

**UNIVERSITY OF KING'S COLLEGE
STRATEGIC ENROLMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN
JUNE 26, 2014**

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INTRODUCTION

The University of King's College has been attracting extraordinary students to its programmes for 225 years. In the 1970's, with the introduction of both the School of Journalism and the Foundation Year Programme, our student population expanded exponentially, attracting many students from Ontario and growing numbers from the west in addition to our Maritime base. In the past fifteen years, the College has increased by 35% and has enjoyed higher course participation by both King's and Dalhousie students in our unique academic offerings and style of learning.

King's approach to recruiting has always been to build one-to-one relationships with potential and enrolled students and to foster its positive word-of-mouth reputation through student, alumni and parent testimonials.

Over the years, however, enrolment targets have grown, demographics shifted and the pool of students is in decline, while the competition among undergraduate universities has increased.

Although our primary markets have expanded to include Nova Scotia, Toronto and Vancouver, King's does not currently generate the number of applications needed to comfortably meet admission targets or achieve a waitlist ideal. Additionally, our retention rates fluctuate and need to be stabilized to provide a greater degree of assurance for financial and academic planning.

The College's Strategic Plan identified recruitment and retention as important priorities for King's and called upon the College to develop a Strategic Enrolment Management Plan. To that end, members of the Enrolment Management Committee interviewed faculty, students, staff and others for their perspectives, reviewed current and historic enrolment data and read prevailing literature on recruitment and retention theory and strategies. This document draws on the Committee's observations and findings.

THE CORE OF THE PLAN: TEN PRIORITIES

This plan looks to the future and our vision for a College easily able to attract bright and fully engaged students whose time at King's will be both formative and fulfilling.

Through its review, the Committee identified ten interdependent recruitment and retention variables requiring attention. Through the development of this plan, these variables have become ten priorities for action, each with identified goals, strategies for reaching those goals, and methods of assessment. These items have not been prioritised as progress must be made on all ten fronts. (Note: Following endorsement by the Board, additional metrics, timelines and oversight for specific activities will be assigned).

- Increase awareness for and an understanding of our flagship programmes - FYP and Journalism.
- Increase awareness for and understanding of King's potential as a four-year undergraduate degree option.
- Strengthen scholarship and financial aid offerings.
- Grow international enrolment.
- Increase the diversity of the student population to better reflect the diversity of Canadian society.
- Strengthen academic advising and provide early intervention for students in need.
- Strengthen mental health programming on and off-campus.
- Strengthen the experience of college life for off-campus day students.
- Strengthen career supports and professional development.
- Strengthen relationship with Dalhousie through clarification of shared benefits increased enrolments.

Although these priorities have a high degree of interdependency, they have been loosely grouped under recruitment or retention.

RECRUITMENT

1. Increase awareness for and an understanding of our flagship programmes - FYP and Journalism.

The goal: To raise King's visibility and communicate effectively who we are and what we do, to the right audience, at the right time, and in the right locations.

How we will reach the goal: King's resources, both human and financial, have limitations, requiring our recruiting efforts to be resourceful, creative, unique, and strategic.

- We will maximize our 'small College' strength by reinforcing 'the personal touch' in all our correspondence with prospective students.
- We will enhance the way we track our relationships and all points of contact with our prospective students.
- We will review and strengthen our relationship with 'best fit' high schools (private and public) through increased contact, MOU's, guest lectures, and student visits.
- The teacher / counsellor database will be expanded and our relationships strengthened through increased contact and familiarization tours.
- The cycle of recruitment activity will begin earlier in the academic year and important dates will be set a year in advance.
- King's will develop and host a weekend high school leadership conference 'on the meaning and value of an independent mind'.
- The recently developed Strategic Communications Plan will be implemented, creating consistent messaging across all communications platforms, including:
 - the website (will be redeveloped to improve content and functionality);
 - social media (we will create campaigns);
 - print materials (we will update content and improve visuals);
 - imagery (we will procure professional photography services);
 - video (we will create new works, balancing professional high production value videos along with student produced projects); and
 - an integrated marketing campaign (as funds allow, we will pay to place select advertising in highly strategic markets).
- We will increase awareness of King's as a destination for science students.
- We will promote the innovative nature and leading edge programming of our School of Journalism. (Journalism has changed but it's far from dead.)
- The value of a liberal arts degree will be thoughtfully articulated in a special section of our website and our parent page(s) will be strengthened.
- We will perfect the way we describe our relationship with Dalhousie to best represent to prospective students the breadth of their degree options.
- Opportunities to partner with Dalhousie in recruitment efforts will be explored and maximized.
- We will work to simplify the application process for prospective students while maintaining our ability to predict the likelihood of their academic success.

How we will know we have succeeded: King's applicant pool will have grown to exceed admission targets and we will have a waiting list for late entry (800+ applications for FYP).

2. Increase awareness for and understanding of King's potential as a four-year undergraduate degree option.

The goal: To raise participation rates in the combined honours programmes.

How we will reach the goal:

- We will hone our promotion of each upper-year programme as a distinct and attractive opportunity – King's quality and community enhancing a Dalhousie Science/Arts degree.
- We will hone our promotion of the recently introduced minors.
- Programme renewal as described in the recently produced Academic Plan will be promoted (as implemented) to inform students about changes and enhancements to the upper-year programmes.
- Course descriptions will be reviewed to ensure that they clearly describe the offering.
- Faculty (including Teaching Fellows) web pages will be revisited to provide the member's most recent academic credentials, and a sense of the experience we offer at King's through faculty video clips and interviews.

How we will know we have succeeded: Enrolment in Combined Honours will have increased, b) the number of King's Science students increased, c) the number of students in upper-year classes increased, and d) the number of Dalhousie science students in HOST as honours increased (Note for Board: Targets to be developed with implementation plan in consultation with Directors).

3. Strengthen scholarship and financial aid offerings.

The goal: King's will successfully compete with other institutions for the brightest young minds; will improve accessibility for students whose families cannot provide for their education; and will offer a variety of financial supports for students and families who are caught just above the loan eligibility threshold.

How we will reach the goal: King's has one of the largest (per capita) endowments in Canada, but significant enrolment growth, increased competitiveness among universities due to shrinking populations, decreased government support for higher education, low interest rates and spotty market returns, have combined to place extraordinary strain on available funds for student assistance.

Through the careful articulation of institutional needs and the help of like-minded donors, King's will work to provide the following.

- An increased number of entrance bursaries and we will encourage four-year renewable terms.
- An increased number of in-course bursaries meeting a larger portion of the student shortfall.
- We will expand bursary eligibility to include a broader cross-section of students, thereby attracting and retaining talented students who are caught in the middle – too much

combined family income to receive a loan, but not enough to save the family from hardship or the student from long hours of paid work in addition to school.

- We will attract more named 'prestige' scholarships and encourage four-year renewable terms.
- Create more named in-course scholarship offerings for the upper year programmes. Example, the "Jane Smith award for EMSP"
- We will encourage new awards for the BJ which often attracts international students.
- We will endow awards for the Masters programmes, the MJ and MFA.
- Alumni and others will be encouraged to provide for team specific Athletics awards and other awards recognising achievement in extra-curricular life and leadership.
- We will develop a 'super bursary' fund that will provide small amounts of discretionary funding to those most in need. This money is intended level the field in the social realm, allowing students with the greatest need to 'decorate' their dorm or buy a beloved sweater from the bookstore.
- We will improve our budgetary advising for students making it more accurate and accessible (e.g. a web-based cost and resource calculator).

How we will know we have succeeded: Through increased fundraising, stewardship and the generosity of our benefactors, King's will have the financial resources required to attract and retain the very best students regardless of their financial circumstances. Our award offerings will be working to raise the profile of the College among potential students, their parents, teachers, advisors, coaches. (Note: Target metric of "financial award per student" with relative allocations to need and merit based awards will be developed with implementation plan following benchmarking research against comparator universities)

4. Grow international enrolment.

The goal: King's financial stability rests in part on our ability to attract more international students. Additionally, our academic community and style of teaching will be enhanced through a wider range of perspectives.

How we will reach the goal: Although international students pay higher tuition, they often require support systems that, particularly in small institutions, can strain resources. International students who have already, or could easily, acclimatize to Canadian living and who have already reached a high degree of language competency are best suited for King's.

- We will target international students studying in Maritime high schools. (NSISP)
- We will develop relationships with independent counsellors in the US and School Counsellors and Agents from other countries with English language competency.
- In addition to New England we will potentially expand our efforts to California and Texas.

- We will re-invigorate our recruitment effort in Bermuda and possibly other Caribbean countries (which have no universities)
- As much as possible, we will partner with Dalhousie to expand our reach.
- We will develop an internationalization plan with special focus on post graduate journalism.

How we will know we have succeeded: In five years, 7% of the student population will be international based on the markets noted above, with potential to increase this target following the development of the internationalization plan.

5. Increase the diversity of the student population to better reflect the diversity of Canadian society.

The goal: We will connect with and attract students from diverse backgrounds and will ensure our community is welcoming and supportive. (There are many elements to a diverse community, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, physical abilities, religious beliefs, and socio-economic background, to name a few. King's will strive to be accessible and welcoming to all. For the purpose of this plan, however, diversity is defined as racial and ethnic origins.)

How we will reach the goal: A challenge of our dependence on word-of-mouth recruitment is that new recruits are drawn from similar circles, with the vast majority coming from upper-middle-income north-western-European backgrounds. To mitigate this we will do the following:

- Diversity will be reflected in the every element of the new Strategic Communications Plan.
- We will approach high schools with diverse student populations in a strategic and targeted way as part of our recruitment effort.
- We will employ students and ask for alumni volunteers who are representatives of visible minorities to act as ambassadors.
- Diversity will be addressed as part of the faculty-renewal plan.
- We will recruit King's students to mentor in the Imhotep's Legacy Academy programme.
- We will appoint a faculty member to partner with Imhotep programmes at Dalhousie in response to their expressed interest in HOST and essay content in their curriculum.
- We will regularly seek the advice of members in our community who are representatives of visible minorities.
- We will form a working group to recommend actions that will provide a welcoming and supportive community, and will respond to a (soon to be released) report from Nova Scotia's Labour and Advanced Education on best practice approaches to supporting diversity.

- Address curriculum. Although beyond the mandate of this committee, we believe that emphasizing the diversity already present in the curriculum and incorporating new perspectives will enhance King's appeal to students from non-western backgrounds.
- This plan also calls for increased scholarship and bursary offerings and increased international enrolments. These, too, will be working to support diversity.

How we will know we have succeeded: King's student body will better reflect the ethnic and racial mix of Canada.

RETENTION

6. Strengthen academic advising and provide early intervention for students in need.

The goal: Our students will have easy access to academic advisors and will receive a high level of personal attention.

How we will reach the goal: The transition to second year entails developing new time management skills, programme scheduling, and forays into Dalhousie. Some students need support in discovering their academic path and overcoming barriers (real or perceived).

Academic advising at King's is a "blended model" that combines support from the Registrar's office with faculty guidance. This process will be strengthened in the following ways.

- In the past 5 years, the service expectations of students and their parents have grown. The College will strike a committee to detail an appropriate refocusing to provide a more robust service that meets the needs of our high achieving and interdisciplinary population. That committee will include the Registrar, the Director of FYP, the Associate Director of Student Affairs for FYP, a Journalism Faculty member and one Director of an upper year humanities programme.
- This committee will consider ways to strengthen academic and career development advising. This may include developmental advising, peer mentoring, assistance in identifying and applying for graduate school, professional programmes, and scholarships.
- The Registrar, the Dean of Residence, the Director of FYP and the Associate Director for Student Affairs for FYP will develop interventions to support students to develop core academic skills, particularly in the first term of the FYP.

How we will know we have succeeded: In five years, 96% of students who enter FYP will finish, and an additional 2% who complete their first year at King's return for further study.

7. Strengthen mental health programming on and off-campus.

The goal: To support those who will experience on-going, sporadic, or single episode encounters with mental health during their time at King's and to promote a positive campus climate.

How we will reach the goal: King's will provide access to professional mental health services both through Dalhousie and referral to off campus supports.

- King's will engage with Dalhousie Student Services to develop a strategy to decrease wait times and address the needs for ongoing programmes of treatment.
- A sub-committee of Enrolment Management will be tasked to develop a mental health strategy with particular emphasis for supports for off-campus students. The sub-committee will include the Dean of Residence, the Director and Associate Director of Student Affairs for FYP, the Registrar or designate, the university chaplain, and student representatives in consultation with Dalhousie counselling.

How we will know we have succeeded: Our students have multiple access points for referral and support that protects confidentiality on the King's campus. Professional counselling through Dalhousie's indispensable services provides fast access to initial screenings and short wait times for further appointments.

A positive mental health environment prevails on campus and our tightly knit community of high academic achievers is as supportive, as it is competitive and intense. This positive environment is fostered in College life through Athletics, the work of the Chaplain, the Chapel community, the music programme and student societies.

8. Strengthen the experience of college life for off-campus day students.

The goal: Successfully integrate day-students into campus life, with special attention to the first few weeks of first-year.

How we will reach the goal:

- We will survey our off campus student population to better understand their needs and wishes.
- We will work closely with the KSU/Orientation Committee to promote inclusion of off campus students in orientation.
- We will encourage off campus students to be Nova Scotia Ambassadors for those who are new to the province.
- We will explore a partnership with Dalhousie and other metro universities for evening shuttle services for off campus students.
- Activities and amenities for early morning FYP commuters will be introduced.
- Wardroom renovations will provide a place of pride in which to 'hang-out'. The space will also provide a dedicated food prep area with microwave and bottle filler. The Day

Students' Society will be publically acknowledged through signage thanking them for their extraordinary contribution to the Wardroom Renovation Fund.

How we will know we have succeeded: Day student retention rates are high, there is evidence that day students are participating more in extra-curricular activities, and the Day-Students' Society is satisfied that life is good for its members.

9. Strengthen career supports and professional development.

The goal: Through the provision of information, advice, and alumni examples, King's will help to minimize the natural anxiety that young adults (and their parents) have about their future.

How we will reach the goal: There are two stages of support King's will offer its students. Phase one will involve supports to incoming students and first years, and phase two will support the decisions confronting our upper year students.

Phase one

- Information on the value of a liberal arts degree will be readily available in King's communication materials. (While a King's education is not formally a professional preparatory offering, the professional advantage of a liberal arts degree /science degree, and 'new' journalism will be promoted.)
- Orientation sessions about career development will be provided to our students in first-year: how to make career decisions, the supports available on campus, and clear descriptions of the role of advisors vs a career counsellor and how each can assist at various stages in the process of deciding 'what next'.

Phase two

- We will provide developmental strengths-based advising and access to tools to help students assess their interests, values and abilities and relate these to future directions.
- Extracurricular experiential learning opportunities through service learning and workplace initiatives will be developed.
- We will build on the School of Journalism's successful "Life After King's" series.
- The Alumni Association will work with the KSU and King's societies to develop informal programs that assist the understanding of career choices and the development of wide-ranging professional skills.

Bridging both

- Career coach training for faculty, dons and staff (who do not require career counselling expertise) will be provided annually with specific suggestions to help promote their understanding of the referral processes available to students.
- A searchable (by degree and interest) micro website profiling alumni stories.
- A University LinkedIn page.

- A greater degree of partnership with Dalhousie Career Services, focusing on the needs of liberal arts/science students.

How we will know we have succeeded: Parents and incoming students easily grasp the benefits of a liberal arts degree; our students are fully supported as they navigate decisions about their future; our community of faculty, dons and staff are fully engaged in the support process; and our alumni are mobilized to assist.

MOBILIZING THE COMMUNITY

Enrolment management touches on every aspect of College life. As budgets, demographics, and service expectations change, we need to engage the College in regular conversations about enrolment. To this end, we recommend that the College host an annual “Town Hall” to present annual enrolment data and plans, and to receive feedback on current progress and priorities as this plan is implemented. As areas of concern or interest evolve, King’s will invite guest experts on enrollment management.

REPORTING ON PROGRESS

To measure our relative success against other universities and internal objectives (e.g. student satisfaction with key services), we will benchmark against our present day level of:

1. student assistance;
2. international enrolment;
3. diversity;
4. first-year and in-course enrolment and retention;
5. first year day-student retention scores;
6. student satisfaction;

We will participate in regular and on-going data collection to be able to effectively measure our progress as this plan is implemented.

CONCLUSION

The Enrolment Management Committee plans for modest growth in the short term through meeting the current undergraduate and graduate enrolment targets, and increased retention. The plan will continue to evolve, and targets adjusted, with the evolution of the Academic and Internationalization Plans.

Although not directly addressed in this document, the Committee acknowledges that the King’s - Dalhousie relationships impacts every element of the enrolment and retention. At the time this plan was written, further clarification of the King’s – Dalhousie relationship is

underway at both the King's long term financial planning committee and through the Dalhousie – King's Senate Review of the Dal – King's relationship.

The Enrolment Management Sub Committee is deeply grateful for the extraordinary engagement of students, faculty and staff in the consultation process. The ideas, suggestions and feedback have demonstrated a deep and abiding respect and dedication to the future of King's.

