



YORK
UNIVERSITY

4700 KEELE STREET, DOWNSVIEW, ONTARIO M3J 1P3

THE PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION
ON GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

April 20, 1977

Framework for the Future

The Commission on Goals and Objectives began work in January, 1976 in order to suggest new goals and objectives that could guide the University through the difficult years ahead, while consolidating and enhancing its role as a first-class academic institution. Even before I joined York University, members of this community spoke to me about the importance of rekindling the spark which brought about at York a truly innovative environment. For the past three years, our colleagues have urged upon me the importance of agreeing upon some basic new directions to guide our future and establishing a new organizational framework as a solution to some of our current difficulties. Throughout the Commission's various hearings and discussions, there has been virtual unanimity in the notion that fundamental changes were required in York University and that the community was looking to the Commission to provide the prerequisite leadership. That is what we have sought to do in the accompanying Report.

As President, I believe that the basic organization and directions contained in the Commission's Report will provide the framework for the future within which our academic community can pursue the goals of excellence to which we all aspire. York University began with some basic decisions about its shape and function which could only be tested by experience. Today, once again, we require a willingness to commit our future to a new course. Acceptance of this framework will permit York - its members and its institutions - to carry on with the process of academic development which we must have in order to withstand the serious pressures of the next few years and provide a firm foundation for the next decade and longer.

There will be details which will appeal to some less than others but the Commission never thought that it would satisfy all of our aspirations. Throughout our work, it has been our foremost concern to acquire and keep constantly before us a composite picture of the University as a whole. In turn, it is the interest of the University as a whole which we believe will be well served by pursuing our particular goals within this general framework.

The following principles underline the recommendations of the Report:

1. The Commission acknowledges the position of central importance in York's curricula occupied by interdisciplinary studies and wishes York's strength in general education to be publicly reflected in its academic organization and degree programmes. At the same time, the Commission feels that each student should be allowed to pursue his chosen course of study at all levels, subject to degree requirements as specified by the major department and the college or faculty; therefore, general education should cease to be a University requirement, and its prescription should be at the discretion of the academic units who have responsibility for the student's degree programme.

(Recommendations 1, 2, 3, and 7)

2. The University should place increased emphasis on scholarship and research, while maintaining its commitment to teaching of the highest quality. This can only be done by re-allocating the University's human resources, such that fewer courses are offered and larger lecture sections (particularly at the first year level) are offered by the most able lecturers, thus freeing up more time for graduate instruction and research.

(Recommendations 5, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33-40 incl.)

3. (a) The College system should be given an opportunity to serve the function for which it was originally intended. In order that there may be an academic basis for the Colleges, the Commission is suggesting that the present system be replaced by a realignment of academic departments reporting to academic officers. At the same time, the Commission believes that the present Faculty of Arts should be structurally re-organized in smaller academic, administrative, and physical units, in order to encourage students and faculty members in its departments to develop a sense of collegiality and to promote academic and social activities amongst themselves.
- (b) The Commission believes that the Faculty of Environmental Studies should more appropriately be run as a graduate programme, and as such would add greatly to the academic strength and ambiance of the grouping the Commission has proposed for the College of Social and Environmental Studies.

(Recommendations 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 24, 25, and 26)

4. The Commission recommends that there be two broad academic groupings in the University under the headings of "colleges" and "professional faculties," both headed by a senior academic/administrative officer responsible for co-ordinating the use of human, physical, and financial resources within that unit.

(Recommendations 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21
22, and 23)

5. In order for effective planning to take place on a continuous basis, a regular programme of review and assessment should be instituted, and administrative structures should be re-organized as appropriate.

(Recommendations 41-46 incl., 90-102 incl.)

6. In seeking to foster an attitude of communal interest in its members, the University should make every effort to create a pleasant and stimulating environment for learning and working.

(Recommendations 47-84 incl.)

7. The University should expand the application of its physical and human resources to community service.

(Recommendations 85-89 incl.)

Recommendations 4 and 10 have been designated for further study by other bodies.

In conclusion, I wish publicly to record the debt which I feel and, I believe, we all owe to my fellow Commissioners. It could be said that the President, in working with the Commission, is merely fulfilling his regular function as "chief academic officer," albeit by moonlight as well as daylight. But for two senior professors, one full-time student, and a young housewife and mother to have devoted such extraordinary time and energy to this project speaks volumes for the devotion so characteristic of members of the York community.

In saluting them, I also acknowledge the faithful support provided by Dr. George Bell, Executive Vice-President, Professor William C. Found and the members of his research team, the Chairmen and members of the four Task Forces, the successive Executive Secretaries, Michael Scott and Barbara Abercrombie, our Secretary, Peggy Cowley, and finally, those many individuals both inside and outside the University whose input and insight provided the basis of our Report.

Yours faithfully,



H. Ian Macdonald
President