

# **UNIVERSITY OF KING'S COLLEGE STRATEGIC PLAN**

## TO THE COMMUNITY



In 2014, the King's community will come together at different times and in different places to celebrate a significant anniversary. Established in 1789, we were the first chartered university in Canada, and 225 years later we continue to offer an academic experience that is exceptional in Canada.

Of course, over such a long history as ours the world has been full of changes, both in the field of post-secondary education and in the wider sphere. No doubt our future will see more of the same. King's has always been able to keep up with the changing world around us, and that is what we must keep doing in the future. This is the context out of which our strategic plan arose, and on the eve of our 225th anniversary, we asked ourselves three important questions: Who are we? What do we want to be? And how do we get there?

To discover the answers to these three questions, we consulted our community: our students, faculty and staff, our alumni, friends, and our board of governors, in a series of workshops. What we have gleaned has given us a clear sense of purpose. We know that the world will continue to change as it always has. We are ready. The Strategic Plan you find here demonstrates that King's has the courage and commitment to remain exceptional as we start out on our next 225 years.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "George Cooper". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning.

*Dr. George Cooper*

University of King's College President and Vice-Chancellor

## PREAMBLE

The University of King's College Strategic Plan attempts to answer three simple questions: *Who are we? What do we want to be? How will we get there?* The strategic planning process involved the whole King's community — students, faculty, staff, administration, alumni, board members and friends of the college.

The Strategic Plan 2013-2016 is a road map that prioritizes institutional goals and strategies to ensure that we remain exceptional in the teaching of interdisciplinary humanities and journalism. Underlying each strategy in this plan is the focus on strengthening a) the student learning experience, inside and outside the classroom, b) our connection with the wider community and c) the basis for the future development of the college.

*The King's community discusses the future of the college in a series of workshops.*



## INTRODUCTION

At the heart of the University of King's College is a belief that education is not only able to inform, but to transform. King's is known nationally and internationally for its exceptional learning and teaching of humanities and journalism, with a focus on primary texts and sources, in a small college environment. Student learning is made alive through lectures, small tutorial groups, informal conversations among students and faculty, the shared life of our residences, diverse extra-curricular activities, and off-campus community involvement. This learning experience is reinforced through a supportive campus involving staff, faculty and administration and our close and distinctive affiliation with Dalhousie University. We prepare our students to be critical thinkers, to express themselves clearly and forcefully, and to exercise an inner freedom not only to engage fully in the world, but also to change it.

King's is successful on many fronts, and there is a collective desire to continue to build on its strengths. But King's must also renew and add to its strengths; it must re-examine its academic mission to ensure that, while true to its deepest principles, it remains relevant and effective in our contemporary context. This includes providing a campus that offers reinvigorated services and physical facilities to support our primary mission of learning and teaching. All this must be done within a fiscal reality that includes increasing costs and decreasing financial support from government. Therefore, we must align our strategic priorities with the need for fiscal balance so that the university is financially sustainable, including broadened support from alumni and friends of the college.

## OUR PURPOSE

The University of King's College offers an internationally recognized interdisciplinary approach to teaching primary texts in both the humanities and journalism. Our intimate and collegial community of learning finds expression through the collaborative participation of students, faculty and staff, not only in scholarly enquiry, research and professional practice, but also in extra-curricular activities, community engagement and through our unique association with Dalhousie University.

### IN CARRYING OUT OUR PURPOSE, KING'S:

- (a)** Puts a special emphasis on the first-year experience, especially through the Foundation Year Programme, and through the significant role of residence for many of our students.
- (b)** Provides students with upper-year programmes in humanities, journalism, science and social science, including interdisciplinary combined honours programmes both at King's and Dalhousie.
- (c)** Prepares graduate students in journalism to lead innovations in professional practice and prepares graduate students in creative nonfiction to work to the highest publishing standards.
- (d)** Engages students in all its programmes in a rigorous and intensive study focused on primary texts in their cultural context and original research as a preparation to be thoughtful contributors to society.
- (e)** Seeks to develop the whole person — intellectual, social, physical and spiritual — through curricular studies, extra curricular activities, athletics and community outreach.
- (f)** Embraces old and new traditions that give a heightened sense of belonging to the college community, such as Matriculation and Encaenia, Formal Meals, Chapel services and a full array of student activities and events.
- (g)** Provides a tightly knit community of support through personal student services, close contacts between faculty and students, and scholarships, bursaries and various forms of student employment within the college.

## OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The following five interdependent priorities emerged from our planning process in which all parts of the college community participated: students, staff, faculty, administration, board members and alumni:

PRIORITY 1 Enriching our Academic Mission

PRIORITY 2 Enhancing the King's Experience

PRIORITY 3 Strengthening Recruitment and Advancement

PRIORITY 4 Improving Physical Facilities

PRIORITY 5 Focusing on Stewardship and Public Accountability

### STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: ENRICHING OUR ACADEMIC MISSION

The academic mission is at the heart of King's. Very simply, King's must make its work in teaching interdisciplinary humanities and journalism as powerfully effective as it can be. This means building on the Foundation Year Programme through a more developed sense that the college's undergraduate work in the humanities should become a four-year experience. By bringing together interdisciplinary core text study and traditional disciplinary study made available at Dalhousie, our students receive the very best preparation to face the demands of living in, and engaging with, a rapidly changing age. This includes keeping our School of Journalism at the forefront of developments in the profession, so that our students are uniquely qualified to be leaders in the changing world of today's media. King's must nurture and hone its particular pedagogy grounded in the study of primary texts and original sources in a collegial context by introducing new technologies where appropriate, and by deepening and complementing our established programmes through well-considered curricular innovation. It includes continuing to develop, support and plan for academic research and professional development in our faculty and students.

Our long-term vision of success, in enriching our academic mission is to provide the very best interdisciplinary humanities and journalism education and to be recognized for this excellence nationally and internationally. In close collaboration with Dalhousie University, our existing humanities programmes expand to complement our current offerings with new courses and programmes in non-western cultures and perspectives. Our journalism school will be the "go to" place for media innovation and narrative storytelling.

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1. Our long term vision is ten (10) years



*King's students learn through lectures, small tutorials, and an immersive academic environment.*

Our graduates in humanities and journalism are thoughtful, critical thinkers who have learned to flourish in community and are well prepared to become fully engaged local and global citizens. In short, we seek to prepare students to be “fit for life” in all its facets.

**In order to achieve our long-term vision of enriching our *academic mission*, our strategic priorities in the next three (3) years are to:**

- (a) Provide, in close collaboration with Dalhousie, four-year interdisciplinary educational offerings in journalism and upper year humanities programmes based on the Western cultural tradition, while exploring new and complementary offerings, such as Asian thought, in upper-year humanities courses.
- (b) Develop further our relationship with Dalhousie through joint curricular planning.
- (c) Strengthen our academic advising process.
- (d) Advance faculty renewal.
- (e) Support and advance faculty academic research and professional development.

**We will know that we have been successful in enriching our *academic mission* when we have:**

- (a) Adopted academic and research plans for the renewal of our humanities and journalism programs and we are well on the way to implementing those plans.
- (b) Successfully embarked on a faculty renewal process, making possible new tenure-track appointments and supporting research and professional development.
- (c) Deepened the relationship between Dalhousie and King's and our respective faculties and administrations have set out clearly a collaborative and mutually beneficial partnership.
- (d) Established new formal links with other academic institutions locally, nationally and internationally.
- (e) Retained more students at King's for upper-year programmes.
- (f) Achieved five-year enrolment and recognition objectives for graduate programs in journalism.



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: ENHANCING THE KING'S EXPERIENCE

A King's education is like no other. Because it aims to educate the whole person, it is the work of the whole college. The teaching and learning process is a campus experience that happens 24/7. It may begin in a lecture hall or computer lab, but is alive throughout our campus: in the library, the hallways, the dining hall and the residences or over a beer in the Wardroom. Our intellectual enterprise finds added expression in the diverse extra-curricular activities of King's, whether they are musical, spiritual, athletic or theatrical. Our mission spills out into the community through public events and lectures and our community volunteer work in a wide variety of social outreach programs.

Because of all this, students from Nova Scotia, other provinces and the rest of the world discover a supportive, nurturing community that develops the whole person. We encourage King's students to join fully in Dalhousie's academic and extra-curricular life, and warmly welcome Dalhousie students into the King's community. Our faculty, students and alumni ensure that King's is a sought-after intellectual voice in the national and international exchange of ideas.

**Our long-term vision of success in enhancing *the King's experience*** builds on our current accomplishments. While the King's campus will have a more diverse and somewhat larger student population, it remains a friendly place where conversations among students and faculty continue outside the classroom, where faculty, staff and the administration know the names of most students, and where the intimacy of shared traditions and experiences are celebrated by all members of our community. It is a place where we are able to nurture and support the gifts and talents of our students through competitive scholarships and bursaries. Our community of learning and teaching, while rooted in the quad, will reach out in person and through technology to a wider world. Students will receive comprehensive academic advising and quality student services to ensure that they take full advantage of the four-year King's experience, and are well equipped to succeed in life after leaving King's.



**In order to achieve our long-term vision for enhancing *the King's experience*, our strategic priorities in the next three (3) years are to:**

- (a) Encourage student-driven extra-curricular activities involving all members of the college, alumni and the wider community.
- (b) Link our academic mission and extra-curricular activities by bringing the world into the quad, and taking King's out into the world.
- (c) Improve student services to better support physical, mental and spiritual well-being in collaboration with Dalhousie University.

**We will know that we have been successful in enhancing *the King's experience* when we have demonstrated:**

- (a) Greater participation by the university community and alumni in student extra-curricular activities.
- (b) High levels of student satisfaction across all four years and in the graduate programs.
- (c) More social and intellectual connections between the college and its alumni, and with the wider community.
- (d) Greater student and faculty outreach in the broader community.

*King's students are encouraged to explore all sides of themselves, such as through theatre and sports.*



**STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: STRENGTHENING RECRUITMENT & ADVANCEMENT****RECRUITMENT**

King's is unique in its academic offerings and intimate campus experience. The Foundation Year Programme and School of Journalism draw superior students to our college. Students stay because of the opportunities offered in the combined honours and post-graduate journalism programs, and because of our close association with Dalhousie University. They also stay because of the richness of King's extra-curricular and residence life and the excellence of our student services. In order to keep attracting top students to King's in an increasingly competitive post-secondary environment, all of this needs to be better known and more deeply supported through investments in communications, student recruitment and student financial assistance.

**ADVANCEMENT**

Advancement, in a university context, normally includes fundraising, alumni engagement and communications (external and internal). A well-developed and sustainable advancement function is critical to the college's ability to develop and steward long-term relationships with alumni and friends with the aim of cultivating financial and other support for the university's mission.

**Our long-term vision of success for *recruitment and advancement* is that:**

- (a)** The King's experience will become more widely known and celebrated, with high demand for all of its programmes. Students, staff and faculty will better reflect Canada's cultural and ethnic make-up. This diversity will be further enhanced through the increased presence of international students.
- (b)** King's will have a robust and well-supported advancement function that enables the university to develop and maintain long-term, sustained relationships with alumni and friends. Our relationships with alumni and friends are generating the funds and other resources needed by the university to advance its mission and Strategic Plan. King's will have well-articulated internal and external communications plans that showcase the accomplishments of King's students, faculty and alumni using our print, website and social media.

**In order to achieve our long-term vision, our strategic priorities for strengthening *recruitment and advancement* in the next three (3) years are to:**

- (a) Grow our student numbers moderately, through a thoughtful and imaginative recruitment and retention strategy that suits our collegial character.
- (b) Encourage greater diversity within our student body through national and international recruitment and retention policies and practices.
- (c) Continue to develop a robust and sustainable advancement function within the university.
- (d) Initiate a capital campaign to support the priorities of this Strategic Plan.
- (e) Develop an external and internal communications plan.
- (f) Increase our profile through wide public sharing of the achievements of its students, faculty and alumni.
- (g) Engage alumni more fully in supporting the university.



*Students are drawn to King's for its highly acclaimed interdisciplinary programs in the humanities and journalism.*

**We will know that we have been successful in strengthening *recruitment and advancement* when:**

- (a) Student enrolment and retention improve and are sustainable.
- (b) The campus has a student population that better reflects Canada's diversity, and we also attract more international students.
- (c) Prospective students have a clear understanding of the advantages offered by the King's-Dalhousie relationship.
- (d) Our capital campaign is on track to achieve its goals.
- (e) We have a robust advancement plan with the objective of securing needed funds and developing ambassadors for the college.
- (f) We have a properly resourced communications plan.
- (g) We have established an advancement department with the appropriate range and depth needed to sustain our long-term health, and which is embraced by the university community as essential to our collective success.
- (h) There is wider recognition and celebration of King's outside the quad.

#### STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: IMPROVING PHYSICAL FACILITIES

When visitors come to King's for the first time, they remark on our beautiful campus – and it is beautiful – but our facilities are in need of upgrading and repair. Our residences and athletic facilities are dated; our beloved stone buildings need more maintenance and refurbishment. The President's Lodge, Chapel, Pit (home of the King's Theatrical Society) and Wardroom, essential to the King's experience, all need complete overhauls.

Because of our success over the past 20 years, we have seen huge growth in our student population and faculty. We have grown so much that today we have a myriad of space issues: too few public spaces for our students and their extracurricular activities, not enough classrooms for our tutorials and seminars, not enough office space for faculty and staff, inadequate accommodation for the School of Journalism, and not enough student residence accommodations. Many of our buildings are not accessible to people with mobility issues. However, we recognize that with limited financial resources we will have to make careful decisions both about our existing physical facilities and possible additions to them.

**Our long-term vision of success for improving our *physical facilities*** will see our current residences renovated and possible new residence spaces. Students will have new, properly equipped public spaces in which to meet and study and carry out extracurricular activities.

The President's Lodge is once again a gathering place for students, faculty, staff, and alumni and guests. The Chapel, Pit, Wardroom and athletics facilities are refurbished and welcoming. The School of Journalism has a dedicated space.

We have enough classroom space to accommodate our current needs and projected growth, and faculty and staff have sufficient office space to meet with students and do their work.

We have made progress on deferred maintenance and have a plan to finish the job. We have a robust campus facilities plan and are building a facilities capital fund to ensure that our campus remains a welcoming and accessible place for all in which to live, study and work.



**In order to achieve our long-term vision, our strategic priorities to improve our *physical facilities* in the next three (3) years are to:**

- (a) Complete a campus master plan based on a comprehensive space planning study, including a plan for dedicated space for the School of Journalism.
- (b) Have a 5-10 year plan to fund and deal with deferred maintenance.
- (c) Improve physical accessibility.
- (d) Create an energy efficient campus.
- (e) Develop a financing strategy to support the campus master plan.

**We will know that we have been successful in improving our *physical facilities* when:**

- (a) Work has started to refurbish current residences and we have plans to add new student accommodations.
- (b) The Lodge, Pit, Chapel, and Wardroom are renovated, and – with timing dependent on resources – accessible.
- (c) Planning is completed and possible sources of funding are identified for dedicated space for the School of Journalism.
- (d) Funding and land acquisition plans (if required) are in place to support the approved campus master plan, including athletic facilities, offices, student common areas and possibly other facilities, such as a music room.
- (e) A detailed energy audit is completed and recommendations implemented.

*Our beautiful campus is modelled on the quadrangles of Oxford and Cambridge colleges.*



**STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5: FOCUSING ON STEWARDSHIP  
AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY**

We understand that, as an institution supported by the public, we have an obligation to be open, accountable and accessible; in a phrase, we are seen to be fulfilling a public good and thus have a “social license to operate.” To these ends, we intend to be continually up to date with best practices in governance, both administrative and financial, and also academic. At the same time, because we exist in a small, intimate and collegial environment, which we know to be deeply tied to the character of our teaching and learning, as we take on and move forward with best governance practices we will do so not in a clinical, mechanistic or “big campus” way, but rather – consistent with achieving best practices in academic self-governance – by being respectful of the precepts of collegial governance that are so fundamental to King’s academic and extra-curricular excellence.

**Our long-term vision of success for *stewardship and public accountability*** is that King’s is an institution notable for the excellence of its self-governance and its openness and accountability to the public. Its policies and practices reflect administrative and financial best practices in the context of King’s culture and traditions. Our university has increased diversity at all levels – students, staff, faculty, administration and the board. Its finances are being managed on a sustainable basis and its endowment is significantly increased.



*The King’s cupola  
continues to welcome and  
inspire generations of  
King’s students.*

**In order to achieve our long-term vision, our strategic priorities concerning *stewardship and public accountability* in the next three (3) years are to:**

- (a) Improve internal and external communications with stakeholders, including government.
- (b) Ensure that we have a comprehensive, robust, up-to-date and publicly available set of university policies and procedures in financial, administrative, human resource and academic governance.
- (c) Ensure that the university's governance evolves with best practices to provide effective stewardship of the university.
- (d) Continue improvements in financial reporting and long-term planning on a fiscally sound basis.

**We will know that we have been successful in focusing our *stewardship and public accountability* when:**

- (a) We have instituted internal administration and academic best practices in governance and in policies.
- (b) Faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends receive regular and transparent information.
- (c) The government recognizes the relevance and importance of King's and other post-secondary institutions to the provincial economic wellbeing.
- (d) Our board of governors has the people, policies and systems in place to provide effective stewardship of the university.
- (e) We adopt long-term fiscally sound budget planning that includes a schedule for debt repayment.



## REPORTING ON OUR PROGRESS

Once the board of governors approves this Strategic Plan, work will begin to implement it, with timelines and tasks assigned to ensure that these priorities are acted upon. The board will ensure that a specific mechanism (making use of metrics, where possible) is put into place to plan and monitor the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The president will provide quarterly updates to the board of governors and the university community on our progress. King's is committed to demonstrating accountability in the ongoing implementation of the Strategic Plan.

In return, the university community will need to take ownership of the Strategic Plan. Faculty members are key to ensuring continued excellence in interdisciplinary humanities and journalism education, and staff and the administration are key to ensuring that faculty have the support, facilities and assets they need to do this. Students will offer perspective on new initiatives, such as the campus master plan and recruitment strategy and continue to be a source of new initiatives that enhance campus life.

This focused Strategic Plan, combined with the thoughtful commitment of the university community, puts King's in an ideal position to carry out our academic mission.



*King's students, faculty, staff, alumni, friends, and board of governors all contributed to the development of our Strategic Plan.*

## CONCLUSION

King's has established for itself a unique and important place in higher education in Nova Scotia and Canada. Its teaching and learning of the humanities and journalism in a small college in the context of all that Dalhousie offers has created an extraordinary place for young minds to develop and come to terms with the world they face. The purpose of this Strategic Plan is to allow King's to realize that role more fully. All this must be done within a fiscal reality that includes increasing costs and decreasing financial support from government. Therefore, we must align our strategic priorities with the need for fiscal balance so that the university is financially sustainable. This will require us to broaden support from alumni and friends of the college.

The Strategic Plan will ensure that King's remains grounded in the intimacy of teaching and learning – young and old together – in the humanities, and as a leading North American school for innovations in professional journalism thought and practice. These programmes will focus on Western civilization, culture, philosophy and literature, complemented by non-Western perspectives. They will rest on a secure and sustainable financial base. Combined with superb extra-curricular experiences and facilities, they will draw the best Canadian and international students who will emerge from King's "prepared for life."



UNIVERSITY OF  
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