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An Academic Plan for Brock University

Brock University

INTRODUCTION

In looking toward 2014, the date of the 50th anniversary of Brock University's founding, it is time to take stock, assess our progress, and plan our movement forward.

In 1999, the University set a very deliberate course. It would move towards comprehensive status, intensifying its Research and Graduate Studies activities, and would do so without losing the student-centred focus on which Brock University has built its strong reputation.

Almost a decade later, much has been accomplished. The University has more than doubled its research funding and has expanded its graduate programming almost five-fold to nearly 40 master's and doctoral level programs. It has also maintained its competitive position as a university that focuses on teaching and learning as a basis for all else that it does. Brock University has made significant gains in the area of internationalization, and has expanded co-op education, internships and 'volunteerships' as a means of broadening students' educational experience and deepening the ties of the University to the surrounding community. Extensive faculty renewal has taken place. More research-focused faculty members have been hired across the professorial ranks, and new academic programs have been developed to optimize the research and teaching capacities of the University.

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MOVING FORWARD

In looking to the future, however, much remains to be done. The University must ensure that it maintains its focus on undergraduate education of the highest quality, while sustaining and consolidating the transformations already underway. It must pursue a course that allows it to enhance its distinctiveness while preserving its strengths. Increased research productivity and related research grant increases are essential if the University is to realize its full potential. New graduate programs must continue to be developed and to flourish in response to the multi-dimensional needs of an increasingly complex surrounding society. At the same time, new teaching and learning modes and strategies must be developed and implemented in response to the needs of our students as citizens of an increasingly global and interactive world. In this regard, Brock University must look outward to a greater extent than ever before, pursuing, creating and disseminating knowledge and promoting faculty and student engagement at all levels. The University's goal is to contribute in significant ways to the meaningful transformation of individuals, their communities, and society at large.

VALUES

Our community – and our work with communities beyond ourselves – is built upon specific institutional values:

- integrity as our foundational principle
- freedom of thought and expression
- imaginative enquiry as the source of new knowledge
- commitment to new multidisciplinary modes of thought, creativity and productivity
- the centrality of the student experience
- respect for diversity and inclusiveness
- quality in all that we do

These values inform all of the activities undertaken at Brock University and animate its vision for the future.

VISION

Building upon its reputation for student engagement and collaborative academic experience of the first order, Brock University will take its place on the Canadian and international stage as a leader and innovator in research, teaching and learning.

In so doing, the University will directly enhance the economic, social, cultural, and intellectual lives of the communities around us: Niagara, Ontario, Canada and beyond and will thereby demonstrate the vital ways in which universities of the 21st century can contribute to the betterment of society.

PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The academic framework provided by this document is based on close work with the Deans of each Faculty and Senior Administrators across the University, and on a number of planning assumptions. These include Brock University's intention to address its space shortage through additional construction and its resolve to enhance its resources through increased government support and vigorous fundraising in the private sector.

ACADEMIC DIRECTIONS

In looking forward to its 50th anniversary in 2014, Brock University will focus on five key directions. The University will:

- Develop an institutional culture rooted in pervasive research and creative activity
- Preserve and enhance the quality of undergraduate programs, emphasizing the education of students for leadership, social responsibility and innovation
- Expand graduate and professional programs reflecting the University's research strengths and capacity for innovation, particularly in response to areas of emerging need
- Encourage interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary approaches to research and teaching
- Engage with the community to enhance the economic, social, cultural and intellectual lives of the citizens of Niagara and beyond

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ACADEMIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In addressing the five key Academic Directions that have been identified within the context of the overarching themes of Brock University's Academic Plan – KNOWLEDGE, ENGAGEMENT, TRANSFORMATION – four broad dimensions or areas of focus emerge: **research, graduate studies, teaching and learning** and **community outreach.**

Specific goals and objectives for each have been set out below, along with links to the strategic plans of the seven Faculties and other units whose plans reflect and further develop the objectives encapsulated here.

RESEARCH

Our collective futures are linked through the knowledge we create and share. Globalization for Canada and for Brock University means more than trade and business; it also encompasses creative expression, the state of the environment, and the enhancement of health, well-being and social justice. Brock University's research will make vital contributions to these areas. Without losing sight of the importance of basic and inquiry-based research that is of universal interest and significance, Brock University's faculty and student researchers will be particularly interested in the impact of their work upon the economic, social and cultural development of the Niagara Region as well as the broader provincial, national and international community.

Objectives

To develop a culture rooted in pervasive research and creative activity, Brock University will pursue a variety of strategies to provide substantial and sustained funding for research, to raise the profile of research in all Faculties, to increase linkages with the Faculty of Graduate Studies, to promote cross-disciplinary research and collaborative research partnerships, and to increase the number of international research and development projects led by Brock University researchers. In particular, the University will:

- Ensure that external sponsored research funds increase by a minimum of 15 per cent per year, reaching at least $25 million by 2014
- Create at least one Research Chair in each Faculty by 2014, supported by external funding and/or University endowments
- Increase University support for research by providing startup funds for all new faculty at levels that are competitive in Canada
- Ensure adequate resources for the Library to support expanded scholarly activities
- Ensure adequate resources for information technology to support expanded scholarly activities
- Support expanded commercialization opportunities through the development of appropriate intellectual property agreements
- Detailed Research objectives appear in the strategic plans of the Office of Research Services, the seven Faculties, and the University Library at www. brocku.ca