



University of Saskatchewan

The Provost's White Paper on Integrated Planning

The concept of Integrated Planning was introduced at the University of Saskatchewan in 2001. Since then much has been done to put the critical elements of the process in place. The most visible product of this effort is the President's Strategic Directions statement, entitled *Renewing the Dream*. The Senate, Council and Board of Governors endorsed this Statement in the spring of 2002. It identifies the University's distinguishing features and strategic priorities as well as the environment required to foster both.

This *White Paper* is a companion to the President's Strategic Directions statement. It outlines the basic elements of a new planning process at the University of Saskatchewan, which is intended to introduce a strong element of collegiality and openness to the planning and budgeting enterprise. It is geared to implement the objectives of the Strategic Directions by evaluating and approving college and unit plans in a multi-year timeframe. I unveiled the key elements of the *White Paper* in my annual address to the University community in March 2002. Since then the various topics introduced there have been the subject of continuous discussion in a number of forums, including the Board of Governors, Deans' Council and the committees of University Council.

1. What Is Integrated Planning and Why Are We Doing It?

During the Development Phase of the Integrated Planning initiative, interviews were held with faculty and staff involved in the governance of the University. Included in these discussions were Deans, Department Heads, chairs of Council committees, members of the Board of Governors, and all of the senior administration. While these observers had positive things to say about the efforts of individuals and units in taking on the planning and budgeting challenges of a very complex institution, they also expressed some serious concerns about the state of our planning efforts. The current process was described as mysterious and fragmented. We were told that we need more transparency and more capacity: people need to understand their role (and the role of others) and feel that their work has some obvious payoffs in terms of decisions.

Above all, there was a general sense that our present planning and budgeting arrangements are diffuse. There are many sources of revenue, many expenditure objects and an army of units with discrete operating budgets. Integrated planning will not change this basic reality, but it is intended to introduce some order and predictability to its operation. Integration will take the following forms:

Integration of planning and budgeting. In theory at least, planning and budgeting go hand in hand, with the former driving the latter. However, when planning consists of retrenchment—cutbacks and downsizing—it often becomes responsive primarily (if not solely) to budgetary discipline. And when budgeting occurs without the discipline of a plan, the loudest voices, often from those in the most advantageous position, expect a privileged hearing. Integrated planning is intended to privilege the

planning process and allow planning to drive budgeting. We start with what it is we want to do, submit those aspirations to rigorous analysis and then decide how we are going to resource our plans. There will be setbacks, years in which we are cutting and not building. But building (although not necessarily expanding) should be our aim and we need a process that is disciplined by goals and priorities as much as by resources. For that reason the Integrated Planning process will consciously integrate planning and budgeting decisions so that we tackle the two in concert rather than isolation.

Integration of financial oversight. The Operating Budget of the University of Saskatchewan is roughly \$230 million, made up of the provincial grant and tuition revenue. For most colleges and units this is the core of their budget; these revenues pay most college and unit salaries and non-salary expenses.

The *White Paper* represents a summary of decisions taken on these topics. Some parts of the *Paper* are more definitive than others; there is still work to do. However, this document represents the consolidation of input from a variety of sources and is intended to provide direction to those involved in the planning process over the next five years. It is being shared broadly with the academic community because the new integrated planning process will involve just about everyone on campus.



Michael Atkinson
Provost and Vice-President Academic
August 2002

However, the Operating Budget by no means represents the entire operations of the University. There are significant trust and endowment accounts (most of which are earmarked for particular purposes), large research accounts (which are similarly pre-assigned), and a host of ancillary accounts that make up the revenues generated by commercial or quasi-commercial activities. In the last few years, these latter funds and activities, taken together, have been larger than the Operating Budget, yet they are seldom considered in the same detail or at the same time as the Operating Budget. The *University of Saskatchewan Act* (1995) vests with the Board of Governors responsibility for overseeing and directing all matters respecting the management, administration and control of the University's property, revenues and financial affairs. To ensure that the Board can carry out its responsibilities and that management has the information it needs to provide for effective stewardship of resources, we need to enhance our reporting and monitoring activities to encompass all operations and all organizational units of the University. The Financial Services Division has begun the task of providing a comprehensive oversight of University activities, including

the provision of business plan assistance for those ancillary operations that require it. Comprehensive oversight will take time to achieve, but the Integrated Planning process will facilitate the thorough treatment of financial risk and opportunity that the Board requires.

Integration of academic and administrative planning. Administrative units—including Facilities Management, Human Resources, Information and Communications Technology, and many more—have developed internal planning processes. Similarly, academic units, including most of the colleges and many departments, have drafted planning papers. At the moment we have no process that will oblige these various processes and documents (and there are many of them) to be closely connected to one another. Even though plans in one unit often have major effects on plans in others, most operations chart their own course without much knowledge of one another. Of particular concern is the absence of strong linkages between the capital and operating budgets of the University. Integrated planning is intended to draw these various activities together, not just at the apex of the decision-making structure, but at the level of public

presentation and discussion. Clearly, the University must give its academic aspirations pride of place, but administrative units must know what these are and what their implications might be. By the same token, academic units need to know what their administrative counterparts are contemplating and to test these plans against their own sense of academic priorities.

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Integration of semi-autonomous units. Like many institutions, the University of Saskatchewan has created institutes, centres and organizations that have specific mandates and precise missions. Some of these units are closely aligned with colleges; others enjoy a significant measure of autonomy. Although Council and the Board of Governors have responsibility for the

creation and evolution of these entities, in many cases we have not established clear lines of authority and responsibility. The Integrated Planning process is an opportunity to correct this deficiency. All units associated with the University will be included in the planning process, either on their own or in conjunction with colleges or Vice-Presidential portfolios. In some cases this will involve an examination of governance arrangements to ensure that authority is clearly assigned and reporting relationships appropriately established. Again, this process will take time, but the leaders and members of these units should begin to consider the basis on which they will become integrated into this new process.

Integration of evaluation processes. In the mid-90s this University, and most others, began paying close attention to the twin topics of evaluation and accountability. At the University of Saskatchewan, the most important innovation in this regard has been Systematic Program Review (SPR), the process of reviewing all programs—graduate and undergraduate—by a team of internal and external reviewers using an

necessary and useful adjuncts to the program review process. Similarly, surveys of students, both current and past, have been added to the evaluation arsenal in recent years. Apart from SPR, which is systematic in more than just name, most reviews are in direct response to one immediate challenge or another. Integrated Planning should allow for a more deliberate approach to reviews and surveys and it should allow the results to factor into the overall evaluation process.

A multi-year framework

This kind of integration can be managed only over a **multi-year time frame**. This observation applies with particular force to the integration of planning and budgeting, but other forms of integration are best accomplished over several years as well. We intend to use a five-year planning cycle, the first year of which will be 2002-03, the final year 2006-07. The President's Strategic Directions statement will be revised at the end of five years and a new round of planning will begin. The scheduling details are contained in Section 3 below.

The major advantage to the multi-year framework is obvious: it allows people to think about their future over a sensible time horizon. One-year budgeting and year-by-year hiring is not conducive to a consideration of how units can best achieve their diverse missions. In a one-year framework the focus is on the immediate and on the individual. The interests of the unit as a whole, let alone the University, are seldom given the attention they deserve. Besides, no one seriously plans for a single year. If we are to be guided by a sense of our collective future, then we should expect that future to play out over a number of years as our faculty and staff turn over and the processes of program review, termination and initiation unfold.

Budgeting should **also** be a multi-year task. We live in a province whose revenue sources are subject to severe fluctuation and whose commitments are made with appropriate caution as a result. But even under these circumstances government provides multi-year contract guidelines and makes multi-year capital commitments. The University needs to make similar long-term commitments with appropriate provisions for unanticipated events. Otherwise, Deans, Department Heads and unit leaders will be obliged to guess at the level of support they can expect in succeeding years. And while there is no such thing as a sure thing in budgetary exercises, and even the best plans have to be revised, it makes sense to consider our collective future over at least a five-year horizon, one that is long enough to actually create programs, recruit faculty, provide facilities and attract students.

A new decision-making structure

The **President's Executive Committee** (PEC) has determined that the burden of Integrated Planning should be shared between two new administrative committees and supported by a new Integrated Planning Office.

The Provost's Committee on Integrated Planning (PCIP) is the main planning and budgetary body. Under the Provost's direction it is responsible for providing the structure for the Integrated Planning process (schedules, templates, and decision criteria), identifying the institution's five-year planning parameters, and recommending to the Board of Governors on resource levels, both operating and capital, for all units over a multi-year time frame. Budgetary recommendations will be based on a review of the plans of all academic and administrative units. In addition, this

Committee will manage the Academic Priorities Fund (see below) and oversee the preparation of the Operations Forecast and the annual budget framework.

In addition to the Provost who chairs the committee, PCIP is comprised of the Vice-Provost, the Vice-President Research, the Vice-President Finance and Resources, and the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research.

The Administrative Committee on Integrated Planning (ACIP) is charged with the integration, *at the administrative level*, of planning and budgetary initiatives. This Committee is responsible for preparing, reviewing, and advising PCIP on the comprehensive resource plans (capital and operating) that must be generated to support strategic initiatives that flow from PEC, the colleges and administrative units. In addition, ACIP will share and critique the strategic plans of administrative support units to ensure their alignment with the Strategic Directions statement and with college plans. It will also advise PCIP on the feasibility of college plans in light of fiscal, infrastructural and policy constraints.

This committee is chaired by the Vice-Provost and is comprised of the Associate Vice-Presidents for Information and Communications Technology, Facilities Management, Student and Enrolment Services, Financial Services, and Human Resources. The Research Office will be represented by a designate of the Vice-President Research, initially one of the Research Coordinators.

Integrated Planning Office (IPO) Integrated Planning will require focused analytical and budgetary support. A new **Integrated Planning Office** is being created through a reorganization of the University Studies Group, the transfer of resources from the Financial Services Division, and the addition of analytic capacity. This Office will report directly to the Provost and Vice-President Academic.

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agreed-upon evaluation grid. At the same time, the need for specific unit reviews has not disappeared. Reviews of the basic science departments in the College of Medicine, the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, and the Registrar's Office/Student Affairs and Services, among others, have been deemed



Led by the Assistant Provost, Integrated Planning and Analysis, this office will consist of two divisions: Institutional Analysis, which will take on primary responsibility for the institutional database; and Budget Planning, which will be responsible for the preparation of multi-year budgets, the annual budget framework, financial modeling and the multi-year budget process. In addition, we are introducing the concept of a “virtual” Integrated Planning Office. A number of Integrated Planning Associates are being identified in the Communications, Financial Services, Facilities Management, Information Technology Services, Research Services and Provost’s areas. They will work closely with the core of the IPO and be the principal liaison personnel.

For more details on committee responsibilities, on the organization of the IPO, and on how these structures will interact, see www.usask.ca/vpacademic/integrated-planning.

Relationship to University Council

It is imperative that this new decision-making process articulate well with the responsibilities and work of **University Council**. Council is described in the *University of Saskatchewan Act* as responsible for “overseeing and directing the university’s academic affairs.” Specific areas of responsibility include academic planning, programs, and student numbers. In these areas, the Council has the power “...to authorize the board to provide for the establishment and disestablishment of any college, school, department, chair, endowed chair or institute...” to “prescribe curricula, programs of instruction and courses of study in colleges, schools, departments...” and to “prescribe and limit the number of students who may be admitted to a college or program of study.” University

Council has been intimately involved with the development of the President’s Strategic Directions statement (which it unanimously endorsed at its May 2002 meeting) and with the Integrated Planning initiative, including offering advice on several of the critical design elements.

Given the overlapping responsibilities of Council and the President (who is, according to the *Act*, “responsible for supervising and directing the academic work of the university”) it is apparent that both need to work together to ensure that the academic mission of the University is advanced. In the proposed structure, Council will be involved in the development of University-level strategic policies and plans. It will help develop planning parameters for strategic planning initiatives, review college/major administrative unit plans, and provide advice on budgetary and physical plans of units. In addition, the Provost’s Committee on Integrated Planning will meet regularly with the chairs of Council committees to exchange information and coordinate agendas. These meetings will be crucial in ensuring the full participation of Council and the informed decision-making of PCIP.

Finally, Council itself may develop plans which may have budgetary implications and for which it may seek approval. Clearly such plans would require review and discussion through the Integrated Planning structure, particularly where such initiatives have resource implications, either operating or capital, for the University.

Why do all of this?

This new decision-making structure, the support needed to make it work, and the various planning requirements contained in the rest of this document, may give the impression of bureaucratic overkill. Whatever happened to the good old days

when you could call up one Vice-President or another or form a delegation and march over to the President’s Office? Well, nothing in this new structure will prevent anyone from making direct contact and sending personal messages. The President will continue to have his breakfast meetings and Vice-Presidents will continue to answer their e-mail and return phone calls.

But this new planning process will encourage Presidents and Vice-Presidents to make commitments only in a collegial context characterized by a strong measure of due process and due diligence. It will place a premium on teamwork and on open and transparent decision making. Work plans will be available on the web and meeting dates and decision dates will be known in advance.

Integrated Planning is intended to allow us to make difficult decisions in a collegial manner with evidence appropriately assembled. In interviews and discussion groups over the past year, colleagues have argued that priorities need to be created, programs consolidated or removed, and critical mass assembled. Integrated Planning cannot *guarantee* these sorts of outcomes, but it can increase the probability.

Finally, there is the promise of *integration* in Integrated Planning. With multiple revenue sources, multiple capital demands, and a changing student and faculty demographic, it is no longer desirable (if it ever was) to make one-off decisions or lavish attention on a selective subset of problems. We have to raise our decisions to a higher level with clear attention to the long-term interests of the institution. The next section of this *Paper* outlines the investments in planning that have to occur if this is going to happen.

2. Strategic Directions and Foundational Documents: Planning at the University Level

At the beginning of a planning cycle, it is necessary to establish a set of university-wide planning goals. In the case of the University of Saskatchewan these are contained in *Renewing the Dream*. The President prepared the initial version of this statement and immediately began an extensive consultation process. The version of *Renewing the Dream* approved by the University’s governing bodies is the product of significant discussion, debate and amendment. While key parts of this document are intended to guide the institution far beyond the immediate

planning period, the Strategic Directions themselves have been drafted to apply with particular force from 2002 until at least 2007.

Of course, no single document can capture in any detail the myriad aspirations of a university like this one. We have undertaken, therefore, to create a set of foundational documents that will provide an opportunity for more complete discussion and more precise direction in areas directly related to the Strategic Directions themselves. These documents,

their status, and anticipated completion dates are summarized in Table One. This table also identifies those individuals and offices that have been assigned leadership responsibilities for each document. It is important to emphasize that these responsibilities will be exercised in cooperation with University Council, its committees, and other governing bodies. These documents will proceed in stages with ample opportunity for discussion and amendment.

TABLE ONE

University of Saskatchewan Foundational Documents Responsibility Assignment and Proposed Approval Timeline (as of August 2002)

Foundational Document	Assignment	Anticipated Date of Completion
Completed		
A Framework for Planning	Approved by Council	February 1998
Standards for Tenure and Promotion	Approved by University Review Committee	February 2002
Strategic Directions	Approved by Governing Bodies	May 2002
In Progress		
Enrolment Plan	Provost/Associate VP Student and Enrolment Services/Dean of Graduate Studies and Research	Fall 2002
Campus Core Area Master Plan	Associate VP Facilities Management	Fall 2002
“Contributing Together” (version two)	Vice-President Finance and Resources	Fall 2002
Information and Communications Technology Plan	Associate VP Information and Communications Technology	December 2002
Research Plan	Vice-President Research	December 2002
Internationalization Plan	Provost and Vice-President Academic	June 2003
Conceptual Framework for Aboriginal Initiatives	Provost and Vice-President Academic	June 2003
Complement Plan	Vice-Provost	Fall 2003

Given their close connection with the President’s Strategic Directions statement, it makes sense to briefly review each document as it bears on each of the directions identified there.

Direction 1: Attract and retain outstanding faculty

There can be no doubt that the quality of a university's faculty is the single most important determinant of that institution's long-term prospects. Hiring the right faculty, providing them with the right facilities, and supporting their efforts has been a recipe for success followed by all top-flight institutions.

To help set the context for the attraction and retention of outstanding faculty, the University Review Committee (URC), in conjunction with College Review Committees and faculty members from all parts of the institution, worked for more than two years on the creation of new **Standards for Tenure and Promotion**. This foundational document was approved by URC in February 2002 following a grueling schedule of consultation and a series of adjustments and amendments. Council approval was obtained in December 2001. These new standards will be implemented following the schedule outlined in the Provost's memorandum of July 8, 2002.

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While this document is clearly intended to govern critical career decisions, its impact will be felt beyond those precise deliberations. Broadly speaking, these new standards represent an opportunity to communicate, to both potential and well-established colleagues, our expectations of one another. It is often observed that hiring decisions are the most important

decisions we make; all others are somewhat anticlimactic. But the Standards for Tenure and Promotion will influence those hiring decisions and other decisions in a faculty member's career. It is undoubtedly true that most candidates for tenure ultimately receive it, but that process should be a positive one, based on achievement and recognition. That will happen only if expectations are clearly understood and those who meet these expectations are the ones who apply them.

Beyond the Standards, we need to plan for a new era of faculty recruitment and retention, one in which there will be far fewer eligible candidates than in previous decades. Two years ago the Provost's Office prepared a *Recruitment Guide* to assist Deans and Department Heads in the difficult task of finding suitable candidates and making compelling offers. That *Guide* needs to be refined and situated inside a broader **Complement Plan**. The size of our faculty complement relative to the tasks we have been assigned (and have assigned ourselves) is an abiding concern to all those holding administrative posts in colleges and departments. And while there is no evidence that, given the size of our student body, our faculty complement compares unfavourably with that of other institutions, it is not clear that we have allocated faculty positions in a way that will enhance our academic preeminence.

The Complement Plan is intended to address allocation issues by taking an inclusive approach to our resources. The teacher-scholar model, described and celebrated in **A Framework for Planning at the University of Saskatchewan**, represents in summary form our expectations of those holding tenure-track positions. These individuals are the core faculty and are subject to the Standards for Tenure and Promotion. There are many others, however, without whom we would

be unable to perform our teaching, research and service responsibilities. They include sessional lecturers, term appointees, research associates, retirees, and an array of adjunct professors, many of whom serve on graduate advisory committees. The Complement Plan will examine these appointment categories and suggest modifications and additions that will allow for increased flexibility. It will pay particular attention to those whose primary concerns and professional skills lie in *one* of the following areas: teaching, research, and clinical service. We need to be able to make these more specialized appointments and to ensure that those who accept them can have full and productive careers at the University, even if they are not holding tenure-track positions.

Direction 2: Increase campus-wide commitment to research, scholarly and artistic work

Arguably, the most effective step we can take toward increasing our commitment to research, scholarly and artistic work is to provide the resources that will liberate faculty to engage fully in these pursuits. This cannot be accomplished for every area of endeavor; in fact, it can be accomplished only for a handful. We will have to be strategic. It is vital that a consensus emerges regarding those areas of research in which the University will commit sufficient resources to achieve recognition at the national and international levels.

Given our stated commitment to the teacher-scholar model (as described in *A Framework for Planning*), our expectation remains that all tenure-track faculty members will maintain a research,

scholarly or artistic program. The University will establish a base level of support for all researchers; for those areas identified as being of national or international standing, the University will establish a higher level of institutional support. In establishing both the base and the advanced levels of support, the University will take into account the physical facilities, technical support, graduate student assistance, direct support from the research office, and the precious gift of time.

To guide the University and colleges in identifying these areas and the resource and policy requirements to achieve this Strategic Direction, the Vice-President Research will take the lead in developing a **Plan for Research, Scholarly and Artistic Work** for the University of Saskatchewan. Work on this Plan began in conjunction with the federal government's CFI and Canada Research Chairs initiatives. Both initiatives obliged the University to identify priority areas and indicate how investment in these areas could ensure a critical mass of activity sufficient to establish preeminence. However, the resulting plans are limited by the requirement to conform to the granting councils' criteria for investment in research. The Plan currently being assembled is based on areas of priority identified by the faculty themselves. They include established areas in which we have a concentration of faculty and research capacity, and emerging areas in which we either have these elements in nascent form, or where we have unique opportunities to build distinctive strength.

Strength in any area of academic endeavor depends on having the appropriate assemblage of information. Increasingly, critical information is available more readily, more completely, and sometimes, uniquely in digital form. Faculty members use information and



communications technology as everyday tools in their work, and libraries are becoming brokers of information, as well as repositories of knowledge. In the **Information and Communications Technology Plan** the University will indicate its major projects for the next five years and their connection to the research and scholarly enterprise. This Plan will outline the USR-net project and associated development, as well as specific initiatives geared to support faculty needs in areas of high-performance computing. The latter includes participation in national initiatives—C3.ca, Grid Canada, etc.—and support for on-campus research computing clusters.

Direction 3: Establish the University of Saskatchewan as a major presence in graduate education

The University of Saskatchewan has ambitious plans in the area of graduate education, including an increase of more

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than 30 percent in graduate enrolment. The background for this initiative, and the impressive array of requirements that must be met to achieve it, are outlined in the **Enrolment Plan**. This Plan, which has undergone a number of iterations and benefited from extensive consultation, calls for not only an increase in numbers, but also a close examination of existing programs and the allocation of faculty resources. Among other things, the Plan

stipulates, “New resources devoted to an increased faculty complement should be aimed principally at research programs that will attract graduate students.” With respect to graduate degree programs themselves, the Enrolment Plan suggests that our current programmatic array is not well suited to achieving a substantial enrolment increase. The Plan also indicates that it is virtually certain that the current financial support available to graduate students is insufficient to shoulder such an increase. In partial recognition of the financial challenge in this area, the Board of Governors agreed, in May 2002, to devote an additional \$1 million to the recruitment and support of graduate students. Next steps, as the Enrolment Plan indicates, include the building of a graduate student residence geared for the particular needs of graduate students, including those related to family, and the identification of additional financial aid for graduate students.

The Enrolment Plan provides direction in both the programmatic and financial areas. It also suggests that we plan on increasing our intake of international students at the graduate level. A more complete treatment of this topic awaits the development of the **Internationalization Plan**. This Plan will identify both the geographic and programmatic areas in which we should invest to help realize our goal of becoming a major presence in graduate education.

Direction 4: Recruit and retain a diverse and academically promising body of students and prepare them for success in the knowledge age

The University of Saskatchewan has experienced little difficulty in attracting

students over the past decade. In most programs the cutoff for entrance has increased and we routinely turn away hundreds of students because we have reached capacity. Whether the future will resemble the past depends on both the changing demographic picture and the University’s own strategic decisions.

The **Enrolment Plan** outlines a set of objectives for the overall size of the institution and the composition of its student body. Diversity and success are two abiding themes. They will require new recruitment efforts and investment in access and achievement programming with which we have limited experience. In addition, and of particular concern for realizing the diversity goal, our current system for creating and maintaining quotas will have to undergo a serious revision. Expanding out-of-province enrolments and opportunities for international students will challenge the “Saskatchewan First” policy that currently guides admissions decisions in many colleges. The Enrolment Plan, like all of the foundational documents discussed in this section, depends heavily on decisions at the college level. But the Plan clearly points the institution toward national competitiveness and that will entail ensuring that Saskatchewan students make the University of Saskatchewan their first choice, and that our unique programs and areas of strength be showcased in other provinces and other countries.

Both the **Conceptual Framework for Aboriginal Programs** and the **Internationalization Plan** will contain details in the areas of access programming and support structures for Aboriginal and international students. University Council has expressed strong concern about the former, indicating that college plans should contain specific measures in this area. Recent workshops have demonstrated the advantages of strong programmatic initiatives in which Aboriginal students who require special assistance to succeed are identified and

supported. Such programs already exist in several colleges, but they are by no means sufficient to meet the needs of hundreds of Aboriginal students who attend our University and then withdraw. International students also require special assistance, much of which is presently supplied by the International Student Office. The Internationalization Plan will consider the appropriateness and adequacy of existing support mechanisms given the Enrolment Plan’s announced intention to increase the number of international students at both graduate and undergraduate levels.

The “Knowledge Age” referred to in this Strategic Direction implies more than a passing acquaintanceship with the tools of information and communications technology. The **Information and Communications Technology Plan** discusses the facilities and infrastructure currently available for student computing, as well as new and expanded services. The latter include wireless access technology and improved services for off-campus students. It also outlines the promise and challenge of a new student information system, as well as the expansion of other on-line services. Along with the Enrolment Plan, this Plan also outlines strategies for increased support for technology-enhanced learning. These include the development of an array of on-line courses through the TEL (Technology Enhanced Learning) initiative, the ongoing classroom renovation project, the Library’s proposed Academic Commons, and the creation of a Centre for Distributed Learning designed to support distributed learning programs and courses throughout the University and to carry out research on the topic.

The foundational documents

The foundational documents have been discussed here under the headings of the Strategic Directions identified in *Renewing the Dream*. This discussion has been selective and illustrative: these documents clearly affect all of the Directions outlined and various other aspects of the Strategic Directions statement. One of these documents, **Contributing Together**, will outline the specific roles and responsibilities of the major administrative units in maintaining stewardship of the physical and human resources of the University. This document will highlight how the major administrative units see their role in the planning process and in achieving the Strategic Directions. Note, as well, that many of the initiatives mentioned in these various foundational documents are expensive. They will have to be prioritized, coordinated and made consistent with college plans. Finally, this array of foundational documents is not

intended to be exclusive and definitive. As time goes on we may wish to divide documents up and add new ones.

It is important that all of the documents identified here undergo significant development in 2002-03. As it is, colleges and units will have to hit a moving target, since changes in these documents will affect their own planning exercise outlined below. Of course, it is easier to hit that target if it is moving closer to where you are headed yourself. All members of the University community, but particularly those in leadership positions—Deans, Department Heads, and Council committees in particular—should obtain the current draft of these documents, become familiar with their contents and urge appropriate changes before these documents become established University policy. All of these documents, including the most current versions, will be posted at my office’s website over the Fall term www.usask.ca/vpacademic/integrated-planning.

3. Templates and Timelines: Planning at the College and Unit Level

Like most other universities in Canada, the University of Saskatchewan has had relatively limited experience with comprehensive and rigorous planning exercises. Our experience in developing plans that have multi-year timelines, are anticipatory in nature, and are used as the basis for resource allocation and re-allocation, is rudimentary at best. The most recent experience dates from 1998 when colleges were asked to prepare plans that addressed the significant recruitment challenges we foresaw over the period 1998 – 2002. It was clear from the uneven character of that exercise that colleges would require specific guidance,

not general admonitions, if they were to develop usable planning documents.

Key planning dimensions

A central element of an anticipatory, multi-year process is the identification of a set of basic assumptions that will guide the planning process. To some extent recent Operations Forecast submissions to government have provided commentary on the general context and issues facing the University, but the development of a set of specific planning dimensions covering the full range of issues that may

affect the University will require a dedicated effort over the coming year.

That process began in June 2002 with an initial meeting with experts in economic and demographic forecasting. Based on presentations and discussions at that point we have identified some basic assumptions that will inform our planning process and the first planning cycle. These include assumptions regarding operating grants from the province, tuition fees, salary settlements, and student demand.

Government Grants. After eight years of economic growth, Saskatchewan experienced a recession in 2001 (*Sask Trends Monitor*, 2002). Given the University's dependence on the Province for its operating and capital budgets, this development is not encouraging. Nevertheless, the University did receive, even under these circumstances, a 2.3 percent increase in its operating grant in 2002-03. Recent assumptions point to modest growth in the provincial economy (Department of Finance), but there are a number of outstanding variables, including the impact of the global environment on the provincial economy. We anticipate therefore that for the initial planning cycle we can expect only modest increases from the provincial government, in the order of two to three percent on the operating grant. Receipt of less than these amounts will require significant adjustments to college and unit plans, and to core expectations.

Tuition Fees. To fill the gap between operating costs and provincial operating grants, universities in Canada have turned increasingly to tuition fees as a source of revenue. While studies have shown that increases in tuition have little impact on enrolment trends, and current tax exemptions for students are greater than recent increases in tuition fees, this upward shift in fees has met with increasing opposition from student bodies and the general public who fear that

university-level education is becoming limited to the privileged few. The University of Saskatchewan has adopted a national norm tuition policy aimed at ensuring that the tuition fees we charge are close to those charged for similar programs at other, comparable, universities. Given that some provincial jurisdictions have changed their policies related to tuition fees, it is likely that tuition fees will increase at a steady rate and, in selected disciplines, increase at a marked rate. We anticipate an average growth of at least 3 - 5 percent over the planning period, but some disciplines may see tuition fee increases at substantially higher levels.

Salary Settlements. The competition for high-quality faculty is increasing and is expected to increase markedly in the coming decade as universities in Canada and the world seek to replace the faculty who are retiring. In addition, slick promotional packages, sizable start-up grants, and higher starting salaries have become commonplace recruitment tools. With the retirement of the baby boom generation, and fewer doctoral graduates choosing to enter academia, the competition for new faculty will be intense. Research by the University Studies Group reveals that current salaries at the University of Saskatchewan are competitive in all but a few disciplines, and when all factors are taken into account (including the cost of living), salaries at the University of Saskatchewan compare very favourably with other universities. Of course we will need to be vigilant to ensure that we maintain our competitive edge, and, in some disciplines, this will be an exceedingly difficult challenge. We remain optimistic that we will maintain salary settlements competitive with those universities in our peer group. However, settlements out of line with expectations will require adjustments to college and unit plans and budgets.

Student Demand. National trends indicate a 10 – 25 percent increase in enrolment by 2010, influenced largely by growth in the 18 to 24 age cohort. The provinces of Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia will likely see the greatest increase in student demand. While Saskatchewan's population as a whole may be stable over this period, the Aboriginal population is growing both in terms of numbers and proportion. Student demand is expected to grow in selected undergraduate disciplines, both in terms of student interest and workplace demand, and more generally at the graduate level. Over the short term, student demand is expected to exceed current capacity at the University of Saskatchewan and other major research universities throughout Canada. For more details, consult the Enrolment Plan www.usask.ca/vpacademic/integrated-planning.

The Integrated Planning Office will refine assumptions over the next six months as college and unit plans are under development and it will share these refinements with the University community in time for them to be utilized in planning activities.

Templates

If we are to make difficult choices from among competing alternatives, it is critical that we achieve some measure of comparability among them and the units that are proposing them. Over the course of the past several months, in consultation with Council, the Deans, and others, we have developed templates for college and major administrative unit submissions. They are available at the Integrated Planning website www.usask.ca/vpacademic/integrated-planning.

These templates anticipate change. They presume that colleges and units will be assessing all of their activities, removing some, and increasing investment in others. *Of particular importance is the requirement that all positions (both academic and staff) identified in the planning cycle, including new appointments and positions available through retirements, be costed and rank-ordered in terms of priority.*

With the odd exception, it is anticipated that most colleges, departments, and units will be asking for more resources. Needless to say, only a few such requests can be accommodated. So, what will the various committees that review and comment on these plans be looking for? It is difficult to anticipate all of the criteria that will be used by all of the committees, but it is possible to indicate those criteria that will be at the core of evaluations performed by the Provost's Committee on Integrated Planning.

Alignment with *Renewing the Dream and the Foundational Documents*
Renewing the Dream signals our intention to make significant progress in four specific areas over the course of this first planning cycle. Opportunities are provided within the template for college and administrative unit plans to discuss these Strategic Directions in some detail. Familiarity with the contents of the foundational documents and alignment with their content will be a clear advantage. We will be looking for concrete, innovative ideas with the potential for making significant impact on the Strategic Directions over the course of the planning cycle. *But colleges and units should confine their programmatic initiatives to one or two strong ideas. A long list of alternatives is unlikely to attract much support.*

Quality and Critical Mass
Just as alignment will be a critical determinant in the approval of college

and unit plans, so too will be the quality of the initiatives advanced. Through this Integrated Planning initiative we must build critical mass in selected areas of existing/emerging strength. It makes little sense to add to an already extensive array of program and service offerings without engaging in a dialogue about which of our existing programs and services should be maintained, enhanced or eliminated. To do this will require Deans, Directors and Unit Heads to take a hard look at how existing resources are deployed, to establish priorities, and to move existing resources to those priorities. A critical determinant in the planning cycle will be the willingness of units to reassign existing internal resources to the unit's and the University's stated priorities. This will mean that colleges will need to describe how their current activities meet or exceed national or international standards (such as those described in the Systematic Program Review process) and administrative units will need to identify benchmarks against which performance can be measured. In addition, colleges will need to consider how they can work with other colleges/units, through innovative collaborative projects, to provide greater impact than can be achieved in individual units.

Cost Effectiveness
College and unit plans will need to demonstrate that existing activities and proposed initiatives represent the most effective use of resources in advancing a specific goal. Arguing that an activity or program is valuable or important is not, in and of itself, an argument for retaining it, let alone committing additional resources. An argument must be made, using comparative data, performance indicators, benchmarks or evidence of demand, that of the alternatives available the one recommended represents an optimal use of resources. Colleges and units that are able to generate their own resources or realize substantial savings will be advantaged in a process of competition for scarce resources.

Timelines

Upon receipt of this *White Paper* colleges and major administrative units should initiate their planning process for the first planning cycle: 2002-03 to 2006-07. Plans should be prepared over the course of the next 12 to 14 months and submitted to the Provost's Office beginning in May 2003. Opportunities have been built into the planning cycle to hear proposals from colleges and major administrative units, as well as from the Presidential and Vice-Presidential Offices, as plans are developed and refined. Critical dates are as follows:

Town Hall Meetings. In October/November 2002, in April/May 2003, and in October 2003, community-wide meetings will be held to hear presentations from colleges, major administrative units, and Vice-Presidential offices on selected initiatives to be featured in their plans, including initiatives which might affect a broader cross-section of the University. A schedule for these presentations, tentatively identified as "Town Hall Meetings", will be prepared and published by the Integrated Planning

We will be looking for concrete, innovative ideas with the potential for making significant impact on the Strategic Directions over the course of the planning cycle.

Office by late September 2002. These meetings will provide a forum for the general campus community to hear about initiatives under active consideration. They will also provide an opportunity for early commentary/reaction to these initiatives by a broad cross-section of the campus community. All colleges and units presenting plans to the Provost's Committee are expected to participate in this process, and there will be

opportunities for further refinement and adjustment once presentations have been made and comments received.

Plan Submission. Colleges will be expected to submit their plans to the Provost's Office first, beginning in May 2003. Following an initial review by the Provost's Office, plans will be submitted to the University Council committees and to the Administrative Committee on Integrated Planning. Each Dean will be invited to meet with the Provost's Committee on Integrated Planning to discuss their plan and initiatives contained within it.

Review Process. When the PCIP determines that the plan is ready for consideration and decision, it will prepare recommendations to the Board of Governors on budgetary matters and to the Council for "in principle" approval. Academic initiatives contained within plans will need to go through the normal approval processes, but we anticipate that these reviews will be informed by the discussions at the two earlier stages and by the plans themselves. Following budgetary approval of college and unit plans, PCIP will communicate results to the campus community. Administrative units and centers/institutes submitting individual plans will be expected to follow the same process but their plans will be submitted to the Provost's Office beginning in October 2003.

To achieve our purpose will require us to work together within this relatively short timeframe. It will mean that the Council committees will need to find space in their activities for the planning process initiatives and it will mean that the administrative committees will need to work hard to meet timelines. A more detailed set of timelines, which include annual and cyclical milestones, will be found at www.usask.ca/vpacademic/integrated-planning.

Outcomes for the planning cycle

While it is difficult to predict all possible outcomes for the first planning cycle, we anticipate that college and unit plans will be approved beginning in the fall of 2003 (see approval process described above). Approval will come only after plans have been confirmed and resources adjusted accordingly. Resources may be committed at current levels, at lower levels, or at higher levels (see Academic Priorities Fund below). The level at which resources can be committed will obviously depend on the criteria outlined above and the changing environment. A word on that changing environment is in order.

Shocks. The Board of Governors maintains a contingency reserve to guard against unforeseen developments. This reserve is available on a one-time basis and is large enough to buffer against most serious unforeseen events or circumstances. It is not, however, geared to account for major economic downturns or changes in legislation that impose new and on-going requirements on universities. These latter are by no means unknown; in fact, they appear to be increasing at a rate that suggests we need to be more thorough in incorporating them into our unit and University level plans. Should these unforeseen, but unavoidable, costs be imposed on us, again PCIP will recommend adjustments to approved plans.

Shortfalls. The Province of Saskatchewan has an open economy that registers with force changes in international supply and demand. In the event that assumptions regarding the growth of the economy, the size of the provincial grant, salary settlements, the stability of enrolments, and other critical variables, are not met and resources are diminished, PCIP will recommend adjustments to the approved plans of colleges and units. These may involve

reduced non-salary budgets, postponements in hiring or permanent changes in resource levels.

Preparing for Integrated Planning

The first year of this planning cycle, 2002-03, is a transition year. We cannot stop the institution while we reshape its future, but we cannot proceed as if the planning exercise is an entirely separate and remote endeavor involving other people but not us. Somehow we must find a way to incorporate planning into our regular lives, something we are admonished to do by countless books and seminars on the topic. As we build this more robust process, however, we confront two immediate challenges.

The Need for Assistance in Creating College/Unit Plans. Colleges and major administrative units can expect to call upon the Integrated Planning Office (IPO), through the Assistant Provost, Integrated Planning and Analysis, to obtain assistance in the development of their plans. Specifically, the Integrated Planning Office will provide general advice on the completion of plans and meet with units and individuals assigned responsibility for their development. The IPO will direct colleges and units to appropriate on-campus resources available to assist in development of strategic plans and in selected components of those plans. These include the financial analysts in the Financial Services Division who will be available to assist colleges/units in putting together the resource component of their plans, and strategic planning resources available in Human Resources.

The Need to Manage Appointments in 2002-03. As we prepare for this initiative, it is important that the University proceed with decisions in 2002-03 only if they fit with the long-term plans of departments, colleges,

administrative units and/or the University as a whole. In the future, all permanent positions will have to be presented and defended on an institution-wide basis; the current relatively automatic sign-off on replacement positions will not continue under Integrated Planning. At the moment, the University has a significant number of positions currently advertised or pending approval for advertisement (i.e., arising out of retirements or resignations). Making permanent appointments at this time could prove to be highly problematic, in that such decisions privilege departments with a vacancy in 2002-03 over those with a vacancy in 2003-04 or beyond. It makes no sense to "freeze" hiring in a competitive environment, but it also makes no sense to proceed with business-as-usual either.

PCIP has decided to proceed with faculty and staff hiring during the 2002-03 academic year on the following basis:

1. Any positions that have been subject to a University-wide priority setting or evaluation process will proceed without interruption. These include:
 - Priority Determination Process appointments that are still pending.
 - Canada Research Chairs appointments or positions associated with Canada Research Chairs.
 - Appointments in Computer Science, Nursing, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine and Physical Therapy that are supported by provincial access funding.
 - Canadian Light Source related positions.
- Any other permanent faculty positions that can demonstrate that they have been subject to a comprehensive college and University-wide evaluation and approval process.





2. All probationary, permanent, seasonal staff and term appointments funded from the operating budget must be approved at the Vice-President or Associate Vice-President levels (as appropriate). For staff in colleges, approval must be made at the decanal level.
3. Colleges will continue to be provided with the replacement value of full-time vacant faculty positions for 2002-03. They can use these funds to secure term or sessional teaching assistance or for other appropriate academic activities within the department/college, including specialized teaching or research activity, additional start-up grants for new faculty, or sponsorship of a conference, workshop or lecture series.
4. All other unforeseen opportunities that arise over the course of the next 12 – 18 months will require special permission from the Provost's Office to pursue. Appointments arising from these opportunities will be limited in number and authorized only where a compelling case can be made to the Provost.
5. Faculty positions with a July 1, 2004 starting date will be approved through the Integrated Planning process. Requests for positions that have been received positively through the initial review stages (i.e. before final approval of college plans) will be authorized for advertising on a "subject to budgetary approval" basis in the summer of 2003. Final approval for hiring will come as a result of approval of college plans.

4. Resource and Infrastructure Implications

The priorities we have identified in the Strategic Directions are ambitious; they will require an equally ambitious commitment to securing the resources necessary to achieve them and using our existing resources effectively. The trends in public funding indicate that large-scale government reinvestment in post-secondary education is unlikely, and we will therefore need to be creative in identifying ways to support our priorities. The Provost's Academic Agenda presentation outlined some preliminary measures meant to initiate a discussion on possible sources of funding for this purpose. No item on the list of "Critical Design Elements" provoked more comment than the creation of an Academic Priorities Fund. The idea that this Fund might have multiple sources, including existing base budget contributions from colleges and units, was a source of significant debate.

Since that initial presentation, Deans' Council and the Budget Committee, among others, have discussed the creation of the Fund and made some alternative proposals. Outlined below is the arrangement that enjoys the greatest support. It is the version that we will put in place beginning in 2002-03, with a phase-in that lasts for the entire initial planning cycle.

Academic Priorities Fund

This will be a Fund managed by the Provost's Office under the direction of the Provost's Committee on Integrated

Planning. It will be used to resource the college and unit plans and the University-wide priorities identified as part of the planning process. The Fund will be created through a combination of funding sources including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Three million dollars from the Saskatchewan Universities Funding Mechanism (SUFM). The Board of Governors has approved a recommendation from the President on the use of these funds for this purpose and funds have been set aside, starting in 2002-03.
2. A portion (to be determined) of any future operating grant increases from the Provincial Government starting in 2003-04. This assumes, of course, that there will, in fact, be increases in base budget funding from the province.
3. A portion (to be determined) of future tuition fee increases starting in 2003-04. We do not anticipate that significant funds will be provided from this source because most of our programs are at the national norm tuition fee levels currently. We do, however, anticipate the recruitment and retention of more international students and a portion of those tuition fees will be linked to this Fund.
4. A portion (to be determined) generated from investment income over and above expectations (assuming such income actually exists).

The Academic Priorities Fund is intended to permit us to make fundamental changes, many of which will occur within colleges and units, and to redistribute resources to activities most closely aligned with the University's stated goals. We anticipate that in the process many colleges will consolidate programs, eliminate others, and request support to strengthen those that remain. With certain critical exceptions, the Academic Priorities Fund will be used to create much needed critical mass, not to spawn a new set of under-resourced fledgling programs. Although some changes will involve new programs, Integrated Planning has more to do with new ideas than with new programs.

Please note that items 2 – 4 above involve reducing the funds available to carry on the regular business of the institution. This regular business includes the paying of salary increases, the absorption of operating costs of new buildings, and the

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management of the "shocks" mentioned above. It will be critical to build a Fund that is large enough to steer change, but not so large as to cripple the institution's capacity to carry on its regular business.

For these reasons, and given that we have little experience with funding our own priorities, at the outset it will be important to take a cautious approach to the distribution of funds from the Academic Priorities Fund. Resources will be available on the following basis:

1. **One-Time-Only (OTO) Funding.** A portion of the Fund will be set aside to fund selected projects, innovative ideas, and programs on a one-time-only basis. This will give us an opportunity to maintain flexibility by supporting specific endeavours or discrete projects. It will also give us an opportunity to evaluate our investments prior to considering further funding support.
2. **Annual Funding with Conditions.** A portion of the Fund will be set aside for annual allocation to units with reporting conditions and potential for additional annual funding. These funds would be used primarily for activities which are anticipated to span more than one year but which will be required to report on outcomes prior to obtaining additional funding.
3. **Cycle Funding.** A portion of the Fund will be set aside to fund initiatives for the length of the planning cycle. One of the big issues we currently grapple with is our inability to move resources from one initiative to another. This funding arrangement will provide us with an opportunity to assess performance prior to committing resources permanently to initiatives that may have a short life span.
4. **Ongoing Funding.** A portion of the Fund will be set aside to fund long-term commitments, usually in the form of faculty positions or initiatives arising out of University-wide planning activities, aimed directly at supporting the University's stated priorities.

5. **Administrative Units Funding Envelope.** A portion of the Fund will be available to fund measures aimed at increasing the University's public accountability.

Specific details on the Academic Priorities Fund will be shared with the University community as the college and unit plans are developed and as the review and approval process is initiated.

Implications for capital planning, physical infrastructure and space

Setting our sights on increasing our research capacity, growing our undergraduate and graduate programs selectively, and providing an improved student experience will require us to consider how we currently deploy our physical assets in support of the University's academic mission. Integrated planning, as described elsewhere in this document, means the bringing together of resources, operating and capital, and other resources, to support our stated priorities. We have traditionally focused almost exclusively on the operating fund. To achieve true integration, we will need to bring our capital budgets, particularly our major capital budget allocation, in line with the priorities assigned as a result of plan approvals.

The President's Strategic Directions statement identifies enriching the resources and physical environment of the campus as one of the supporting conditions for achieving our goals. The University of Saskatchewan was created as one of the finest, most inspirational campuses in Canada and we must work hard to preserve the built legacy we have inherited from our predecessors. But *Renewing the Dream* also indicates that a setting for scholarly excellence must also

include viewing facilities and infrastructure – such as up-to-date classrooms and laboratories, effective and innovative information technology, and a major research library – as keys to our future success.

In the past few years, we have committed to a classroom upgrading project that is now beginning to meet student and faculty expectations. But we have major challenges on this front. According to recent audits, our deferred maintenance backlog is now approaching \$150 million, slightly above the national norm. At the same time, our annual cyclical renewal and replacement requirements are \$13 – 15 million per year (we currently receive no funding for this from the Province) and current operating deficiencies are approximately \$3 million per year. Clearly funding to ensure that we protect the University's built infrastructure, currently estimated as a \$1 billion public asset, must be obtained. The President's Strategic Directions statement has pointed us toward increasing our commitment to research. This will have major implications for the infrastructure support, both human and physical, that will be required to achieve our goals. College and administrative unit plans will need to point out potential areas for synergy and development.

Finally, in our move towards multi-year planning, we will need to think more creatively and with more forethought about our space needs, including possibilities for capital projects and major building projects that ensure we meet our aspirations. We will need to draw on the general community for advice about where our priorities should be and we will need to develop opportunities for discussion of projects and conceptual plans well in advance of current time frames. Most important, we will need to match our institutional priorities to approved priorities identified through the college and unit planning process.

5. Evaluation

We need to be able to assess the progress that we have made against our stated goals and to identify areas for improvement. At the University of Saskatchewan we already have some experience with evaluation processes. Council approved the Systematic Program Review process in 1999 as one tool for evaluating program quality. We regularly subject many of our programs to accreditation reviews, and we often require reviews of administrative units based on perceived problems and selected issues.

With the advent of Integrated Planning, we need to move our evaluation tools to a different plane and ask whether the University is achieving its stated goals. The Board of Governors, in particular, is very interested in learning about progress over the course of the planning cycle, as well as evaluating this cycle against future cycles. We outline below some possibilities.

Performance Measures. Most universities view performance measures with suspicion and recent publications express a healthy skepticism when it comes to adopting a business-like approach to assessing academic activities. Nevertheless, the general public, politicians, students, concerned parents and alumni are demanding that we demonstrate that our efforts produce continuous improvement. To do this will require that we develop a set of measures or indicators of success, which we regularly refer to and which highlight progress over the course of this, and subsequent, planning cycles.

The college and unit planning templates require that a set of performance measures be developed that are suitable to the precise mission of these units. Over the course of the next year, the Integrated Planning Office will develop, in collaboration with Council, Deans and others, a set of baseline performance measures highlighting our existing activities. We will begin to apply these measures as we evaluate plans and proposals from colleges and units. In addition, the Integrated Planning Office will develop a set of performance indicators by which we can compare our success at the University or institutional level. Global measures should pay attention to those that have been adopted at the college and unit levels.

Benchmarking. It makes sense that as we develop performance measures to evaluate our success over the planning period, we also identify a set of universities by which we measure our progress at the institutional level. We are all painfully familiar with the most public assessment of our success – the annual *Maclean's* report on universities. This is a crude comparator, which has been subjected to much scrutiny over the past decade or so as it has developed. In our opinion we need to identify a number of universities, perhaps a handful or more in Canada and abroad, which offer the wide variety of programs that we provide, and against which we can compare ourselves. These need not necessarily be the same universities for all activities. For example, given our diverse program offerings in Aboriginal education, it makes sense for us to compare ourselves with a set of

universities with similar activities. These would not necessarily be the *Maclean's* "medical – doctoral" universities. Similarly, the University of Saskatchewan was established, in the spirit of land grant institutions, with a significant community service mandate. We should consider comparing our progress in this regard against other, similar, universities. Over the course of the coming year, we will need to determine which universities best represent our "peers" and develop measures by which we should compare ourselves to them.

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The University is at a fundamental stage in its development. Our current processes have served us well, but they are not equipped for the new environment in which we find ourselves. We need to do our academic business differently, more openly and with much more concern for the overall priorities of the institution.

The President has challenged us to renew the dream of our founders. Integrated Planning is a key part of that initiative, but it is merely the means. Renewing the dream means learning more about our history and understanding what our founders hoped to create in the University of Saskatchewan. Renewing the dream means adapting our founders' vision to the conditions of a new century and taking the decisions required to ensure the future.

