

9/9/21

To members of the OU community,

I am pleased to let you know that the Ottawa University strategic planning process is now underway.

Working with the Board, the Cabinet, and faculty leadership, I have formed a steering committee that will guide the planning process over the coming months. The 21-member group, which met for the first time last week, is broadly representative of our campuses, our key internal constituencies, and our connections to the larger world.

Over the next few weeks, the group will immerse itself in data and other materials on where OU stands today, its points of strength, and the areas where attention and investment are required. It will also survey the complex landscape of contemporary American higher education and identify opportunities as well as challenges going forward. At the end of this month or in early October, we will gather for a day-long retreat and identify a list of key topics (that might include anything from academic excellence to the student experience to external partnerships) that will provide focus to broader community conversations on the future of Ottawa University.

After the retreat, the steering committee will convene a number of working groups, smaller committees of individuals from across the institution, who will dive deeper into these key topics. The working groups will allow for greater participation in the process and will be charged with soliciting broad, grassroots engagement through focus groups, open meetings, listening sessions, surveys, workshops, and other (hopefully imaginative, effective, and not too annoying) means. The goal will be to empower, inspire, and genuinely hear as many voices as possible, from as many corners of the OU as possible, on issues that matter for our future directions, the goals we are going to stretch for, and the hard choices we are going to have to tackle together.

Early in 2022, the steering committee will collect input from the working groups, duly consider it, debate it, distill it, synthesize it, and ultimately bring it together into a document that (after comment from the community and approval by the Board) will be our roadmap for the future, for how we invest our energies and our limited resources, for what we hope to be and how we hope to get there. The intention is to have a complete draft by late spring 2022 for final consideration by the Board at its June meeting, and with the anticipation that the evolving strategic plan will inform the budgeting process for the 2023 fiscal year.

As we embark together on this critical project for the future of Ottawa University, I have a few simple requests for you all: please engage with the planning process, please contribute, please serve, please share, please imagine and dream with others from across the university. I promise



you that this is not an empty exercise: the strategic plan that emerges from this comprehensive and inclusive process will be the touchstone that the Board, the Cabinet, and I consistently come back to as we make decisions and shape budgets and set fundraising priorities for the next five years. I firmly believe that we will only be able to achieve our full potential as an institution and as a community by coming together now to collaborate on the important work of planning.

For more information, please visit the Strategic Planning tab on the MyOttawa portal. There you will find a full listing of the steering committee and the agendas from all our meetings, and you will be able to access the public data and background materials that we will be reviewing. I will update you all on a regular basis on the status of the planning process by email and through the tab on the MyOttawa portal. If at any time over the course of this strategic planning effort you have questions, comments, or ideas that you would like to share with me and the steering committee, you can email them to PresidentCEO@ottawa.edu.

I am excited to be started on strategic planning and I look forward to collaborating with the entire community in setting a vision and charting a path for the next chapter in the history of Ottawa University.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John M. Jones", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.