



Dear Acadia Community,

This past year has been marked by challenges and change: significant financial pressures, government-mandated program reviews and costing, limits on international students, and declining revenues alongside rising costs present great threats to our autonomy and sustainability. We recognize that this is a time of uncertainty, tumult, and upheaval.

Yet, through it all, our community has risen to the occasion, and we are inspired by the work, innovation, and dedication of students, staff, faculty, alumni, and partners. This year has also been a time of deep conversations, creativity, and visioning what Acadia – and indeed the entire post-secondary sector – can and must do to support students to learn, grow, and be prepared to face the complexities of their worlds. It has been a time of questioning many things: Who are we? Where are we going? What is our purpose? and What are our responsibilities – to students, to communities, to the province, and to the world?

While there has been strife and struggle, there is also a generative energy on campus as people push boundaries, explore what is possible, and (re)imagine what Acadia can be and must become.

A Moment of Change

In March 2026, in recognition of the critical financial, provincial, internal, and societal stressors we face, the Board of Governors Executive Committee mandated the President to work with the Provost, the Senior Leadership Team, and members of our campus community to present a plan of strategy and transformation to meet this moment and secure our future. The resolution mandated an immediate reduction in expenses, which led to a reduction in staffing across the university on March 11. But it went much further than that and stipulated that we must reorganize to become financially sustainable and more efficient, responsive, and academically centred.

Specifically, the Board Executive Committee has resolved that future budgets will support:

1. A reduction in the number of independent faculties from three to two;
2. An across-the-board reduction in the number of discrete units (academic and support units); *and*
3. A strategic response to the government-mandated program review (Schedule H) that both secures provincial funding and responds to student needs through program renewal, pedagogical innovation, and curriculum transformation.

We know that this represents a significant change and may cause anxiety and concern for many of you. Great thought has gone into a proposed response to this mandate, based on



conversations over the past almost two years at Acadia for Ashlee, and over many years for Jeff.

Since both of us began in our new positions at Acadia in 2023 and 2024, we have spent substantial time listening to and learning from faculty, staff, and students through Town Halls, gatherings, meetings of all sizes, feedback mechanisms, and ongoing discussions.

We have heard that Acadia is siloed and inefficient. We have heard that the academic and educational mission has been eroded and must again become the university's heart and core. We have heard that our structures, processes, and models hinder creativity and stifle progress and our ability to be flexible and responsive. We have heard from students that our programs need to better reflect their priorities, prepare them for changing and uncertain futures, and be delivered in ways that are more accessible and attainable. We have also heard that we need to better demonstrate our impacts in and for community and ensure that we support the region and the province.

Our next steps are grounded in what we have learned from you.

Throughout this process, we remain, as always, committed to transparency, compassion, and ongoing communication with our community. We seek your guidance in making this proposal stronger. We know there are many creative people in our community with great ideas, and we look forward to this generative moment.

The Proposed Model

Creating a College Model

We propose shifting from a three-faculty model to a **Two-College Model in recognition that our academic sector is more than just an assemblage of academic staff; it drives the primary mission of the university and needs to be centred and strengthened.**

We propose two strong, independent-yet-connected Colleges that build on and highlight our already-existing critical strengths, emphasize more opportunities for working across and with diverse knowledge systems, embed critical knowledge bases throughout both Colleges, and create a more streamlined and responsive administrative structure.

In a university, a College is a major academic unit that groups programs under shared leadership and a common educational mission. It oversees curriculum, academic quality, resources, and academic student supports, and serves as the primary organizational home for the academic sector. The two Colleges, for the context of this proposal, are an integrated collegiate community of faculty, staff, and students working together to advance the academic and educational aims of the College and Acadia. The traditional “faculty” concept



of a grouping of scholars from closely-aligned disciplines is enhanced in the College model by infusing more supports, removing academic administrative barriers, and establishing an identity based on a common theme.

As a starting point, one proposed College would emphasize **Health, Community, and Change**, and one proposed College would emphasize **Environment, Systems, and Society** (see (Re)Building Acadia Strategic Academic Restructuring document). Current and newly-emerging programs would be re-organized and re-deployed from three Faculties into two Colleges. We recognize that the absence of words like ‘arts’ and ‘science’ in the proposed College names may cause initial concerns for some. In this College structure, all disciplines and perspectives will be infused throughout and across both Colleges, and thematic clusters within each College will highlight these areas within the College structure. This structure will ensure that intellectual and disciplinary coherence will continue and strengthen through the College model and allow faculty and students to enjoy a more collaborative and interdisciplinary collegial community.

It is important to note that throughout this process current programs of study will continue. All students currently enrolled will be able to complete their degree programs on time and without disruption. The government-mandated Schedule H Program Review process will also continue uninterrupted and is a parallel exercise to this restructuring.

More Embedded Supports

As part of this move to two Colleges, we also propose a new leadership, organizational, and resourcing structure for each College. This approach embeds critical supports related to recruitment, communications, external relations, research, educational and curriculum development, academic advising, graduate program coordination, accessible learning, student life, and professional and extended learning resources into each College, creating localized supports and resources that strengthen the Colleges and are connected to centralized teams (see (Re)Building Acadia Strategic Academic Restructuring document). This is a critical reinvestment and realignment of resources into the Colleges and the academic sector, to create synergies, support innovation, open and advance new pathways, and strengthen the academic heart of Acadia.

New Administrative Structure

Each new College would be led by a Dean, with Associate Deans responsible for clusters of programs, and a Manager of College Operations. Alongside an Executive Assistant and a team of Administrative Assistants and support staff, the leadership and management team of the College would oversee day-to-day operations, budgeting, academic programming, and the embedded support positions described above. The goal will be to support each College



administratively so that faculty can spend more time pursuing teaching and research and less time on administration, while increasing the educational and research capacities and efficacies of each College. This will also centre the academic programs themselves as the main site of academic collaboration and creativity, rather than administrative units. As such, the new structure would eliminate Departments and Schools and focus instead on flexible and thematic clusters that better support new, existing, and re-imagined programs and academic operations.

Enhanced Student Opportunities

We are excited about the opportunities for enhanced student leadership through a College model, including the creation of College Student Councils, the ongoing support of student societies related to programs, and opportunities for enhanced student voices and connection to academic decision-making. In this new model, student voices and experiences are better supported – and better integrated – through all aspects of academic, educational, research, and services matters.

Opportunities for Input and Feedback

We believe and maintain that ideas are always better and stronger when there is broad participation. This is one of the strengths of a university, where principles of collegiality and co-creation underpin our work and our mission. As we move through this process, we are asking you to provide input and feedback, and to help strengthen this proposed restructure. There will be multiple ways to provide feedback, including Town Halls, small and large group working sessions, engagement sessions, and feedback surveys. We are also launching a webpage with information and FAQs shortly. We will synthesize and collate all the feedback and finalize a report for the Board of Governors approval in June 2026.

Throughout the next two months, you can engage with the process through one or more of these avenues:

- **Anonymous Feedback:**

Surveys will provide the opportunity for faculty, staff, and alumni to answer specific questions and provide feedback:

- **Faculty, Staff, and Students** Feedback Survey: Click [HERE](#) to access the survey

- **Virtual Introductory Town Halls:**

These **preliminary discussion** sessions will provide an overview of the draft plan shared on April 6, outline the principles informing the proposal, invite early feedback, and allow for large-group discussion. Due to limited availability of large in-person



spaces next week, these sessions will be held on Teams.

April 7:

9:30-11:00am: All Faculty

1:30-3:00pm: All Faculty

April 8:

9:30-11:00am: All Staff

3:00-4:30pm: Everyone (Staff and Faculty)

- **Working Sessions:**

These hands-on workshops and interactive sessions will provide opportunities to work together in small groups and offer more in-depth feedback and ideas on the proposed structures, themes, and organization. All in-person sessions will be in Fountain Commons.

April 14:

9:00-11:00: Faculty (In Person)

1:30-3:30: Faculty (In Person)

April 15:

9:30-11:00: Staff (In Person)

2:30-4:30: Everyone (Virtual)

- **Student Feedback:** These student sessions will provide interactive opportunities to learn more about the structural changes, provide feedback, and share ideas.

April 13

12:00-3:00pm: Library Lobby drop-in sessions for information and feedback

April 16:

1:00-3:00pm: Library Lobby drop-in sessions for information and feedback

- **Senate Discussions:** Having discussions for feedback and input at Senate are an important part of this process. April 13 will be an overall discussion, and May 6 will discuss an updated proposal based on received feedback.

April 13: Initial Proposal discussion

May 6: Updated Proposal presentation and discussions



Further, a variety of meetings and gatherings with students, staff, faculty, alumni, community, and key partners will be held as this process unfolds. Stay tuned for more details and regular updates.

(Re)Building Acadia, Together

Acadia is a powerhouse for the region and in the post-secondary sector. We fuel innovation, discovery, creativity, and social change. And we are at a crossroads, facing a critical financial moment. We cannot sustain our mission within current structures. We face both an urgent responsibility and an extraordinary and unprecedented opportunity to reshape our institution for a stronger, more sustainable, and more impactful future. We must step up, stand out, and find new ways forward.

This moment calls for a comprehensive restructuring process that is driven by strategic vision, ensuring that every resource is deliberately utilized to sustain Acadia's academic and educational mission and its long-term viability. The convergence of financial necessity, external government pressures, institutional reflection, strategic opportunity, and changing national and global needs has created a rare and defining moment that presents a significant strategic opportunity.

This transformation will not be easy. But it is possible, it is essential, and it is within our reach. Together, we can build a university that honours our history, while embracing a bold, sustainable future – a future in which Acadia fully lives its responsibilities to students, staff, faculty, communities, the region, and the world.

We thank you for your continued commitment, insight, and courage as we shape Acadia's future, together.

Jeffrey J. Hennessy, PhD
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