series of programming and administrative changes that while respecting the unique characteristics of Liberal and Professional Studies, will build the bridge between them, forge stronger links between teaching and research activities, and service an increasingly diverse student population.

Underpinning its actions will be a continued commitment to a number of key principles that have guided the Faculty since the beginning of its restructuring. Of these, the first is a strong and enduring dedication to the unique role of Atkinson in offering top quality, flexible programs during the evening, summer, and through distance education to enhance accessible education at York University. The second is a common vision of its purpose as the production of well-rounded students who have received specific credentials in their academic program of choice and gained a wide body of transferable skills that will serve them well into the future. Finally, the Atkinson Faculty is committed to realizing the strengths that derive from the combination of liberal and professional studies by streamlining and strengthening discipline-based programs and developing interdisciplinary programs that integrate both liberal and professional studies.

Atkinson Faculty is unique in its programming and direction. We serve a large and diverse student body; offer a distinctive set of services from continuing education classes, through distance education courses, technology enhanced learning (TEL), and experiential based learning programs; have established a wide range of interdisciplinary programs and degrees; work in collaboration with a wide range of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAATs), and public and private partners; and actively pursue the goal of integrating liberal and professional studies to develop academic programs unlike those found anywhere else. These are strengths of which we are proud. Atkinson's purpose over the next five years is to build on the solid foundation it has created while ensuring it remains true to its mission and goals by maintaining the integrity of the full-time faculty complement during growth periods; establishing a strong research

infrastructure; and developing responsive programming that supports a vibrant and sustainable Faculty.

Undergraduate Education

Enrolment

The Atkinson Faculty was originally established to provide a quality education to non-traditional students: adults who work, have family and/or child-care responsibilities, or cannot otherwise access full-time, daytime higher education. While remaining strongly committed to its historic mission, Atkinson is now experiencing significant growth in direct entry enrolments (approximately 61 percent of new, year one students admitted in September 2002 were OAC students). As a result of secondary school reform our OAC intake is slated to increase: Atkinson is expected to take seventeen percent of York's high school target in 2003-04 which translates to just over a one hundred percent growth increase over the Faculty's 2001-02 OAC intake. In addition, Atkinson has seen a tremendous growth in the number of international students enrolling in the Faculty: between 1998-99 and 2002-03 the number of international students rose from 184 to 1004, a percentage growth increase of 446 percent. This trend puts Atkinson in line with the UAP's commitment to internationalization. In part as a corollary of the rise in direct entry domestic students as well as international students, whereas most of Atkinson's students were historically mature or part-time students, in 2002-2003 over 58 percent of Atkinson students were full-time students.

This change in the composition of our student body has raised new complexities in course planning. Increasing student numbers have brought increased pressure on class sizes and increased the number of sections in multi-sectioned courses; while there has been mounting demand from full-time students particularly in certain degree programs, to schedule classes outside Atkinson's normal window of 4-7 p.m. and 7-10 p.m. in order to provide them with daytime class options, a broader range of courses, and greater programming flexibility. Some of the means by which Atkinson will address these needs include expansion plans for distance modes of delivering courses, as well as hybrid courses which combine distance and in-class instruction, and alternative timetabling such as weekend courses.

The situation within the School of Administrative Studies poses particular challenges. Not only has the School grown considerably in terms of student numbers, but there has also been an increase in average number of courses taken per year, making it very difficult for the School to mount a sufficient number of courses within the traditional evening time-slots. This issue must be addressed by increasing access to classrooms during the day if the School is to sustain its share of Atkinson's targeted growth.

Over the next few years the University anticipates a significant rise in student numbers as a result of secondary school reform, demographics, increased participation rate, and workplace demand for higher credentials. In keeping with the University's strategic enrolment plan, Atkinson is being positioned to increase its current enrolment share from 18.8 percent (2000-01) to 22.1 percent (2005-06) of the University's total enrolment. It is

expected that Atkinson will continue to bring in large numbers of direct entry students many of whom hope to complete their programs on a full-time basis with access to day classes. Much of this enrolment demand will be in current growth areas such as Business, Information Technology, Health Policy and Management, Nursing and Social Work.

It is also quite likely that we may see an increase in part-time student demand. The trend for higher credentials, in combination with the coming retirement wave for managers in fields such as health, education, and law enforcement, is expected to result in new demands for more *advanced* part-time studies from working students who need to upgrade or re-skill and who are interested in fast tracking with evening, weekend and summer programming.

Academic plans over the next five years will therefore be sensitive to the needs associated with the increasing number of full-time students in the professional programs, while at the same time, reflect our commitment to providing flexible and high quality academic programs for students combining work and study. This dual mandate for Atkinson is consistent with the UAP which calls for the expansion of professional programs, accessible education and strong liberal studies programs. These priorities will be especially important for maintaining enrolment figures after the double cohort years. The restructuring of Atkinson was a step toward streamlining our programs so as to consolidate our strengths and enhance the quality of our programs. Atkinson will now build on this strategy with measures which include ensuring appropriate resources for growth; replacing retiring faculty with new tenure stream hires; working to design new and creative Liberal Studies programs that will attract more students and address emerging needs; developing interdisciplinary programs that integrate liberal and professional studies; and redesigning Atkinson's degree programs in order to offer students the possibility of enrolling in double Majors and declaring formal Minors in both Liberal and Professional Studies.

Academically, the increasing cohort of direct entry students, in combination with secondary school reform, and the sheer number of students have raised questions about the diverse experiences and skills our students might have on entering university, the learning objectives we have for our students, and how we might take maximum advantage of the fact that we are a Faculty with both liberal and professional studies. The UAP moreover calls upon Faculties to provide students with a challenging academic atmosphere and ensure that they successfully complete their studies at the highest possible level. An Atkinson *Task Force on Student Learning* is planned to explicitly address these issues (see academic initiatives and projects below) while our Writing program is actively designing courses to respond to many of the challenges faculty are already encountering in the classroom.

Atkinson is well positioned to meet the challenges posed by its rising and changing enrolment. The situation it confronts is neither entirely new, nor has it been a surprise. As this five year plan will outline, in addition to enhancing many of the steps that we have already taken to respond to the presence of this larger and younger student body, we

have developed a series of specific program reforms and review measures which are designed to enhance Atkinson's ability to accommodate this new student cohort while maintaining our commitment to our traditional principles and clientele.

Programming

The Atkinson Faculty now comprises seven schools: Administrative Studies, Analytic Studies and Information Technology, Arts and Letters, Health Policy and Management, Nursing, Social Sciences, Social Work; the Department of Psychology (for ease of presentation, the general title of 'School' is periodically used to refer to the Department of Psychology as well), and the Division of Continuing Education. The Faculty's programs have been significantly restructured since 1999, course offerings rationalized, new ventures embarked on, collaborations entered into, research chairs secured, and faculty hired. While we have created a vibrant academic culture, the challenges of our changing enrolment, shifting demand for our academic programs, faculty retirements, and diminishing resources make it crucial that we continue to focus on change. Over the next five years the Atkinson Faculty will take up the torch once more and focus resolutely on a series of innovations and reforms outlined here that will reinvigorate our undergraduate offerings, focus on program quality and academic rigour, bolster our graduate programs, and create a stronger, more rounded, and better integrated Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies.

One of Atkinson Faculty's emerging strengths is in the area of health – an emphasis that directly supports a central strategic priority of the UAP. The School of Nursing established its Collaborative Nursing program in 1997 admitting its first class in 1999 and, since then, the program has experienced significant and rapid growth. In 2000-01 combined third and fourth year enrolment was 134 students whereas we expect enrolment in 2003-04 to be 424 students in these two years. Demand for the Post-RN BScN program has declined somewhat, but the School's human-science based nursing philosophy is unique, and with greater accessibility, the program might be reinvigorated. The School is thus investigating alternative modes of technologically enhanced delivery to make this educational opportunity available to a larger audience. Atkinson Faculty's new and dynamic School of Health Policy and Management offers programs that focus on an integrated and interdisciplinary approach to the study of health. The School is working actively to increase student awareness of its unique approach to health education which in its emphasis on interdisciplinarity addresses another of the strategic priorities of the UAP. There are a number of faculty in other Schools who are also actively engaged in health-related teaching and research. For example, faculty in the Atkinson Department of Psychology are engaged in innovative work on the visual aspects of migraine; early experience and visual development; age-related visual problems as they relate to health policy and diseases of aging; and cognitive rehabilitation after stroke.

The School of Social Work established a direct entry BSW degree a year ago in response to declining enrolment in the School's post degree BSW program. Student response has been very positive. At present the program has been developed on a substitution rather than an expansion model and as a consequence, overall enrolment has not increased as a result of this program. Given a high level of expressed interest in this program and the

pressures of the double cohort, our academic plan, in line with the University's goal to increase the profile of professional programs, calls for the School to grow over the next five years, contingent upon additional resources.

Atkinson's Department of Psychology has actively pursued a program of curricular harmonization with the Faculties of Arts and Pure and Applied Science. This has enabled it to provide a full undergraduate program, including a specialized honours degree, in Psychology through a combination of evening and summer classes and distance education to Atkinson's traditional student cohort: students who cannot, for whatever reason, undertake full-time, day programs of study. The Department also provides exposure to the discipline of psychology to other Atkinson students, whatever their program of study and is working particularly closely with the Schools of Nursing and of Health Policy and Management to accommodate their students.

The School of Administrative Studies is Atkinson's largest academic unit and demand for its programs continues to increase: OAC applications are 3,689 in 2003-04 compared to 2,244 in the previous year. It offers a range of programs including finance, accounting, human resource management, and marketing. The School's plan focuses on curricular issues and academic excellence. A major challenge for the School is how to ensure that students are progressing through their programs as designed, in the absence of automated degree audit. This issue bears directly on the Faculty's ability to ensure the academic integrity of their programs, and Atkinson cannot impress too strongly the importance of moving this project forward in the Office of the Registrar.

SASIT is Atkinson's second largest School. It houses the popular ITEC program that collectively draws its programming strength from a close collaboration between Arts and Atkinson, and a growing economics program. A main and distinguishing feature of SASIT is its commitment to the development of applied interdisciplinary studies. As such, its philosophy mirrors the UAP's emphasis on interdisciplinarity. It is also an approach that is especially relevant to Atkinson's mission to educate students who are already in the workplace and to bridge liberal and professional studies. In keeping with the Faculty's commitment to interdisciplinarity, SASIT is developing a school-wide degree program. SASIT also offers general education curriculum in three areas, math, modes of reasoning, and natural science. Along with the School of Social Sciences (SSS) and the School of Arts and Letters (SAL), SASIT delivers the Atkinson Faculty's general education program which provides the common thread that unites all Atkinson students.

Liberal Studies at Atkinson, like so many of the professional Schools, have made interdisciplinarity the hallmark of their operations, mirroring the UAP's strategy to "maintain our strong commitment to interdisciplinarity in undergraduate teaching and in the design of undergraduate programs." The School of Social Sciences offers an interdisciplinary Social Sciences degree – the only such degree at York University - and a Public Administration and Management degree which is offered in coordination with Administrative Studies. It also administers the Communications Studies Program and contributes to the Women's Studies Program. The School has particular strengths in Political Science and Sociology, and students are therefore able to take disciplinary

degrees in those two areas. The School of Arts and Letters (SAL) offers a series of major degree programs both interdisciplinary (Creative Arts and Cultural Expression, Humanities, and Religious Studies), and disciplinary (English and History). In addition, the School houses the Canadian Studies program and Atkinson's Writing programs, and contributes to Communications Studies and Women's Studies. SAL majors, perhaps more than any other group within the Atkinson Faculty, continue to be drawn from our "traditional" cohort of students who combine work and study. Enrolment in SAL courses also comes in the form of electives taken by Atkinson students pursuing majors in other Atkinson Schools and Faculty of Arts students who find SAL courses of interest. The School plans to focus on four new thematic areas in its School-wide degree: Europe and its Legacies, Historical Studies, Literary Studies and North American Studies.

As a Faculty, Atkinson has always been distinguished by the flexible and creative approach it has adopted to undergraduate programming. Courses are offered year round in the fall, winter and summer sessions, during the day, evening and on the weekends. Beyond this, the Faculty is increasingly adopting new and ever more creative strategies to reach out to students and deliver unique material in new ways. The Faculty, for example, is committed to increasingly incorporating experiential elements into our programs. Some of our programs have always required a practical component as an integral part of their professional training. In the School of Nursing, clinical placements play an essential role in the professional education of nurses. Collaborative BScN students have clinical placements in three of four semesters and Post-RN BScN students have two clinical placements in their programs. Similarly, the practicum is an integral component of the Social Work program. Post degree students currently spend two to five days a week over one or two terms in a social agency, working under the supervision of a qualified and experienced social worker, and direct entry students will spend three days a week for two terms. The Schools of Nursing and Social Work assume responsibility for locating placements, contracting with the setting to provide a suitable learning experience, and ensuring that the student's progress in placement is evaluated. Other Schools have developed new programs: CARRP, the Anti-Racist Research and Practice Certificate offered by the School of Social Sciences has provided students with the opportunity to set up anti-racist research projects with/in community organizations. The School of Health Policy and Management has begun to develop a co-op program to serve students in years two and beyond of their programs. The School of Arts and Letters is developing ways of incorporating volunteer work or service-based learning in its programs.

The UAP observes that "the rapid evolution and advances in digital technologies offer opportunities to accommodate an increasing student body through technology-mediated learning experiences and to provide greater flexibility and accessibility through distance education." Atkinson has long been the University leader in the development of high quality technology enhanced education and we continue to work actively to develop and extend our programs. In 2002-2003, Atkinson's Centre for Distance Education supported 19 correspondence courses and 94 internet courses that accounted for 409 FFTEs and 891 FFTEs respectively. As a result, 16.6 per cent of Atkinson's total FFTEs were generated by distance FFTEs, a total that includes enrolment in Atkinson's hybrid courses which

combine a classroom component with internet delivery. Distance education courses permit students from further afield to study at Atkinson and allow us to offer greater programming flexibility to students in our catchment area. Faced with constraints imposed by classroom space limitations, they are also part of the Faculty's strategy for accommodating Atkinson's planned enrolment growth.

The School of Administrative Studies services an increasing enrolment of distance education students and each year it offers a large part of its curriculum online. Students can now earn a Bachelor of Administrative Studies (BAS) degree entirely by combining the flexibility of the internet and correspondence courses, and it is the intention of the School to make the degree available entirely online. Other Schools provide students with the possibility of taking specific courses via the internet and through correspondence including courses in philosophy, health studies, psychology, social work, sociology, political science, social science, English, the history of the modern world, and general education. The Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Public Service Studies offered by the School of Social Sciences is available online, and the School of Nursing's proposed MScN program is being designed as a fully accessible degree available both full-time and part-time via interactive video/teleconferencing. This program will be unique in several respects. Students will start in the Summer term with a one week residency for face to face interaction (or by video-teleconferencing for very distant students) to accommodate both college faculty who need upgrading and who do not teach in the summer, and practising nurses who are better able to schedule holidays in the summer. The program can be taken full-time (14 months), accelerated part-time (seven consecutive terms), or regular part-time (over four years – two semesters per year) and can be taken as either a thesis or thesis equivalent option. The program will be offered using a variety of distance and technology enhanced learning modes of delivery including synchronous and asynchronous on-line methods, CD ROM and tele-and video-conferencing. Atkinson intends to lead York in initiatives in distance education.

Collaboration

Another way in which the Atkinson Faculty has expanded and improved the programming it can offer its students is through entering into innovative collaborative ventures. In this as in so many other respects the Faculty is once again taking a leadership role in pursuing one of the key strategic priorities outlined in the UAP: the call to "expand our innovative partnerships." Most visible in this respect is the tremendous work undertaken by the Atkinson School of Nursing to establish the collaborative Nursing Program with its two community college partners: Seneca College and Georgian College.

The School of Administrative Studies is working on a collaborative agreement with Seneca and Georgian to fast track graduates from its business school through Atkinson's degree program, and similar ventures are being forged with other community colleges. In response to receiving a significant pool of transfer students with advanced standing, the Schools of Analytic Studies and Information Technology and Administrative Studies are also collaborating with CAATs on the possibility of articulation programs that will provide greater degree completion opportunities for students. Given the significant

relationship between Atkinson and Seneca and Georgian, in particular, Atkinson will continue to explore other opportunities for joint ventures with college partners.

Continuing Education

Atkinson's vibrant Division of Continuing Education (DCE) has also played a significant role in helping the Faculty fulfil its mandate. First and perhaps most importantly, the DCE provides an important service in community outreach. In offering an opportunity for non-traditional and mature students who might not otherwise pursue a University education to take a course or complete a certificate of study, it supports and reflects the mandate of the Atkinson Faculty to serve its traditional student cohort. Within the university itself, Continuing Education programs help contribute to overall student success: specific Continuing Education course offerings are explicitly designed to focus on academic skill preparation and to assist students to be successful in achieving their academic goals. In addition, Continuing Education programs are an important source of revenue for the Faculty. Participation in Continuing Education courses bring additional financial resources to specific units within the Faculty, while all Atkinson's academic programs and initiatives benefit from the income Continuing Education programs bring to the Faculty as a whole.

In addition to the specific admission credential courses offered in 2002-03, current Continuing Education programs of study include certificate programs in trauma response, dispute resolution, and infant mental health. Underscoring Atkinson's ongoing commitment to fostering collaboration between units and with outside agencies and organizations, the first is offered in collaboration with the Department of Psychology, Atkinson and the Traumatology Institute (Canada), an external joint venture associate; the second is offered in collaboration with the School of Social Work, Atkinson and the LaMarsh Research Centre on Violence and Conflict Resolution, York University; and the last is co-sponsored by the Infant Mental Health Promotion Project, Hospital For Sick Children and the Ontario Association for Infant Development. The School of Social Work and DCE have also partnered on a Certificate in Working with Special Populations, and DCE offers professional development courses in fundraising for non-profits, family mediation workshops, seminars on women and abuse, and an admission credentials course for flight dispatchers designed to help candidates prepare for Transport Canada's certification examination.

The Division has well-developed plans to significantly expand the range of courses and programs it offers over the next few years. Plans are underway to introduce an Advanced Certificate in Dispute Resolution and to develop a certificate program focused on internet advertising and interactive marketing which will be offered in collaboration with the School of Administrative Studies and the Internet Advertising Bureau of Canada (an external joint venture associate); and two pilot courses have been developed to address retention issues, offered in collaboration with the Counselling Centre and the Office of Student and Academic Services, Atkinson. DCE is also exploring the possibility of offering a Certificate in Leadership. A very innovative initiative is a non-degree certificate in liberal studies for students with developmental difficulties now being developed with the Schools of Arts and Letters and the School of Social Work. These

new programs reinforce and expand Atkinson's commitment both to reaching out to the broader community of mature students seeking part-time/professional enrichment and to offering programs/courses that will help ensure the viability of student success in Atkinson's regular/for credit programming. While the Continuing Education programs are not for credit, the service Continuing Education provides at Atkinson is essential to the Faculty's ability to fulfil its mandate and serve its student population adequately.

Pedagogy

The initial substantial organizational restructuring of Atkinson, the associated enrolment growth, and the changing student cohort pose specific pedagogical challenges to which Atkinson plans to respond over the next few years.

Atkinson Faculty's traditional mandate has been to provide programming for students who combine work and study and that is a mandate to which we are committed. The relative decline in part-time versus full-time student enrolment at Atkinson must, therefore, be addressed, along with the potential growth in a new type of mature part-time student interested in advanced studies. The Faculty has thus made targeted part-time recruitment a priority in attracting working students to our vital part-time liberal studies programs. At the same time, Atkinson faces increasing pressure by full-time students for daytime programming and pressures from overall enrolment numbers on class scheduling and class size. We must find creative and innovative ways of meeting those pressures with the assistance of senior university administrators.

Increasingly, we face a mounting concern over student preparedness, a result of the combined impact of enrolment growth, the increased diversification of the student body, and secondary school reform. Do students have the language, literacy, math, and reasoning skills necessary for success in our programs? We have always worked on the assumption that we need to offer our students an introductory course that will provide exposure to precepts and skills necessary for university life [and beyond.] Our concern now is that the students entering our programs need more than they did in the past. The key challenge is to look closely at what these student needs are and how we can respond to them in order to help ensure student success.

The Atkinson Faculty has emphasized the importance of experiential learning and distance education but mounting such innovative programs requires special expertise, poses unique administrative questions, and places enormous demands on staff. In planning for the future we must consider carefully how to support and resource such programs in order to ensure their success.

Throughout the next five years, it is our intention to establish the integration of the Professional and Liberal Studies as a hallmark of the new Atkinson Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies. This will require greater balance and dialogue between the Schools. Demand for our professional programs is growing rapidly. Incoming students are flocking to our business, information technology and health related programs. The School of Social Sciences has seen an increase in majors since 2001. However, a decreasing number of students are choosing to complete majors in the humanities

disciplines. We must find concrete ways to honour our commitment to maintain the integrity of our liberal studies programs while at the same time supporting our professional programs. A strategy is outlined below of the initiatives Atkinson will pursue over the next five years but one key component will be creative new programs within the liberal studies Schools and/or in interdisciplinary programs which integrate both liberal and professional studies. As part of this we must consider whether the existing structure of our programs/degree offerings has served to create a barrier to student interest in some of our majors and actively worked against fostering a synergy between the liberal studies and professional programs. The School of Arts and Letters has committed to transferring a third of its courses to a half course format to facilitate access by students in the professional programs.

Overarching all of this is an awareness of the implicit challenge issued to the Atkinson Faculty by the various UPRs that have been conducted of our programs over the last few years. Many specific recommendations have been incorporated into School plans, and are therefore reflected here. As one example, Atkinson Faculty and the Faculty of Arts have had several discussions following the UPR report, resulting in a complete review of the respective course offerings in the context of the redesign of the undergraduate curriculum. Both Faculties agreed to harmonize three of the most significant courses, Introduction to Political Science, Introduction to Political Thought and Introduction to Canadian Government, and steps are underway to cross list course offerings that have strong similarities. While we are committed to pursue efforts to harmonize where appropriate, we feel that, in general, UPRs which suggest *merging* cognate units fail to recognize Atkinson's unique role in adult education and the individualized service that Atkinson provides to guarantee accessible education to those students who are unable to attend fulltime during the day. We feel further that it would be an impediment to the integration of liberal and professional studies, and the potential for new, creative programming that derives from this integration. We welcome cooperation of mutual benefit to the Faculties concerned. Atkinson Faculty has moved forward on harmonization in several instances (e.g. Psychology, Math, ITEC) and our academic plan prioritizes continued efforts to coordinate programs across Faculties in order to facilitate those students who wish to move between Faculties or simply avail themselves of courses in cognate units.

Atkinson will be pursuing the following initiatives during the planning period 2003-2008:

1. Pushing forward with Experiential Education

Atkinson is committed to teaching excellence and will be pursuing various recommendations that came out of the Report of the Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates. One aim will be to develop a more systematic approach to the experiential education opportunities that are already available in some Schools, and in particular, to promote a pedagogical philosophy that gives students concrete experiences, encourages reflection based on available theoretical arguments, and leads to generalizations to other situations. Experiential education incorporates service-based learning opportunities (e.g. self-directed learning linked to community volunteering), cooperative internships, in-class experiences such as simulations, and so on. This

approach is only one among several which promotes self-directed and inquiry-based learning but it appears to be particularly well-suited to many of the programs offered at Atkinson. As an initial step, the Faculty will use available OTO funds to hire an Experiential Education developer/coordinator who will be able to assist academic units with the unique challenges of establishing and maintaining these effective and rewarding learning opportunities.

2. Creating a Centre of Excellence in Distance Education

The Faculty intends to establish a Centre of Excellence in Distance Education. The Centre will provide faculty with support for the design, development, and delivery of distance education courses, and allow us to take a leadership role in this field. The creation of the Centre will also allow us to evaluate the impact of distance education which is important for the quality of our programming. The expansion of our distance programs as a whole is essential to help us reach out to students beyond our traditional catchment area, provide programming flexibility, and meet increased student demand outside the restrictions on classroom availability.

3. Establishing Ourselves as the Leader in Health on Campus

The Atkinson Faculty, as outlined throughout this Plan, has very strong teaching and research programs in the Health field. We need to continue to build on these strengths, and to develop interdisciplinary programs between the various units engaged in this work, in order to provide strong and cohesive leadership in this field.

The School of Health Policy and Management currently offers an Honours degree in Health Studies with students specializing in one of health policy, health management or health informatics. The School of Nursing offers a three-year Liberal Studies degree in Health Studies as well as a Certificate in Health Informatics, and the School of Analytic Studies and Information Technology offers a BA in ITEC – Health Informatics. A priority over the next five years is to coordinate these efforts.

The School of Nursing is also exploring the possibility of a second degree entry for students wishing to switch into the BScN and will be participating in a provincial college/university bridging initiative for practical nurses (PN's) who wish to upgrade to a BScN.

Finally, Atkinson intends to explore opportunities for collaboration with departments elsewhere on campus in order to work collaboratively on new health initiatives, including the proposal for a new Health building on campus. The Chair of the Atkinson School of Health Policy and Management has assumed the position of the new Director of the Centre of Health Studies at York which will help to build critical networks between the various Faculties on campus.

4. Continuing Business Innovation

The School of Administrative Studies has put forward an aggressive plan for change and restructuring over the next five years. Its plan is a response to a number of serious challenges facing the School which need to be addressed. In particular the School intends to look closely at and resolve issues around:

- the format of its degree programs
- the capacity of the program to meet student demand particularly in light of secondary school reform
- the need to properly profile the school in order to attract faculty and top quality students
- the need to work together with relevant stakeholders (Schulich, Arts, and the VP Academic) to define the role of Administrative Studies in offering business education at York

5. Encouraging New and Creative Programming

The Atkinson Faculty must work to design unique and distinctive programs that will help establish Atkinson as a leader in education and attract students, particularly to those programs that are currently under-enrolled.

Three overarching priorities are: i) establishing experiential education at Atkinson; ii) developing interdisciplinary programs that integrate liberal and professional studies; and iii) providing additional BA degrees fully online. We need, in addition, to actively pursue opportunities to develop programs in collaboration with local community colleges (aside from Nursing, ITEC, and Administrative Studies, there may be opportunities for applied liberal studies programs) and explore non-competitive daytime options and expansions.

Academic programs currently being revised or under exploration at the undergraduate level include:

- health informatics (involving the SHPM, Nursing and SASIT)
- social justice/human rights (Psychology, SSW, SASIT, SSS, SHPM and ADMS)
- policy studies (SSS, SHPM, SSW, SASIT)
- an applied liberal studies program in economics (Business Economics)
- SASIT is interested in pursuing joint programs with ADMS such Financial Mathematics
- communications and interpretative studies (SAL, SSS, and SASIT)
- diasporic /immigration/anti-racism studies program (SSS, SAL, and SSW)

We have yet to conduct a thorough analysis for demand but preliminary investigations indicate that these types of programs are of general interest to a broad range of students. It would be our intention to ensure flexibility to accommodate working students. Finally, Atkinson will be exploring possibilities for other professional Schools that bridge with Liberal Studies. Two potential areas of interest that link well with liberal studies are Journalism and Media Studies, and Speech Pathology.

6. Reinvigorating Part-time Programming

The Atkinson Faculty must make a renewed commitment to actively recruiting part-time students. We need to revitalize our communications strategies to ensure that part-time students clearly understand that Atkinson recognizes and values the unique experiences, knowledge and needs of adult learners. In keeping with our commitment to and expertise in adult education, we plan to deliver the message that Atkinson makes life-long learning

possible no matter who the prospective student. We will also focus on developing innovative courses and programs that are responsive to the needs of this potential student cohort.

7. Changing Atkinson's Degree Offerings

Currently, Atkinson students can choose to complete a Specialized Honours; Honours (in limited majors); Combined Honours; General Honours, Type A and B; or Bachelors Degree. Within each of these options, however, students tend to have limited flexibility in the selection of courses, particularly if they want to keep their career options open during their first two years. This has, in large part, been the result of curricular design that has been complex both at the Faculty and program levels. The effect has been to limit student choice in course selection, to constrain the range of student program options, and to discourage students specializing in one course of study from taking courses in another. The degree option that might have been expected to encourage students to combine programs of study - the Combined Honours Degree – has not been popular, in large part because it has been extraordinarily restrictive and applied only to specific disciplines.

The changes we intend to introduce will create greater flexibility within the degree programs at Atkinson and establish, where possible, a variety of degree options and combinations for students while retaining discipline-based specialities. The degree offerings available to students will include a Specialized Honours; Honours; Double Major Honours; Honours Major/Minor; and Bachelors degree. These reforms will free students from the program rigidity to which they have hitherto been subject, allowing them much greater freedom of choice and room for more electives. The reform will also make it possible for students to meet the academic requirements in their area of concentration while at the same time being able to receive credit for study in another discipline whether by combining two majors, or a major and a minor. This should help to break down the barriers between Schools and create a greater conversation between the professional programs and liberal studies. We expect, as well, that the change will encourage more students to choose Professional and Liberal Studies majors within the Atkinson Faculty. As an additional advantage, this will bring Atkinson into line with the current degree offerings allowed in other Faculties at York such as Arts, Pure and Applied Science, Fine Arts, Environmental Studies, and Glendon.

Atkinson also plans to propose a change in the name of the BAS degree to Bachelor of Commerce for consistency with other business programs and to help ensure that our students are not disadvantaged in terms of employment opportunities upon graduation.

8. Forming a Task Force on Student Learning

In pursuit of the Faculty's vision of fostering a student-centred learning environment, a Task Force on Student Learning will be established. The intention of developing a Task Force is to provide a vehicle for Atkinson to address a variety of issues related to 'best practices' in undergraduate education within the context of the restructured Atkinson Faculty. The Task Force will be charged with balancing the needs of its diverse population and the Faculty's commitment to educational excellence.

The formation of this Task Force is prompted by issues raised in the School plans, including the ability of our current general education program to prepare students for specific areas of study within Atkinson; the impact of secondary school reform; the needs of both younger students and older part-time students; and to improve further retention rates.

The Task Force will initially address the following three major priorities in the Faculty and develop strategies and ‘best practices’ for each:

- *Learning objectives for undergraduate students.* Atkinson will review the learning objectives we have for our students as well as the ways in which we assess whether or not these objectives have been obtained, and how to best ensure that they acquire the knowledge and transferable skills (e.g., comprehension, writing, abstract reasoning, critical thinking, presentation, math) they need for success.
- *The integration of liberal and professional studies.* A systematic approach to establishing strong links between liberal and professional studies has the potential to lead to innovative interdisciplinary programs, applied programs of particular relevance to students who combine work and study, and flexible degree combinations including double majors and minors. The Task Force creates a forum for discussing these initiatives.
- *Student needs.* Given the diversity of students who choose Atkinson, the various collaborative ventures with the CAATs, and secondary school reform, it is important to consider the needs of specific groups of students in terms of the transition to university, advising, and retention. The Task Force will be able to consider the unique challenges Atkinson faces in regard to new, younger students coming directly from high school as compared to mature students combining study with work and/or domestic responsibilities.

A climate that fosters learning and academic integrity of our programs requires effective and efficient systems and processes. An adequate infrastructure is required to meet the increasing demands for student advising, degree audits, pre-requisite checks and monitoring of students’ academic progress. The Atkinson Faculty is committed to working with the Office of Student and Alumni Services, the Registrar’s Office and the Offices of Student and Academic Services in order to pursue a vision of a student-centred environment which requires a strong infrastructure and improved systems and processes.

9. Collaborating with Cognate Units

As previously indicated, Atkinson is committed to maintaining its own vibrant Liberal Studies programs due not only to the mandate for servicing those students who are not able to attend fulltime during the day, but also to the increasing integration of the Liberal and Professional Studies within the Faculty. At the same time, we appreciate the obvious advantages in minimizing competition and maximizing options for students. Our academic plan thus promotes collaboration rather than mergers of cognate units. We have identified four priorities over the next five years:

- i. Work with cognate departments to ensure that we have removed as many barriers as possible to allow students to move easily between Faculties.
- ii. Work with cognate departments to develop a structural foundation for collaboration to ensure that individual faculty members within a discipline but across Faculties meet to discuss how their programs might complement each other.
- iii. Explore increased specialization in the case of programs with cognate units in other Faculties. While it is essential to have adequate breadth in the core curriculum, specializations provide several advantages. Most notably, specializations can cater to the strengths of the faculty within programs, distinguish programs between Faculties, be sensitive to the academic priorities of the respective Faculties, and increase curriculum choice for students.
- iv. Collaborate on graduate programs: In addition to those Atkinson faculty who are actively involved in delivering graduate programs based within their own Schools, most Atkinson faculty have strong links to graduate programs located in cognate units on campus. These connections involve our faculty in important planning issues. As one example, the Department of Psychology at Atkinson has prioritized hires in neuropsychology, disability and trauma since these areas are not strongly represented elsewhere on campus, in contrast to clinical health psychologists who are strongly concentrated in Arts and Kinesiology, and because such hires would contribute to other plans in the SHPM.

Increased harmonization and collaboration between cognate units does not come without significant challenges, including issues around parity in teaching load, graduate supervision credit, and T.A. support.

10. Expanding Continuing Education Opportunities

Atkinson has plans for expanding both Certificates offered within the Schools and non-degree credit courses and certificates through its Division of Continuing Education.

There are two main priorities in this regard:

- i. Foster conversion opportunities for continuing education students to enter degree-study at Atkinson or York, through exploration of various strategies such as Prior Learning Assessment and Review (PLAR), advanced standing toward degree credit for completed CE certificate programs, etc., and;
- ii. Enhance opportunities for Continuing Education by increasing availability through distance education. There is potential for much wider participation across the province, for example, in the Certificate in Working with Special Populations, as it answers a demand for training in the area.

Graduate Education

While the Faculty of Graduate Studies has responsibility for presenting the academic plan for graduate education, we have added a short section here on initiatives that we are, or will be pursuing with FGS, given the importance of graduate programs for the promotion

of scholarship in the Faculty, and the links to undergraduate programs in the Atkinson Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies.

The UAP sets out as a strategic priority that “[d]uring a period of anticipated enrolment growth at the undergraduate level, and subject to a sufficiency of resources, the balance of graduate and undergraduate enrolments should, at a minimum, be maintained.” In this area, as in so many others, the Atkinson Faculty is working in harmony with the strategic goals of the University as one of our major strategic priorities is to expand our MSW and introduce new graduate programs at York. We are currently awaiting final approval for a Master’s in Critical Disability Studies and a Master’s in Human Resource Management and we have a number of other new and exciting proposals at the conceptual stage.

The Master’s of Arts degree in Critical Disability Studies is targeted to begin in 2003-04. This degree will be the only graduate program of its nature in Canada and one of a handful in the world. At the same time, the School of Health Policy and Management is also working on developing three other programs. The first initiative being investigated is a specialized joint program with Osgoode Hall Law School to provide students with an LLB/Masters in Health Policy. Also being investigated is an MA in Health Management with the School of Administrative Studies, and an MA in Health Informatics.

The School of Nursing is in the process of developing an MScN program. When approved, this will not only attract and retain high quality faculty, but will also help address the need for nurses with a graduate degree who can be hired for faculty roles or for advanced practice roles within the Ontario nursing sector. In addition, the School of Nursing is planning the development of degree-credit courses/certificates with other professional and liberal studies disciplines that will be suitable for the graduate level. It is currently working with colleagues in the Liberal Studies Schools on a proposal for an Arts Informed Health Praxis Certificate at the graduate level. Within the School of Nursing, it plans to develop certificates in Advanced Practice Nursing, Oncology Nursing and Mental Health Nursing.

The School of Social Work currently offers a MSW degree to students already holding a BSW. It intends in the next few years to develop a PhD in Social Work grounded in critical theory, potentially on an interdisciplinary basis and is contemplating adding a two-year MSW that would be open to students holding a BA but not a BSW.

The Masters degree in Human Resource Management in the School of Administrative Studies will be resubmitted for OCGS approval shortly. This “executive” degree is unique in its curriculum and designed to in a flexible executive-style format that blends theory and case studies. Students will learn from internationally recognized leaders in HR scholarship and research in order to provide professional HRM specialists with the skills and credentials necessary to become senior-level professionals.

The Atkinson Faculty intends over the five year planning period to work to design other graduate programs that will offer students an opportunity to take advantage of the unique and developing scholarship of our faculty. The School of Analytic Studies and

Information Technology is considering a Masters degree in ITEC, and two other joint programs being considered are a Masters in: i) Social Justice/Human Rights/Social Marginalization; and ii) Public Service and Policy Studies. These interdisciplinary programs would draw support from virtually all of Atkinson's academic units.

Most of our faculty are members of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and service a variety of graduate programs in terms of teaching and student supervision. In addition, however, we feel that Atkinson can contribute to the excellence and diversity of graduate education at York in areas of academic strength at Atkinson, and that this contribution, in combination with our expanding research activities, will help to establish the reputations of Atkinson and York University. It will be imperative in concert with these developments to address adequate support including T.A. support at the same rate offered in the Faculty of Arts, the funding model for graduate programs, and recognition for graduate supervision.

Scholarship

Atkinson Faculty adheres to the principle that teaching and research must be intricately linked in any academic plan. Research activities provide invaluable learning opportunities for both undergraduate and graduate students in terms of research positions, but in addition, they supplement academic programs in terms of the scholarship generated in research centres and institutes, and the incorporation of that scholarship in classroom lectures and activities. Promoting scholarship is therefore integral to Atkinson's Five-year Plan, and over the next five years, we plan to: i) establish stronger links between research and teaching; ii) strengthen our alliances with other universities and community partners; iii) create opportunities for us to address needs in the surrounding communities that support York University; iv) create learning and work opportunities for our students in terms of research assistantships; v) concentrate on hiring fulltime tenure stream faculty who are active researchers; and vi) attract top quality students to our programs.

Current Areas of Research Strength

One area of research strength within the Atkinson Faculty is within the broad area of health research – an area that supports the UAP's strategic interest in this area. A series of initiatives on the part of the School of Health Policy and Management has brought together faculty from Nursing with SHPM faculty to seek funding to address: a) societal determinants of diabetes among Canadians (CIHR); b) the establishment of a Centre for Studies into Income and Health (CIHR); and c) a proposal to establish a Community-University Research Alliance in association with the Association of Ontario Health Centres of Ontario (SSHRC). In the area of health informatics, research is being pursued in conjunction with other Atkinson faculty and with researchers at other institutions.

The UAP emphasizes the importance of the "development of new, primarily interdisciplinary, research programs" and "the encouragement of research collaborations within and beyond York." In both of these respects SHPM has been active. The pan-university CIHR development grant in health was coordinated by the Chair of the SHPM

and has brought together faculty from the Faculty of Arts, Pure and Applied Science, and Law. A number of proposals have been generated through this development, the majority of which have SHPM faculty participating, including a major initiative which is being developed at York in geomatics and health policy.

Faculty members in the School of Nursing are involved in scholarly activities focusing on the development of human science based nursing knowledge, research, and practice. Scholarly activities and research programs utilize a variety of quantitative and qualitative approaches including narrative inquiry, hermeneutic phenomenology, and concept development and encompass such broad ranging areas as: lived experiences in health care; community and public health nursing; client centred care, health outcomes, and quality of life; teaching/learning pedagogies and clinical evaluation; people living with cancer and other chronic illnesses; professional issues and innovation; health informatics, e-health, caring and technology; women's health; and advanced nursing practice. Arts-informed praxis, as well as a focus on innovative and complementary caring-healing practices, addresses both the art and the science of nursing.

The School of Social Sciences (SSS) at Atkinson is an important centre of social science research at York, with strong faculty specialization falling under the themes of social marginalization and leading in research areas such as diaspora studies, anti-racist studies, precarious employment and gender equity. The significant external funding tied to the Canada Research Chair (CRC) in Feminist Political Economy, has helped to fund two significant projects: the Gender and Work Database developed in collaboration with Statistics Canada through a CFI grant; and a Community University Research Alliance on Contingent Work. One of six MCRI projects awarded to Canadian scholars in 2001 is held by faculty in SSS. This international, collaborative project brings together scholars from Canada, Britain, Iran, Israel, West Bank and Gaza. This and another research project link directly to foci in the School of Social Sciences, namely, in Diaspora Studies and in Gender and Families concentrations, Certificate in Anti-Racist Research Practice (CARRP), and Certificate in Refugee and Immigration Studies. These and other projects in the SSS promote York University's internationalization objectives in terms of attracting students and developing important networks with other scholars.

The research of Psychology Department members is supported by all three federal granting agencies, reflecting the fact that their research encompasses health, social and basic neuroscience perspectives. Two areas of strength are vision science and cognitive science. Faculty study basic visual processes such as object recognition and face perception, as well as health related aspects of vision: normal and abnormal visual development, the role of vision in migraine, and visual consequences of age-related disorders (glaucoma, macular degeneration, diabetes cataract). In terms of cognitive science, faculty strengths are in the neuropsychology of cognitive processes (with particular emphasis on cognitive rehabilitation following stroke), memory, cognitive development, social cognition (particularly surrounding health-related behaviours), and comparative cognition, examining the cognitive processes of our nearest primate relatives.

The School of Arts and Letters has especially strong research concentrations in a wide range of areas. These include studies of the intersections of the arts and culture; Canadian studies, especially with an immigration and ethnicity focus; the early history of Christianity; European traditions prior to 1800; and women's studies/gender studies. These areas frequently overlap in the work of individual researchers as interdisciplinarity is a major thrust of the School. One of the School's outstanding scholars has specialized in research on Nazi Germany.

Research undertaken by faculty members at the School of Social Work covers a wide range of topics, currently including international social work, post colonial relations, social policy, community development and mental health. A number of projects are designed to explore power relations and the effects of political and economic structures on the lives of marginalized groups. Critical theory is the starting point of much research carried out by our faculty. We are presently working on a community based project that would provide on-going linkages to the School, including teaching and research opportunities carried out in partnership with community members.

With over 100 full- and part-time faculty, the research profile of the School of Administrative Studies is quite eclectic. Faculty research covers the full spectrum of business disciplines. As a professional business school, most faculty research has an applied focus, but ADMS also has individuals publishing highly theoretical pieces. Research has included significant work on Human Resources which has involved collaboration both amongst faculty within the School, with colleagues in other Universities, and with HR professionals. Other faculty have been involved in research focusing on international marketing; medical statistics focusing on cancer; organizational behaviour emphasizing crucial issues such as trust and ethics; accounting, both environmental reporting and historical critical accounting; and personal finance amongst a vast range of individual research topics. Members of the School have been nominated for University Scholar and Canada Research Chair.

The School of Analytic Studies and Information Technology has research strengths in areas corresponding to its five units. The School houses numerous external grants and faculty make significant contributions in various graduate programs (most significantly in the mathematics and philosophy programs). In Economics research interests include labour market analysis, public finance, international trade, health economics and monetary policy. In Information Technology they include medical imaging, educational tools in computer science, modelling of environmental systems, business rules based information systems and natural language processing. The research interests of the Mathematics group incorporate algebra, topology, geometry, statistics and econometrics. The work of faculty within the Science and Technology Studies group focuses on life sciences, enlightenment and romantic sciences, history of natural history and in the philosophy of science. Finally in Philosophy the focus of research is on communications and mass media, political theory, prehistoric philosophy, philosophy of art, applied ethics and language development.

Future Directions in Research

In addition to the research institutes and centres to which our faculty members are already attached, Atkinson will also be moving forward with plans to develop several new research institutes within the Faculty.

A proposal for *The Atkinson Policy Research Institute* has been prepared with support from faculty in the Schools of Health Policy and Management, Social Sciences, Social Work, Analytic Studies and Technology, Nursing and the Department of Psychology. In addition to developing important research networks among scholars both within, and outside of, Atkinson, this Institute would support academic programming in the area. We will be prioritizing the Institute in our fund-raising efforts.

Based on the substantial research collaboration by SSS faculty on issues around Islamic culture and the diaspora, Vice-President Stan Shapson has encouraged the project directors to consider the development of an Organized Research Unit (ORU), Centre for Research on Islamic Cultures and the Middle East (CRICME) at York University. This Centre would bring together scholars from York and other Canadian and international institutions, and would combine research, policy development and strong relations with communities.

The School of Nursing has submitted a CFI NOI for an *Arts-Informed Health Research Institute* with links to the School of Arts and Letters. In addition to the promotion of research, such an Institute builds on academic courses in the School of Nursing and SAL, and creates opportunities for research internships for upper level students.

There is considerable support within the Faculty to establish a Chair (or Professorship) in Social (and Economic) Justice.

Continuing to Work to Enhance Atkinson's Research Culture

An important strategic priority set out by the UAP is “to enhance” the University’s profile “as a leading research university where the lives of all of its members, and the larger community, are enriched by a variety of scholarship.” Research is an area of increasing strength within the Atkinson Faculty and we recognize the need to foster it and to work to create an ever stronger culture of research within the Faculty.

Over the planning period, 2003-2008, Atkinson has made a specific commitment to build the research infrastructure within the Faculty and to support research activity by our faculty. Specifically, we are committed to improving our collaboration with the Office of Research Innovation and Office of Research Administration within York. To promote research activity, we intend to establish an officer within Atkinson who is qualified to help faculty with grant applications and grant administration and who can personify this link with ORA. In hiring new faculty we will be emphasizing the importance of the research and teaching records, and how prospective hires might fit into existing research networks or provide access to new networks. We are also working on developing the means of offering faculty research awards, fellowships, and small-scale research funding,

and on finding sources of money from which to fund teaching release. Without the latter, significant improvements in productivity are unlikely because the teaching load for our faculty is incompatible with large-scale research. Beyond these measures, we hope increasingly to foster a research culture within the faculty by bringing in speakers and hosting conferences with support from the Dean's office, by hosting lectures, talking about research, and by celebrating the research successes of our faculty.

As graduate programs expand, graduate teaching opportunities will increase and we expect that this will play a significant role in strengthening the research culture within the Faculty. At the same time we recognize that a commitment to continual strengthening of the research culture at Atkinson will be crucial to our ability to recruit new faculty and mount viable graduate programs.

External Relations

A major initiative in Atkinson is to develop an external relations strategy for the Faculty. In addition to hiring a Chief Development Officer through the York Foundation, an external relations team including representatives from the Office of the Dean, the Master's Office, the Atkinson Student Association, and the Alumni Association are working together to identify priorities for the advancement of the Faculty, and plans for moving the advancement agenda forward in cooperation with the various academic units in Atkinson. Those plans include the creation of an Atkinson Advisory Council and Associates.

The external relations strategy extends beyond academic plans, but it is mentioned here because it is intricately linked in several ways:

- i. promoting a stronger student identity with Atkinson,
- ii. developing strong ties with our alumni as mentors for our students, job shadowing, career workshops, networking opportunities, service-based learning opportunities, cooperative internships, and financial support for awards, scholarships, professorships, Chairs and other academic priorities,
- iii. increasing applications and conversions with effective communication strategies about our academic programs, flexible teaching schedule, etc., and
- iv. promoting and supporting new academic initiatives and research activities, including the establishment of research institutes, Chairs, professorships.

Resource Implications

The Atkinson Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies has outlined a progressive five-year academic plan which builds on the restructuring of the Faculty and its unique strengths in liberal and professional studies, diverse teaching pedagogies, and multiple delivery strategies. The implementation of these plans is premised on adequate resources and a word is therefore in order on the challenges facing Atkinson in this regard.

At the provincial level, while full average cost funding has been provided for growth enrolment, there has as yet been no provision for inflation or the losses experienced to the university over the last ten years as a result of inflation. At York, these growth funds are further offset by university-wide budget cuts. It is not clear therefore that the net revenue associated with growth will keep pace with the expenditures but it is certain that the revenue will not help address problems outside the growth spectrum.

In the context of Atkinson, some programs have exceptionally high student to faculty ratios (e.g. the Schools of Administrative Studies and Analytic Studies and Information Technology are over 70:1). In addition to the inequitable faculty and staff workload, this situation is contrary to the educational experience Atkinson strives to offer its students and to the plans that Atkinson has for embracing the Boyer Report on undergraduate education and expanding experiential education opportunities for learning. The possibilities no longer exist for addressing this issue through the transfer of resources among Atkinson programs since the workload in most of our programs is high relative to similar programs across the university. It is a matter that can only -- and must urgently be -- addressed with a collaborative effort on the part of Atkinson and the rest of York.

The Faculty also faces a structural problem in terms of the costs of new appointments and the gap between those costs and the money returned to the Faculty from the salaries of those who have retired. In Ontario, and perhaps Canada more generally, demand for new faculty is expected to exceed supply for the next several years, creating further upward pressures on salaries and associated start-up funds. To clarify the extent of this problem, Atkinson will need to make some 88 tenure stream hires over the next two years simply to keep pace with the current student to faculty ratios.

Atkinson at present has a surplus which it will carry forward to 2003-2004. This surplus has been targeted to:

- offset the budget cuts in programs particularly stretched during the period of the double cohort growth (structural changes must, however, be completed at some point to reflect these budget cuts);
- help cover costs associated with start-up funds and “progress through the rank” (PTR) OTO contributions for net new hires;
- support the development of research infrastructure for the Faculty including a program whereby faculty are able to apply for 0.5 FCE teaching release based on research productivity;
- cover costs associated with equipment and the renovation of facilities not covered by central funds which are necessary to support teaching and research activities;
- fund contract staff positions to address peak enrolment periods during the double cohort;
- support an external relations strategy with the aim of securing both volunteer and financial support for the Faculty; and
- address other expenditures still under discussion.

Based on the enrolment projections for Atkinson, and the revenue that Atkinson can expect based on current financial arrangements, we are optimistic about our budget situation for the next three years. By year four, however, we are predicting a deficit and this is before addressing problems such as the student to faculty ratio in specific programs and other UPR recommendations which require commitment of funds.

Conclusion

Despite very real resource challenges, Atkinson intends to move forward with an aggressive plan for growth, faculty and staff renewal, new and innovative academic programs, and student-centred teaching and research excellence.

As outlined in our five-year Academic Plan, Atkinson Faculty continues to: 1) maintain our traditional commitment to the ‘working student’; 2) expand our comparative advantage at York of providing flexible offerings; 3) retain our pre-eminent role at York as technological leaders in delivering distance education; 4) expand our research activities by cultivating an environment at Atkinson that supports grant applications, publications, conferences, and collaboration at York and beyond; 5) promote pedagogical strategies which encourage self-directed and life-long learning through such initiatives as experiential education; 6) forge the unique partnership between Liberal and Professional Studies that defines more than anything what Atkinson is all about; and 7) develop an external relations strategy for the Faculty that will include adequate and accurate promotion of the new Atkinson.

At the same time we are committed to ensuring that the Faculty is adequately resourced, and to securing equity *within* the Faculty. Several factors must be considered in assessing workload and equity, but the student to faculty ratio is an important benchmark which cannot be ignored. In 2003-2004, the student to faculty ratios in Atkinson are expected to vary across Schools between approximately 20:1 to 75:1. While there are many innovative program reforms planned for Atkinson over the next five years, the Faculty will strive as a macro goal to address this disparity by bringing Schools with exceptionally high ratios closer to the 20:1 norm.