

# **MEMORANDUM**

**To: Board of Governors**

**From: Amit Chakma, President & Vice-Chancellor**

**Re: Priorities for 2009-10**

**Date: November 18, 2009**

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Over the first few months of my time as President, I have been meeting with individuals and groups on campus, talking to key stakeholders in the wider community and learning as much as I can about this great University and the opportunities and challenges that face us. Based on those consultations and what I have learned so far, I have begun to develop a plan for my own priorities for the next few months and for the next five years to strategically position Western to deal effectively with the opportunities and challenges confronting the post secondary system and to enhance our academic mission through strategic initiatives in the following areas: strategic leadership, students, graduate education and research intensiveness, financial accountability, and external community. In all that we plan to do, we will build on the important work completed thus far in achieving the objectives in the University's existing strategic plan. Following are the goals and objectives I consider critical in the short-term:

## 1. STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

For Western to successfully achieve its goals we must continue to foster a culture of collegiality and respect that has served the University so well for 131 years. To compete in our increasingly global and complex world also requires us to work more collaboratively and in an interdisciplinary fashion, not only across faculties but across institutions.

- Further strengthen and develop our academic community in partnership with faculty and staff
- Raise the University's international profile and reputation through the establishment of one major internationalization initiative
- Strengthen our working relationships with the Affiliated University Colleges through exploration of partnership initiatives to advance mutual goals and objectives
- Plan for a modest expansion in undergraduate enrolment, recognizing that this will necessitate an increasing in housing for students in order to maintain Western's reputation for providing the best student experience
- Continue building a dynamic administrative leadership team

- Establish process for the next strategic planning cycle
- Continue visits with academic and administrative units to understand the opportunities and challenges facing Western and to foster an innovative and entrepreneurial culture
- Actively participate in Council of Ontario Universities' and G-13 universities' advocacy activities that enhance Western's academic mission

## 2. STUDENTS

It is critical that we maintain our focus on providing the "best student experience", retaining top rankings earned in student satisfaction surveys and improve in areas where there is work to be done. One element of reaching our strategic goal of internationalization is increasing the number of international students on our campus.

- Continue to build strong and effective relationships with student leaders on campus
- Explore opportunities to expand study abroad programs
- Set targets for growth in international student enrolment

## 3. GRADUATE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH INTENSITY

The inter-connectedness of graduate education and our ability to increase our research intensity and thereby our national and international research reputations is clear. Strong research programs attract talented graduate students; talented graduate students are essential to innovative research.

- Continue to execute and refine the graduate expansion plans to keep Western on track to meet the provincially approved targets
- Launch the expansion of professional Master's programs with the goal of enhancing Western's reputation
- Establish at least one major research cluster

## 4. FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Achieving our dreams, requires finding ways to support the work of faculty, staff and students. To achieve excellence, we cannot rely entirely on government funding; we must also develop new revenue streams. As a public institution, we are accountable to the people of Ontario and we have a responsibility to ensure funding from both government and donors is spent wisely.

- Ensure the success of the \$500 million Make a Difference Campaign by playing a direct role in ensuring the foundational pieces are in place and annual Campaign results are on target

- Initiate planning for the next long-range budget cycle that will support the aspirations of the University while recognizing the economic challenges universities are facing
- Initiate the development of an income diversification strategy, including non-government sources, to provide new revenue streams
- Provide oversight to the major capital projects to ensure their completion on time and within budget

## 5. EXTERNAL COMMUNITY

While our university will be increasingly focused on expanding our influence nationally and internationally, Western's roots run deep in the local community. Working together with our community partners, there is much that the City, Middlesex County, the region of Southwestern Ontario and the University can achieve for our mutual benefit. We should also recognize that, beyond any individual projects that may be initiated, the strongest contribution we make to external communities is our alumni – intelligent, educated, dedicated citizens.

- Initiate at least one major collaborative project with the City
- Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for strengthening government relations at all levels
- Develop a plan to enhance the connection to our graduates by engaging Alumni in systematic and structured ways
- Continue visits with alumni, friends and other stakeholders to share with them Western's ambitions and the role they can play to help achieve them

I look forward to working with members of the university community in the coming months to realize these goals and objectives and thank the Board for its ongoing support.