



University of King's College

Strategic Research Plan

Preamble

The University of King's College Strategic Research Plan addresses research and scholarship, focusing on key areas of strength and potential growth and identifying areas needing support and attention. The strategic planning for research involves the whole of King's faculty, with input from administration and the students. Since it is the students who will be affected by a culture of scholarship and research, we especially value their contribution. The Strategic Research Plan is a blueprint that prioritises institutional goals and strategies to ensure that we remain strong in the world of scholarship and research and stand by our commitment to provide the best undergraduate humanities and journalism educational experience in Canada.

1. Introduction

The University of King's College is a small, intimate, highly respected liberal arts university dedicated to the delivery of the highest quality undergraduate humanities education and training in journalism at the undergraduate and graduate level. By building relationships between the humanities, arts, and social and natural sciences, King's has led the way in Canada with our resolutely interdisciplinary approach to such studies, and this approach has inspired and continues to inspire other initiatives across the country. The presence of a nationally recognized School of Journalism at King's affords further dimensions of interdisciplinarity and public profile to these growing and increasingly varied efforts. Our thriving programmes and our unique relationship to our sister university, Dalhousie, have attracted and fostered a keen group of scholars who are recognized beyond our borders as offering a calibre of leadership in interdisciplinary research that belies the University's small size and the relative youth of its faculty.

Our areas of research strength centre upon the fields of intellectual history, literary and political theory, the history and philosophy of science from the ancient to the contemporary periods, and the methodologies and practices of journalism. We have consistently demonstrated our commitment to making such research public through

individual and collaborative publications, through public lecture series events, and through bringing our scholarship out into the community. We have also been instrumental in creating collaborations with other educational institutions and stakeholders in our region, focusing on particular issues of local, national and international interest, in our studies of journalism, interdisciplinary studies and science and technology. Our faculty members in the humanities are cross-appointed and adjunct in the graduate programmes of our sister university, Dalhousie, and are responsible for supervising and serving on PhD committees and are active in the research community of scholars in the region.

We are aware that our region faces crucial financial and cultural issues, especially as they pertain to higher education and the economy in Nova Scotia. The February 2014 Report of the Nova Scotia Commission on Building our New Economy (<http://nowornevers.ca>) focuses on the role universities can play in developing and implementing new strategies for sustainability and growth, which affects us all. King's will participate in the debate and add our own critical voice and agency in the creation of a sustainable region and university sector within the "for profit" model of economy/university interaction.¹ Our voice is unique, critical, and engaged.

King's attracts some of the best students in the country to its programmes, and in turn employs a Faculty dedicated to its teaching and scholarly mission. Our students have been disproportionately successful at entering some of the best graduate programmes in the world such as Harvard, Princeton, Cambridge, LSE, Northwestern, Toronto, and McGill. We recognize that in a small, teaching-centred institution, research and scholarship can be seen to take second place to the classroom. But true skill in teaching at the university level requires solid engagement with scholarship and research. Teaching at this high level of accomplishment and dedication entails a deep commitment to bringing scholarship into a close association with pedagogy, with mutual reinforcement between the two. This requires close attention to the fine and productive balance between teaching and scholarship, with active and balanced support for each.

2. Key areas of success

Belying its size, King's College punches well above its weight in research and scholarship. Although their numbers are small, the faculty in all programmes have achieved a remarkably high level of local, national and international recognition for their scholarship and research. Our faculty include leading scholars working on Newton, Holocaust and memory, Hegelianism in Canadian philosophy, Darwinism, the history of logic, social media, freedom of information and media law. We have also leveraged a remarkably high level of funding and shown a consistent research

¹ For recent defense of the university as a sanctuary for critical thinking, see Martha Nussbaum, *Not for Profit*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012.

output. Moreover, our dedication to reaching out beyond the university and into the community is notable.

Here are some of our key successes:

Centre for Interdisciplinary Research.

The University of King's College Centre for Interdisciplinary Research (CIR) was established in 2008 with funding from the SSHRC "Aid to Small Universities" programme, building on the previous entity, The Institute for Advanced Study. The King's CIR acts as a resource to aid faculty in their research, collaborations within and outside King's, academic events (conferences, symposia, guest speakers, lecture series, etc.), travel associated with conferences, and dissemination of research. The CIR's key mandate is to foster activities in three key areas:

1. Historical and contemporary research on the concept of 'interdisciplinarity' and its various modes and applications. This includes examination of how the demarcations separating disciplines are defined, employed, redefined and/or questioned. It also includes research on past and present divisions between the humanities, journalism and the various sciences.
2. Interdisciplinary re-examination of texts, figures, ideas and periods central to historical and contemporary representations of the 'Western Canon', including elements within it and those excluded by it, as constitutive, critical and/or subversive of societies and their institutions.
3. A reflexive consideration of questions of interdisciplinarity present in local, national and international research concerning the character and future of humanities and journalism education.

The Centre for Interdisciplinary Research has supported a range of particular projects including successful agenda-setting symposia, on the originary past, (<http://www.originarypast.ca/>), Great Books, Great Questions, (<http://www.greatquestions.ca/>), a series of dynamic seminars constituting a series entitled Journalism and the Public Square, (<http://www.ukings.ca/news/joseph-howe-symposium-2013>), a tercentenary symposium on Newton's General Scholium, (<http://isaacnewton.ca/general-scholium-symposium/>), and "From the Early Modern to the Extreme Contemporary" planned for 2014..

Journalism

The Journalism Programme at King's College is the one of the largest journalism schools east of Montreal, with noted leadership in the study of freedom of information, social media, media law and computer assisted data-journalism. Recently, the College has established in collaboration with Dalhousie University two graduate programmes in journalism: a Masters of Journalism with an

investigative and new ventures streams, and a limited residency Masters of Fine Arts in Creative Nonfiction.

Humanities

King's College has a strong concentration on studies in the interdisciplinary humanities, centred on scholarship within the Foundation Year Programme and the upper-level programmes in Early Modern Studies, Contemporary Studies, and the History of Science and Technology. Key themes centre around studies of "memory", "the holocaust", "early modern political theory", "aesthetics", natural philosophy and the development and place of the modern self.

For example, some recent publications include:

Sarah Clift, *Committing the Future to Memory: History, Memory, Trauma*. Fordham University Press, 2014.

Dorota Glowacka, *Disappearing Traces: Holocaust Testimonials, Ethics and Aesthetics*. Washington University Press, S. Weinstein Series in Holocaust Studies, July 2012.

Melanie Frappier with L. Meynell, Letitia, and J. R. Brown edited, *Thought Experiments in Science, Philosophy, and the Arts*, (London: Routledge. 2012).

Gordon McOuat, with Bernard Lightman and Larry Stewart, *Circulating Knowledge Between Britain, India and China*, (Amsterdam: Brill, 2013).

Christopher Elson, Garry Sherbert, *In the Name of Friendship: Deguy, Derrida and Deconstruction* (Amsterdam: Rodopi Editions, forthcoming).

Interdisciplinary public engagement.

Our Faculty have been very active in expanding scholarship and academic engagement outside of the university, and bringing the public sphere into the College. Amongst our Faculty are award-winning authors working in areas of wide public interest such as Stephen Kimber, Susan Dodd and Laura Penny. Our faculty have been instrumental in bringing the "Great Books" to the broader and marginalized communities of Halifax through the Halifax Humanities 101 programme. Our College's regular non-curricular lectures, series and symposia are open to the public and very well-subscribed. Members of our faculty make regular appearances in the local and national media, and are drawn upon as authorities in our respective fields.

"Situating Science" and Science and Technology Studies

Since 2007, King's College has housed the central administration of one of SSHRC's seven original large-scale "Strategic Knowledge Clusters": "Situating Science, Canadian Cluster for the Humanities and Social Studies of Science". (budget \$4mil +) (www.SituSci.ca) This eight-year project draws together seven leading research universities and more than 200 partnering organisations and

individuals to develop a network and public engagement for the study of science from a humanist perspective. The Cluster has proved to be a remarkable and even unexpected success in catalyzing multiple collaborations and crossing boundaries between sciences, technology and the humanities, and has brought national and international recognition to the College. It has brought newfound confidence to research in the university and has show that our small College can engage in this sort of collaboration and leadership without compromising its mission.

Our university has also housed the Canadian section of the international “Newton Project” and is also a driving force in the cross-disciplinary “Evolution Study Group”, working with scientists and humanists in studying the meaning and significance of evolutionary theory.

3. Key research strengths

With the maturation of the upper level programmes and Journalism at King’s, the continued successes of the Foundation Year Programme, and the presence of vibrant young faculty joining the ranks of established King’s scholars, we can now identify several key areas of research and scholarship in the College.

- **Core Texts**

Central to the pedagogical approach of the humanities programmes at King’s (FYP, CSP, EMSP and HOST) is the use of “core texts”. In most of our courses we require students to engage primarily in the study of core texts combined with a sense of their historical context. This pedagogical approach also affects research at King’s – so for many “core text” interpretation and criticism forms a central aspect of faculty research projects and leads to collaborations both within and beyond the College.

An important component of this core text centred research is King’s relation to the Association of Core Texts and Courses (ACTC), of which King’s is an institutional member, faculty have served on its board and King’s has twice co-sponsored its annual conference. ACTC helps to connect King’s to other core text oriented universities from not only North America, but also globally – most recently in China. ACTC’s annual meeting has proven to be a very useful sight for King’s faculty to share developing research projects and to engage in research with others focused on core text pedagogy. This work has been supported by the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research at King’s and through the SSHRC Aid to Small Universities.

- **Public engagement with the Humanities.**

“Halifax Humanities” has done much to bring the core élan and mission of the Foundation Year Programme to marginalized population of Halifax, showing why an engagement with the classics of “Western Civilisation” might matter. The College has the raw resources and desire to expand, as evidenced in the Academic Plan, thus making it a star on the academic and public horizons, including the expansion into summer programmes and school, online offerings and multi-university collaborations. The presence of a strong journalism programme makes such a vision all the more plausible.

- **The intersection of Journalism and academia**

With the expansion of Journalism into graduate programmes, and its strong role in the College as a whole, King’s has a real opportunity to make journalism and creative non-fiction a major component of its research profile.

- **Contemporary Theory, and Early Modern Studies**

King’s College has a remarkable concentration of scholars working in the area of contemporary Theory, and the study of the Early Modern period, working on issues concerning the rise and place of the modern self, the holocaust and memory, political and aesthetic theory, and the place of natural philosophy in the traditions of the “West”.

- **Science and Technology Studies**

As core to its commitment to multidisciplinary humanities scholarship and the study of Great Books and great achievements of the “West”, the College is dedicated to the exploration of the role of science, technology and natural philosophy in the development of our culture. The college is a magnet for exploring science and technology studies, history and philosophy of science, locally and internationally.

4. Strategic Priorities

To facilitate the continuation and advancement of research and scholarship at King’s, support for research over the next three years will entail:

- **STRATEGIC PRIORITY ONE: Support for Individual Research**

Hitherto, individual research has been the foundation of scholarship in the humanities, and will continue to be the mainstay of scholarly research at the College. The College must continue to support and expand opportunities for individual research, including academic travel for new and established

faculty members, providing research grants for smaller projects and infrastructural support for larger projects. It must encourage and give administrative support for existing grant holders, and develop strategic plans for leveraging Federal and regional financing for Faculty's research projects.

The College must address the issue of "time" for research, especially in light of SSHRC's discontinuing of the SSHRC "Research Time Stipend" in 2009. King's teaching load is quite high (in comparison to that at many other universities). The College must consider the amount of time devoted to teaching as coordinated with research and re-examine teaching loads in the programmes.

We will know when we are successful when:

- a) We have enhanced our knowledge transfer by an increase in support and number of articles in refereed publications, peer-reviewed and non-peer reviewed monographs and books, creative work, performances, commissioned work and technical reports, public speaking engagements, colloquia and attendance at profession meetings and seminars.
- b) The Faculty feels supported in their endeavours to leverage research funding and time for research. The College will establish a "Research Officer" to oversee, coordinate and support the research applications and projects of the faculty.
- c) Seed grants are offered through the "Research and Travel Fund" as part of a strategy to increase the number of "Insight Grants" within the Federal SSHRC Programme. The Research and Travel Fund Committee will renew and update all of the RTF policies and post on the website, with clear access and online forms.
- d) The College has expanded and sufficiently supported the "Student Assistance Programme" (SAP) to provide student support and integration for Faculty research projects. Every faculty member will have access to a student assistant for their research projects.
- f) The College will solidify the process of producing semi-annual newsletters and meetings reporting and disseminating our research.
- g) We have enhanced our students' research activity measured by the number of Honours and Masters theses completed, the number of students employed as research assistants, and the number and quality of applications made to King's undergraduate and graduate programmes and their retention.
- h) The College has established a committee to examine teaching loads and research, and thoroughly explored ways in which time can be allocated to

faculty research and scholarship in addition to offering a full range of courses.

i) The College will have established comprehensive research ethics guidelines, accommodating the particularities of journalism ethics.

- **STRATEGIC PRIORITY TWO: Multi-collaborative Projects**

Increasingly, scholarship in the humanities is being seen as a collaborative project, and the national and local funding agencies are moving in the direction of multiple-centred and disciplinary long- and short-term projects. King's has already shown remarkable success in building collaborative initiatives and attracting multidisciplinary cross-border scholarship to our projects, and is well-poised to make a further mark in this area, drawing on its strategic themes of strength.

We will know we have been successful when:

a) The College has facilitated the continued success and expansion of its participation in multiple collaborative research projects within and outside the College.

b) The Faculty has increased its involvement and leverage within the SSHRC, CIHR and other funding agencies.

c) The College has increased its collaboration with scholars in other fields, including natural scientists, engineers and those in medicine, leveraging collaborative projects in the other federal granting agencies such as the NSERC and CIFAR programmes.

d) The "Research Officer" has presented an annual plan and report for leveraging and coordinating collaborative projects.

e) The Research Officer will coordinate with Dalhousie University to create a process for joint Dalhousie/King's research projects.

- **STRATEGIC PRIORITY THREE: Dissemination, Mentorship, and Facilities.**

King's has had remarkable success at building international workshops and offering robust educational opportunity for multidisciplinary engagements in the humanities and journalism. King's has some of the finest facilities in the country for intimate scholarly retreats and public engagements, and has been a major draw for international scholars. The College is also well known for

reaching out with innovative events and cross-disciplinary activities, and has consistently involved its students at all levels of these activities in a manner that makes them integral to campus life. The College should expand upon these successes and develop a vigorous expansion of its offerings in this area over the next three years. The College is also committed to the Tri-council's (SSHRC, CIHR and NSERC) goal to ultimately adopt a joint policy on access to research results as outlined in the draft (http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/about-au_sujet/policies-politiques/open_access-libre_acces/index-eng.aspx)

We will know when we have been successful at our dissemination and mentorship plans when:

- a) We have utilised the resources of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research to organize a series of strategic interdisciplinary workshops on themes identified by the CIR mission statement and this Strategic Plan, with support from the SSHRC "Connections Grant" programme.
- b) We have organised in-term events and public lectures in conjunction with the celebrations of the anniversaries of the College programmes (FYP, Journalism, Contemporary Studies, Early Modern Studies, History of Science and Technology).
- c) We have supported student and student/faculty symposia and conferences, coordinated with the academic programmes and CIR.
- d) We have developed a plan for establishing a themed annual "symposia" coordinated by the CIR in conjunction with Faculty and conference services.
- e) We have expanded our public appearance and our use of dissemination websites.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY FOUR: Visiting Scholar Position, and Endowed Postdocs and Teaching Fellowships

With its multi-collaborative research projects in interdisciplinary humanities and journalism, the College has attracted a number of internationally recognized scholars including Isabelle Stengers, Evelyn Fox Keller and Philip Kitcher to its invited lecture series, workshops and symposia, and as "visiting scholars" on extended stay. The role of visiting scholar is an important one for the College, and has facilitated a fruitful interaction between students, faculty and visitors, solidifying our commitment to multidisciplinary scholarship and teaching and bolstered our international reputation, and providing seeds for funded research collaborations.

The College needs to follow up on the provisions in the College's *Pink Book* for a Visiting Scholar and establish a strategic plan for a regular visiting

scholar position. The position would be financed between the programmes or by external funding, including endowments and Fulbright scholarships and/or fellowships.

The College should explore the possibilities of endowing one (or more) of its Senior and/or Teaching Fellows to work with the Foundation Year Programme and the other programmes. In addition, the College should examine the possibilities of funded post-doctoral positions to combine individual research and teaching.

We will know we have been successful when:

a) We have established the Visiting Scholar position in the College, coordinating between the programmes and the CIR to invite an annual visiting scholar during term, taking up residence within the College in order to engage with students and faculty over a short or extended period.

b) We have leveraged financial support for the Visiting Scholar, either through endowment, internal budget, or external funding and partnering with stakeholders.

c) We have increased our international contact by inviting visiting scholars from non-European and North American areas such as the Shastri Institute, with support from partnerships, federal programmes, and NGOs.

d) We have leveraged funding for at least one Senior Teaching Fellow and/or Post-Doctoral position at the College.

- **STRATEGIC PRIORITY FIVE: Endowed Chairs in key areas identified in the Strategic and Academic Plans**

As part of the Strategic Planning process, the College is strategizing for renewal and expansion in its academic programmes. The solidification and expansion of opportunities for cross-disciplinary class and programme offerings, and the growing significance of King's on the academic horizon, opens up the possibilities for creating key endowed positions in the College devoted to scholarship and teaching in our core areas of strength.

Key possibilities for coordinating chairs are in areas of "Medical Humanities", "Engineering Humanities" and "Technology Studies", "East/West Studies", "Digital Journalism", and interdisciplinary studies.

Supported and endowed chairs bring with them a strong research component, and a significant ability to leverage research funding from local, national and international agencies, increasing the research portfolio of the

College.

We will know when we are successful when we have:

- a) Established a committee, with members from Faculty, administration and Advancement, to identify the possibilities of creating and fundraising for Endowed Chair(s) in specific targeted areas of the College's strengths.
- b) Explored financing through the Canada Research Chairs (CRC) and the Canadian Foundation for Innovation (CFI) programmes.

5. Conclusions:

The University of King's College has reason to be proud of its achievements in research; at the same time, as a small, teaching-intensive undergraduate institution it undoubtedly faces challenges in terms of maintaining and expanding its research profile. The plans and priorities outlined here aim to promote a congenial environment for research at King's: one that fosters pedagogical as well as scholarly innovation; that helps to nurture collaborations across disciplines and between institutions; and that benefits not only professional academics, but also the student body and the wider local and national community. In the process, they strive to help ensure the sustainability and success of the College in the years to come.

Appendix:

Timeline and responsibilities for implementation of the Strategic Research Plan.

[To be completed by the committee in collaboration with CIR and RTF committees]