



Faculty Transition:

Creating a new Faculty comprising the humanities, social sciences and related professional programs.

Issued by the Transition Steering Committee, January 15, 2008

1.1 GENERAL

What exactly is happening?

In line with the University Academic Plan (UAP) and the will of Senate, as of July 1, 2009, the Atkinson Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies and the Faculty of Arts - both at the Keele campus will be dissolved, to be replaced by one new Faculty comprising the humanities, social sciences and related professional programs.

Why are we doing this?

To achieve the benefits and synergies from the creation of the most comprehensive range of interdisciplinary academic programs and researchers in social sciences, humanities and related professional programs in Canada.

What are the key benefits?

- The development of a dynamic learning environment that gives students interested in these areas maximum choice in program and course selection and the flexibility to transfer between programs
- A concentration of innovative graduate programs in the humanities, social sciences and related professional areas
- The ability to support, expand and intensify world-class, interdisciplinary research
- The amalgamation of duplicate programs to increase clarity and coherence for students.

Where did this idea come from?

- The UAP calls upon the University to ensure that it has the best structure and units to support its priorities, which include:
- the expansion and intensification of research
- graduate growth and innovation
- improved student experience and dynamic interdisciplinary environment and delivers clarity, coherence and choice to students

After many wide-ranging discussions, members of the Senate's Academic Policy and Planning Committee concluded that merging the Faculty of Arts and the Atkinson Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies would help the University to achieve these priorities. The proposal was subsequently approved by the Senate and presented to the Board of Governors.

How did we get here?

Atkinson began as a Faculty dedicated to part-time education for mature students, typically after 5 and in the summer, and Arts concentrated on those students who came directly from high school and completed their undergraduate education primarily in fall-winter, during the day and in a 4-year timeframe. As things have evolved, some of Atkinson's programs are offered during the day and accept students directly from high-school. In the same vein, Arts has many part-time and mature students (as do other faculties across the campus). The blurring of the mandates of these Faculties led to an extensive review and created an opportunity to consolidate these two strong Faculties into one new Faculty defined by its academic offering rather than by the kind of student the previous Faculties once attracted or the time of day or seasonality of their programs.

So what principles is the restructuring based on?

- Clarity in relation to our academic mission
- Enhancement of the research culture and profile
- Advancement of graduate education
- Enhancement of the student experience

The restructuring is based on the principles of coherence and clarity and an understanding that the new Faculty will be built upon the principle of the fundamental importance of research and the creation and dissemination of new knowledge. The new Faculty's mandate will be clear and comprehensible both internally and externally. In practical terms, this means that similar or identical programs are not offered in different faculties but rather only in one place so that the university and the student know logically exactly where each program fits and why.

What is the timetable for planning and implementation?

The new Faculty will open its doors as of July 1, 2009. Academic timelines are paramount, providing the critical path for planning; there are parallel timelines to guide the creation of internal administrative structures in the new Faculty and the development of support structures external to the Faculty. Some key academic milestones leading up to the opening are as follows:

- November 1, 2007: determination of unit structures and programs in the new Faculty

- Spring 2008: Senate approval of program/degree requirements for new Faculty, following collegial deliberation, and of disestablishment of the Faculty of Arts and the Atkinson Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies to coincide with opening of the new Faculty
- Spring 2008: search for a Dean of the new Faculty begins
- Fall 2008: recruitment initiatives in place (e.g., Ontario Universities Fair)
- Spring 2009: student advising in place

Is this business as usual under a new name?

No. Together we are creating something new. It is a historic opportunity to create a new Faculty for the 21st century university environment in line with the priorities established in the University Academic Plan.

Is this one faculty swallowing the other?

No. Both faculties will officially be disestablished effective with the opening of the new, consolidated Faculty on July 1, 2009.

So it's a merger?

It's much more than a merger. It is a chance to fashion a brand new Faculty. Thus it is a unique occasion to re-shape the University's future in York's 50th year along the lines of the UAP.

Is this a cost-cutting exercise?

No. The key motivation here is academic, not financial. The new Faculty will be organized in such a way as to eliminate duplication and deliver coherence and clarity to students. However, if the new Faculty's creation generates greater efficiencies in costs or time, those resources will be re-invested in the new Faculty to reflect UAP priorities such as the student experience, research, and graduate studies.

Who is drawing up these plans?

Several working groups have been struck under the direction of the Vice-President Academic. These committees are broadly-based and are meeting frequently. The mandate and members of each committee can be seen at www.yorku.ca/vpa/transition. Committee members can be contacted with regard to issues that may arise during the transition process.

Are the unions being consulted?

Yes. Regular labour-management meetings are taking place with all York's affected unions.

How do I keep up to date with the consultations?

A special website has been created at www.yorku.ca/vpa/transition to keep the entire community informed of any issues that may arise. There will also be regular updates in Y-file and Y-Life (for students).

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Where can I send comments and suggestions?

These can be directed to the VP Academic's office via e-mail to transition@yorku.ca

1.2 RESEARCH

How will the creation of the new Faculty benefit research at York?

The creation of the new Faculty will provide a critical opportunity to expand and intensify research across many of York's humanities and social science departments and related professional programs through a focus on increased participation and performance and through harmonized and focused complement planning. It will also provide an opportunity to expand research into new areas through the development of visionary interdisciplinary research programs and cross-cutting research clusters. The new Faculty will also help the University to provide needed research infrastructure and deliver the most effective, leading-edge and efficient research support services to faculty members by re-investing the financial savings found through the merger into the new Faculty.

1.3 STUDENTS

As a student will this affect my degree?

The short answer is no. Students currently enrolled in degree programs will be 'grandparented' which means that they will be allowed to complete these degrees with the same rules and degree requirements that exist now. Degree designations (e.g., BA, BAS) will not change. One of the goals of the restructuring, however, is to consolidate programs offered in *both* Arts and Atkinson such as English or Sociology. This will inevitably require some changes as the curricula and requirements from two programs

are integrated into one program. The aim is to provide stronger programs with greater course selection and scheduling flexibility for students. Programs that are offered only in Arts or Atkinson such as Anthropology or Administrative Studies will move intact into the new Faculty.

How will the new Faculty support the needs of graduate students?

The Faculty of Graduate Studies, the Research Centres and Faculty-based initiatives will continue to operate as usual during this process and thus graduate students will not be directly affected. However, restructuring will better align the undergraduate programs with the graduate programs rather than having separate undergraduate programs in many of the humanities and social sciences. This stronger alignment will allow for better planning of undergraduate and graduate courses, and will bring together faculty members and students with common research interests.

What about York's commitment to part-time and mature students?

York remains committed to its diverse student population including a) mature students and b) those students who need or want to study in the evening, on the weekends and/or in the summer. The new Faculty will be providing flexible programming where appropriate so that students from across the University will benefit from Atkinson's rich history and experience in teaching part-time and mature students in accessible formats.

So is York losing the Atkinson name?

No. As of August 1, 2007, York has established the Atkinson Centre for Mature and Part-time Students whose mandate is specifically to advocate for the distinct needs of these students and to enhance the quality of their academic experience. The Atkinson Centre is located in the ground floor of the Ross Building at 111 Central Square, tel: # 55770; web site <http://www.yorku.ca/acmaps/>

How will I know what courses I am supposed to take in the new Faculty?

When planning the courses to complete their programs, continuing students in grandparented programs will be able to refer as necessary to course substitution lists and course credit exclusion lists published on the York Web site, the undergraduate lecture schedule, and the University calendars.

New degree and program requirements for students beginning in Fall/Winter 2009-2010 will be made available as of February 2009 and published in the Calendar in May 2009.

Will the existing student-focused initiatives continue in the new Faculty?

The best practices for integrating various student-focused initiatives into the new Faculty will continue to evolve through ongoing discussions. Creating a new Faculty presents many unique opportunities to share innovative ideas developed within Atkinson and Arts about how to best support student engagement and success.

What will happen to the currently established Faculty-based student organizations and clubs?

We have been in consultation with student leaders in Arts and Atkinson to discuss this. We believe that the establishment of the new Faculty is an excellent opportunity to incorporate the best of both existing faculties into new student organizations and clubs.

Where will I go for advising and student services such as petitions? What about writing and ESL assistance?

Offices will be set up in the new Faculty to provide these services; in the meantime, students will continue to be served by their current Faculty. We are working to ensure that the level and nature of writing assistance and ESL provided to students will not be diminished as a result of restructuring, and to better coordinate access to these services across the university.

Will I continue to be eligible for scholarships and bursaries?

Students will continue to be eligible for various kinds of financial support at the University and Faculty level, although the criteria for some Faculty-specific awards may need to be adjusted to reflect the new Faculty structure.

I am a student representative of my Faculty Council or Senate; will I be able to continue?

Faculty Councils in Arts and Atkinson will be disestablished when the Faculties are disestablished, and a Faculty Council will be created in the new Faculty at the same time. There will certainly be student representation on the Council and its committees, and provisions will also be made for student representation on Senate for the new Faculty's students. The details are being worked on and students will be consulted and informed along the way.

What about College affiliation?

Discussions in relation to College affiliation are occurring with the Council of College Communities. Students in the new Faculty will be affiliated with a College. We are aware of these issues, and they are being considered as part of transition planning. More information will be available at a later date.

What about health and dental plans?

Full time students will receive under the York Federation of Students plan. We are working with our student government partners to address part-time student needs.

What will the name of the new Faculty be?

This has yet to be decided by Senate. A name is expected to be confirmed in the inter term of '08.

What happens to the old Faculties?

The Faculty of Arts and the Atkinson Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies will be dissolved. Programs and courses previously offered through these Faculties will be taught through the new Faculty. Where similar programs were offered in both Faculties, programs and courses will need to be consolidated. Students currently in Arts and Atkinson will be moved automatically into the programs in the new Faculty.

What degrees will be offered in the new Faculty?

All of the degrees currently offered through the Faculty of Arts and the Atkinson Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies will be offered in the new Faculty. Current students will automatically be moved to the same degree programs. Students pursuing graduate studies associated with Atkinson of Arts will continue to receive support through their graduate programs.

What will appear on the diploma and transcript upon graduation?

York University issues degrees, such as Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Administrative Studies, Bachelor of Social Work, etc. The diploma parchment issued by York University notes the degree prominently, and the faculty name in smaller print. Degrees offered by the new Faculty will be the same as in Arts and Atkinson Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies, except that the new Faculty's name will be in smaller print. The transcript issued after graduation makes note of the degree and program title (including majors, minors, streams, etc.). Students who completed the Marketing Stream for the BAS (for example) will have this noted on their transcript.

What does it mean to complete a program under grandparented rules?

The University adheres to the principle of grandparenting which allows students to complete programs and the degrees under the rules in place at the time they began their studies at York. Students beginning or switching to programs in the new Faculty will follow the newly established rules.

Will current students have to apply to the new Faculty?

Students currently registered in the Faculty of Arts or the Atkinson Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies will automatically be moved to the new Faculty. It will not be necessary to do anything further.

Students from a Faculty other than Arts or Atkinson will be able to apply transfer to programs in the new Faculty for the Fall/Winter 2009-2010 session.

How will I know what courses I am supposed to take in the new Faculty?

When planning the courses to complete their programs, continuing students in grandparented programs will be able to refer as necessary to course substitution lists and course credit exclusion lists published on the York Web site, the undergraduate lecture schedule, and the University calendars.

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Will I need to repeat courses to meet my major requirements, if, for example, the year level changes or the number changes in the new Faculty?

In keeping with grandparenting principles, previously taken courses of grandparented programs will be honoured by programs in the new Faculty. To assist with this, course substitution lists will be available.

Will I have trouble enrolling if there are fewer courses being offered?

There is no plan to offer fewer courses in the new Faculty. Enough courses and sections will be available to meet the demand of all new and continuing students. Where overlapping or cross-listed courses are consolidated, additional sections will be offered.

Will there still be evening and summer classes?

Yes, evening and summer classes will be offered.

Will internet and correspondence courses still be available?

Yes. York will continue its commitment to the flexible and innovative delivery of courses.

Can I be co-registered in the Faculty of Education and the new Faculty?

Yes.

Where will I go for advising in the new Faculty?

Advisers for the new Faculty will be available in March 2009 to help students prepare for enrolment, whether they are new students or continuing students. The locations will be published when they are available. In addition to central services in the new Faculty, students will receive support from their program area.

Will the reputation of my degree still be as good as it was? Will these changes impact my opportunity to go on to graduate school, law school, or MBA programs? Will employers recognize degrees from the new Faculty?

Programs within Arts and Atkinson have built strong reputations for excellence. This is due in large part to the quality of the professors, programs and graduates from these Faculties. The new Faculty will build on these strengths going forward.

Degrees are granted by York University. Graduate schools, professional schools and employers will continue to recognize the excellent quality of York's undergraduate programs and graduate programs.

See also:

Faculty Transition, November 1, 2007, from the Transition Steering Committee
<http://vpacademic.yorku.ca/facultytransition/index.php>