



ANNUAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Academic Year 2020-21

Approved by the Board of Governors September 23, 2020

It should be a surprise to no one: the 2020-21 academic year will be nothing, but exceptional. As far as we can see, the COVID-19 crisis is not near to disappearing. It is likely that the entire academic year will be unfolding under conditions that are far from ideal. We should expect then that remote teaching will be the new normality for a certain period and that support services to students will have to keep adapting and redefining themselves in order to cope with the challenges it brings.

From a managerial standpoint, this will require a great deal of creativity, agility, transparency and flexibility. The situation induced by the COVID-19 leaves us with very little we are familiar with and our usual ways of doing things are unsettled, if not shattered. The challenges we face are two-fold: responding to immediate needs with appropriate solutions that ensure a high quality education for our students while anticipating what post COVID-19 may look like. In short, being responsive to the most pressing needs and starting to prepare for a future that might look like nothing we have yet imagined. These are surely trying times that will leave its mark on how we address what is forthcoming. More than ever, we have to be judicious and deliberate in our decisions, proposing a vision that is clear and cohesive while fostering a problem solving approach based on teamwork, trust and effective communications. Challenging times indeed!

These are the concerns reflected in the 2020-21 annual objectives that the Board of Governors adopted earlier in June, for both the Academic Dean and the Director General.

For the Director General:

The unexpected situation we find ourselves in since the Covid-19 pandemic started to unfold and the uncertainties about the conditions under which we will be able to operate the academic year 2020-21 are two main factors worth of consideration while setting up the road map for the upcoming year.

(...)

Many challenges arise from this situation. Some are organizational while others are financial. Overall, the key challenge will remain the core of our mission: doing whatever possible to offer our students a college experience that is meaningful, enticing and enriching.

Ensure the proper leadership to address the various challenges arising from the exceptional situation created by the Covid-19 in the unfolding of the Fall Semester by implementing conditions that will offer our students a meaningful college experience, will foster their success while ensuring financial stability of the College.

For the Academic Dean:

In late March and early April, Dawson shifted its teaching and learning on-line to deal with the immediate crisis posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and allowed students to complete the winter semester. As the College moves into the next academic year, planning of a different order is required because the summer and fall semesters at least will be conducted on-line from the outset, with only certain exceptional activities taking place in person at the college. In the 2020-21 academic year, the Academic Dean will:

Oversee the academic division's preparations to ensure that Dawson is able to deliver an education of quality to its current and incoming students. The creation of a successful, virtual educational environment will require concerted efforts to engage and support students, necessitating continued efforts to enhance the faculty's pedagogical development in distance learning as well as a close collaboration with Student Services.

Furthermore, in collaboration with other Deans and HR, as well as allied College services, the Academic Dean will seek to conceptualize and reinforce the management of Sector operations to ensure consistency between academic sectors and support services, and to ensure safe and successful outcomes for students, faculty and staff in a hybrid mode environment.

In addition, the Academic Dean will ensure that:

- ***Program revisions are conducted in a timely and effective manner (Social Science, Physiotherapy, Interior Design, Industrial Design, and Computer Science),***
- ***The new Ultrasound Technologies program, authorized by the Ministry recently is developed and ready for implementation in Fall 2021.***
- ***The planning of the new site will continue to unfold in collaboration with the various teaching departments with the assistance of Facilities Management Department (FAMA).***

The pandemic has thrust the adoption of digital transformation, as new technologies were quickly deployed and used in unprecedented numbers. In 2020-21, the overarching challenge of Information Systems and Technologies (IST) will be to imagine and plan the new normality in the aftermath of the crisis. Developing tools and expertise to support distance learning was already identified as a key area to foster as part of the strategic plan for Information resources. This year, Information Systems and Technologies will:

- ***Review the technologies with stakeholders and users, notably the videoconferencing and collaborative suites;***
- ***Continue to support innovative technologies with the Faculty Hub team and Communities of practice.***

The sudden increase in volume of IT resources has prompted rapid changes in our infrastructure. In 2020-21, the IST Department will:

- ***Review our strategy for computing devices in offices and laboratories, with an emphasis on remote access and videoconferencing needs. It will also review our master network plan to better support these needs and the trend to move to cloud services.***

The deployment of online services for Human Resources and Finance is already in process. IST will continue to guide these initiatives in 2020-21 and will propose overall solutions for the administration to reduce paper forms and signatures.

In the area of Student Services (STSV), the shift to online services was implemented in a few weeks following the COVID outbreak and services to students continued to be provided through Zoom and Teams platforms. In 2020-21, the key priorities of Student Services will be:

- ***Improve online services in all areas, specifically Counselling (Titanium Software), Academic Skills, AccessAbility, Campus Life and Leadership.***
- ***Provide additional support to students (financial aid; extra support for students with special needs) in the context of online learning.***

As the pandemic unfolded, Student Services was in the final stages of producing two major policies, the Dawson Code of Conduct and the Inclusion Policy (for students with special needs). These policies will be finalized this year.

In the past two years, many of the STSV offices were renovated and there are still areas that need to be reconverted. One major undertaking that has started last year will obtain special attention in 20-21, both from STSV and FAMA directors.

- ***Move forward with the Feasibility Study for the renovation of the Library – Learning Commons.***

The impact of the pandemic is also tangible in the area of Human Resources management. As our reality shifts, the department of Human Resources at Dawson has to evolve accordingly. Although the face-to-face interaction will always be part of HR's core service, the delivery of online services will take a much bigger place in the near future. With the assistance of Information Systems Technologies (IST), the main priority of the Human Resources Department will then be in 2020-21 to:

- ***Ensure that the majority of the HR services as well as most specific issues can be offered and online with direct access with the proper resources within the HR department.***

The whole situation arising from the COVID crisis weighs in quite importantly on the College's financial situation. Anticipated revenues are jeopardized and extra expenses are incurred. In that regard, despite non-recurrent ministerial aid, the Finance Department (FNSV) will in 2020-21:

- ***Continue to monitor and evaluate the financial impact of Covid on operations of the College.***

Considering the fact that the post-COVID situation may necessitate organizational changes and that shift in the delivery of our services and the functioning of our operations may be needed, the Finance Department intends also to:

- ***Work closely with other directors to understand the shifting needs and priorities of Academic, Student Services as well as all support services through assessment of the cost of meeting shifting priorities and identification and establishment of appropriate funding sources to meet the evolving needs.***

One last thing before closing: the current situation calls upon Facilities Management for several tasks that are critical to the successful response to the pandemic. Security, access to the building, observance of health preventive measures (they are numerous!), chain of supply (PPE, bookstore,...), circulation, control of attendees, response to needs arising and coordination with other sectors, etc., these are the basics making this sector of activities paramount to our overall success. At the end of the day, everything revolves around managing the physical materiality of people entering the building while ensuring their safety.

There is no straightforward conclusion to this Annual Management Plan. The pandemic is far from being over and its aftermath is full of uncertainties. How the future will look like is largely unknown at this time. As Dawson College's managers, we have to rise to our responsibilities and lead a twofold struggle: deal with the multiple issues arising from the pandemic and project ourselves beyond the COVID crisis and prepare for a reality that might be profoundly different to the one we used to live in.

It will require from all of us a great deal of managerial courage to address difficult questions and as much determination to search for the right responses. No stone can be left unturned. Our overarching responsibility remains to lead the College during these trying times and to make everything possible to make sure we will be able to "hit the ground running" when this virus is gone.

I am confident we can make it.

Richard Filion
Director General
September 16, 2020