

To Ryerson students, faculty and staff:

Earlier this week the Provost's Commission on Academic Structures submitted its third and final report to my office. This report is in the form of a White Paper - a set of suggestions for Ryerson's academic structure that the Commission believes could support the university's growth and success in the future. The White Paper, as well as background on the Provost's Commission on Academic Structures, is available to the Ryerson community at

http://www.ryerson.ca/provost/planning/planning_initiatives/academic_structure/

I want to thank all members of the Commission, whose names are listed below, for their time and commitment to Ryerson's academic future and vision. These members provided broad representation from all across our community, ensuring that the Commission considered a diversity of perspectives and opportunities. In particular, I want to thank Commission Chair Maurice Yeates, Dean of Graduate Studies, for his leadership and wisdom throughout the Commission process. We are very fortunate that Maurice, with his depth of academic experience and deep understanding of the university sector and of Ryerson, agreed to lead an exercise that will help define our future.

The White Paper is the culmination of hundreds of hours of work, dozens of consultations and meetings by Commission members, four campus-wide town halls with a total attendance of about 280, and more than 50 written submissions. A Discussion Paper outlining the Commission's research, process and evaluation criteria was released on September 21, 2009, followed by a Green Paper on November 29, 2009, which presented nine potential scenarios for academic structure. Both of these papers were shared with the campus-at-large. This has been one of the most extensive academic consultations undertaken at Ryerson and it has continued the momentum of inquiry, debate and open dialogue that we began in 2007 as we developed our Academic Plan - *Shaping Our Future*.

Over the next several weeks, I will review the Commission's report and carefully consider the information provided. Ryerson's Senate will review the White Paper at a special meeting on February 9, 2010. The Senate discussions will assist me in my assessment of the structural scenarios presented and, as part of an ongoing consultation process, I will be meeting with individual faculties to hear their views.

No decisions have been made and there will be no immediate changes to the structure of Ryerson's academic faculties or programs. Any such changes would occur in phases, implemented over many months and possibly years, and only after further consultation with students, faculty and staff, and approval by Ryerson's Senate and Board of Governors.

Academic evolution is natural and inevitable in today's universities. It has been more than 40 years since change was made to Ryerson's academic structure. Today, we have the advantage of considering change not out of necessity, but out of opportunity. And those opportunities are endless. Thanks to the work done by the Provost's Commission on Academic Structures and the input of so many Ryerson community members, we are in a better position to understand how our academic structure can help us seize opportunities now and in the future.

Please join me in thanking the Commission members for a comprehensive and thoughtful review and report. I look forward to engaging in further consultation with students, faculty and staff, prior to sharing my formal response to the Commission's White Paper later this year.

Alan Shepard
Provost and Vice President Academic

Members of the Provost's Commission on Academic Structure:

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