

**UNIVERSITY COUNCIL  
PLANNING AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE  
FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

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**PRESENTED BY:** Fran Walley, Chair, Planning and Priorities Committee

**DATE OF MEETING:** September 19, 2013

**SUBJECT:** **2014-15 Operations Forecast**

**COUNCIL ACTION:** For information only

**CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND:**

The planning and priorities committee and its capital and finance subcommittee had several opportunities to discuss and comment on draft versions of the Operations Forecast. The planning and priorities committee is responsible for providing advice to the president on the budgetary implications of the Operations Forecast and for reporting to Council on the nature of its advice.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Memorandum on the 2014-15 Operations Forecast.

The full text of the 2014-15 Operations Forecast document can be found at  
[http://www.usask.ca/ipa/planning/budget/op\\_forecast.php](http://www.usask.ca/ipa/planning/budget/op_forecast.php)



## *MEMORANDUM*

TO: Ilene Busch-Vishniac, President  
Brett Fairbairn, Provost and Vice-President Academic

FROM: Bob Tyler, Chair, Planning and Priorities Committee of Council

DATE: June 12, 2013

RE: 2014-15 Operations Forecast

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As Chair of the Planning and Priorities Committee, it is my pleasure and responsibility to provide the Committee's perspective on the 2014-15 Operations Forecast. The Committee reviewed and provided comments on early drafts of the document at its meetings on April 17 and May 15, and was provided with the final version at its meeting on June 12.

The Operations Forecast has evolved in purpose and scope. The Planning and Priorities Committee supports the strategic decision to frame the Operations Forecast as one component of a broader government relations strategy, enabling the Operations Forecast to focus more on the funding request rather than on the provision of ancillary information. The new government relations strategy also enables the mandates of other ministries and provincial programs to be taken into consideration, and will ensure that the Operations Forecast reaches a broader audience.

In light of the current financial reality faced by the University, the Committee supports the wide adoption of LEAN processes. An emphasis on LEAN also demonstrates the University's alignment with the Province's own LEAN philosophy.

The Committee supports the University's continued emphasis on highlighting the impact of the institution, through its research contributions and the training of highly skilled individuals, including First Nations and Métis peoples, on innovation and economic growth in the Province. Continued development of more detailed quantitative measures of this impact, as we are seeing at other research intensive universities, is encouraged.

Emphasis on the alignment of University initiatives, such as distance learning and satellite campuses, with the Province's goals and objectives for training and education is supported, but a realistic assessment of the resources required is essential. Opportunities exist for a variety of complementary partnerships with the Province, and highlighting these opportunities in the document and elsewhere clarifies the shared goals of the Province and the University.

The Committee continues to support the position that the Province's debt financing strategy of capital projects places the University at risk of assuming more debt than is wise. The document clearly articulates that our capital requests require cash funding, as the University is near the limit of its borrowing capacity as specified by the Board. History would suggest that the University is unlikely to receive the funding necessary to make significant headway on deferred maintenance. Still, the Committee supports the continued emphasis in the Operations Forecast on enhanced funding for capital renewal, deferred maintenance and building repurposing. The Committee was pleased to see the continued (although not at the level as planned in the multi-year budget) allocation from its operating budget of funds to RenewUS, as the signal this sends to the Province is a strong one.

Although supported in principle, the initiative to create a Natural Resources Innovation Complex and its inclusion as an area for investment by the Province was met with some reticence by the Committee, purely because of the perspective the project may generate at a time of fiscal restraint and in light of our needs related to capital renewal, deferred maintenance and building repurposing. However, we must continue to look to the future, and to be in a position to take advantage of opportunities which might be created by provincial initiatives such as SaskBuilds.

In closing, the Planning and Priorities Committee acknowledges and appreciates the opportunity to provide its views on the 2014-15 Operations Forecast, and recognizes the efforts of those responsible for the development of the document.

On behalf of the members of the Planning and Priorities Committee,

Sincerely,



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