

**Message 1 of 3 – Sent August 28, 2023**

***This message is being sent on behalf of Dr. Ann-Barbara Graff, Provost and Vice-President, Academic***

Good morning everyone,

Following the broad consultation that informed Nipissing University's Strategic Plan: *Pathways: Our Commitments to Water, Land, and People*, we enter the next phase of planning. The purpose of the new Academic Plan is to respond to the direction set out in the Strategic Plan and define and guide the university's academic priorities and decision-making.

In my role as Provost, I have been charged to lead the development of the University's next Academic Plan. The Academic Plan will serve as the roadmap for continuous improvement in the university. Aligned with Nipissing University's Strategic Plan, as well as federal, provincial and municipal priorities, including the [94 Calls to Action](#) of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the [Dimensions Charter](#) on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, the [UN's Sustainable Development Goals](#), SSHRC's [Future Challenge Areas](#), the [Scarborough Charter](#), and the Nipissing University Act, the Academic Plan is a critical strategic document.

Designed to support the university's statement of value and principles, the Academic Plan provides a concrete set of directions and metrics by which the community can evaluate our progress as we advance common goals and priorities. Key to this Academic Plan will be defining the unique academic value proposition for the university. Nipissing must define its impact in community (local, regional, national and global) and celebrate it at each opportunity. Moreover, Nipissing must be prepared to adapt, as we listen to community. We are entering a period of urgent sectoral reform and reinvention; we must embrace humility as an integral part of co-creative, reciprocal relations if we are to advance with our partners and communities.

The plan's constitutive elements will be defined by the university's priorities, values, principles, and objectives, not by administrative function or structure. This choice distributes ownership, agency and responsibility for Nipissing success across the university community, internal and external. This recognizes that Nipissing's brightest future is not dependent on any individual or office, but on our collaborative efforts to ensure that the shared vision is delivered.

I will call together a Working Group from all stakeholder groups to assist me in convening the voices of the University. Over the course of the year, we will meet with students, faculty and staff, with Senate, community stakeholders, alumni, and University governors to identify what needs to happen over the short-, medium- and long-term, to determine what we need to do and in what order so that we achieve our ambitions. I have defined 6 areas of

focus (to be shared in message #3); some overlap, some must inform all priority areas, but they all must function in harmony, if we are to succeed with the larger objectives.

Having said this, there are four “must-haves” that exist as the bedrock upon which the plan rests. They are areas of engagement and action that are urgent to get right and upon which we must maintain vigilant focus:

- (1) Recruitment, Enrollment, Retention and Persistence;
- (2) Indigenous Knowledge and Reconciliation;
- (3) Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; and,
- (4) Structural and Procedural Clarity (*integritas*).

I will be sending a follow up email on the “must-haves” (to be shared in message #2). For purposes of this email today, I want to apprise you of the ongoing preparation work for the academic plan and invite you to participate.

The next decade must be Nipissing’s. It is clear to those contributing to discussions of both “the future of work” and “the future of the university” that resilience, adaptability, collaboration, humility, and compassion are necessary. Nipissing must be ready to take a leadership role in articulating the values and principles of the emerging reality (first among these values is sustainability—environmental, fiscal, creative, and social).

The goal of this Academic Plan is to set a course for sustainable leadership in post-secondary education. This plan will see Nipissing transform its practices of teaching and learning, research, and community engagement mindful of the demands of the future. The goal of this work is to be a demonstrably inclusive community with robust enrolment and measurable impact: everyone will understand what is possible and relevant as a function of being in community.

All my best,  
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