

December 23, 2012

Dear Members of the Strategic Planning Working Groups,

We had our first meeting of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee on Tuesday December 17. I thought we had a great initial gathering and exchange of ideas. I very much enjoyed the discussion and, in particular, I found it beneficial to hear a wide range of well-considered comments from committee members regarding the challenges and opportunities which lie ahead of us.

The Steering Committee identified a handful of overarching themes (and opportunities for innovation) for our strategic planning. They are:

1. The **identity** of the School; who we are and what distinguishes us from our competitors; how to build on our strengths without spreading ourselves too thin.
2. The **reputation** of the School, among prospective students, employers, the academic community, alumni and donors; our effectiveness in projecting the School's strengths and uniqueness through technology, social media and other mediums, as well as in garnering financial support.
3. The **relevance** of our curriculum in a changing external environment; the types of courses we offer and the ways we teach; the **diversity** and inclusiveness of the internal environment.
4. The **added value and quality** of our degree programs and the cohesiveness of the School as we expand the number of programs and range of activities.
5. The strengths and weaknesses of the School as a place for cutting edge **research**, knowledge creation and the generation of new ideas.
6. The **impact** of our teaching, research and direct engagement in the policy/professional world; the global footprint of our leadership, faculty, alumni and partners.

The overall themes should inform the deliberations of each of our Working Groups. The Working Groups, as they dig deeper into their own area of inquiry, should use these themes as reference points in discussion.

We expect that each Working Group will launch their individual efforts next month, soon after classes begin on January 13. Of course, Working Groups are welcome to commence work before the 13th!

We also request that each Working Group develop a short list of 4-5 major focal points for their specific area of inquiry. We would like a preliminary outline of these focal points by the end of January.

Finally, we have designed a template ("Suggested Guidelines for Working Groups") which we expect each Working Group will use in developing its report. The template is attached.

Should you have questions about any of the above, please feel free to follow up with me, or with Academic Dean Ian Johnstone or Executive Associate Dean Jerry Sheehan.

I look forward to learning more about your thoughts, ideas, suggestions, in the coming weeks and months.

I hope you all have wonderful and relaxing holiday season.

Jim