# Academic Divisional Retreat – A Focus on Fleming’s Academic Plan

## Slide 1:

Welcome and thank you for spending a few minutes with me today. I am very much looking forward to seeing you at our Academic Division event on October 26th where the focus will be on our Academic Plan. It’s been almost a year in development. While no plan is perfect, we are at the point where we need to roll it out with the idea that the specific deliverables, particularly those identified in Year 2 and 3 can and will be adjusted. We need to be flexible and responsive to the changing conditions that are part of postsecondary education in Ontario. If you can’t join us on October 26th, no worries. At the end of the presentation I will be providing you with ways in which you can engage with the Academic Plan.

So let’s begin.

## Slide 2:

I thought I’d begin with a roadmap for the presentation. First, I will talk a little about why I’ve opted for this approach. Next I will connect the outcomes of our event to our core promise to students. I will show how the priorities of the Strategic Plan relate to those of the Academic Plan. I will talk a little about the overall organization of the Academic Plan, including the priorities we have identified. Using the Learning Design priority as an example, to show you how the overarching goal associated with this priority is connected to strategy and deliverables. I’ll provide some links to resources and provide suggestions as to how you can engage and participate in bringing our Academic Plan to life.

## Slide 3:

Many of you have been using the “flipped classroom” for some time. Since our Academic Planning day will be incredibly packed, I thought it appropriate to model the “flipped classroom” approach to prepare for the event. That way you can spend your time in discussing and creating rather than listening to someone (me), drone on and on about something that you could have read or researched on your own.

Here are the intended learning outcomes for the day. They may seem lofty, but I believe they are achievable. During the course of the day, you will have the opportunity to participate in up to four 45 minute sessions. Each timeslot offers a choice of 4 topics, each related to one of the priorities of the Academic Plan. These sessions, when combined with the advanced reading of the draft plan will contribute to the achievement of the first learning outcome.

At the end of the day, we will gather back together and work in teams for an extended time so that you can build on your learnings from the morning and develop, with your colleagues, a draft plan for your program or discipline area that will meet the priorities of the Academic Plan in Year 1; this is the activity that will contribute to the achievement of outcome 2.

## Slide 4

Let’s begin by having a look at the 4 priorities of our Strategic Plan for 2015-18. For more information on the plan, click on the link at the bottom of the slide. The number of priorities have been reduced to 4 from 6 in the previous plan. While there are strong connections between the work we do in the Academic Division and all the priorities, the first priority really is our “wheelhouse”. As the teams build their draft action plan to meet the goals of the Academic Plan, it is essential that we have the 4 priorities of the Strategic Plan firmly in mind.

## Slide 5:

While we have a new Strategic Plan, our Core Promise to Students remains unique to Fleming. During the consultations for the Strategic Plan many faculty and staff spoke about how “Learn, Belong, Become” resonated with them. It was so much more than a tag line. It sticks in our minds and our hearts. Each one of us can relate a story about a student or colleague within this framework and so the Core Promise has been refined to align with “Learn, Belong, Become”. Later you will see that we have used “Learn, Belong, Become” in our description of the Fleming Graduate.

## Slide 6:

The Academic Plan consists of the draft Plan document and an appendix. The link on this slide will take you to the Plan draft document. This slide outlines the organization of the document. As with any plan, it is necessary to position the work situationally. To this end we begin with the context for the plan, including the PSE landscape in Ontario and some of the challenges we and other postsecondary institutions are facing in the coming years. Of course there are a number of opportunities and so it is important that we maintain a positive and energized outlook.

Since it is important for everyone to know how we arrived at the specifics in the plan, we summarized the process that was undertaken. The feedback from the sessions is available on the Office of the VPA affinity site under the “Academic Planning” tab.

A plan cannot be realized without people – faculty, staff and academic leaders and the document “calls out” the role of our champions and faculty. I’d like to note that our Academic Council has a special role in ensuring the Academic Plan remains front and centre for us. To this end Council agendas will include regular progress reports and features on different aspects of the plan.

Students are our raison d’etre; I know all of you are completely focused and committed to ensuring their learning experience is exemplary and that our students become graduates. During our consultations we heard from a number of employers about our graduates. What makes a Fleming Graduate unique? We’ve attempted to capture those attributes succinctly and around “learn, belong, become”.

The next part of the plan document presents the priorities and strategies for the next 3 years. An appendix which provides a detailed plan, taking each priority and strategy and aligning deliverables for each year will accompany the plan.

## Slide 7:

At the heart of our plan is the overarching objective to deliver outstanding student learning experiences. Each of the six priorities are aligned with this objective: Learning Design, Teaching Excellence, Pathways, Student Success, Quality Assurance and Applied Research. Let’s have a look at one of the priorities: Learning Design.

## Slide 8:

The first statement is the goal associated with this priority. Underlying the goal are strategies to achieve the goal. For Learning Design, you will see an emphasis on authentic assessment, course design and applied learning. These are not new to us. We’ve made tremendous progress over the past few years and we want to build on this good work.

## Slide 9:

Just as assessments must be linked to course learning outcomes and course learning outcomes in turn map to program learning outcomes, this slide shows how the proposed Year 1, 2 and 3 deliverables are linked and contribute to the strategy and the strategy is connected to the goal of the priority. This map will be presented as an appendix to the plan; while the Year 1 deliverables are well established, the Year 2 and 3 plans will be revisited and revised as needed, so that we can be responsive to changes that will inevitably occur over the next 3 years.

## Slide 10:

We are all busy with competing priorities. It may be that you cannot attend the event on October 26th. If you cannot attend, here is what you can do. In order for us to realize all of the goals of the plan, we need to “own it” and keep it front and centre as we go about our day to day work.

## Slide 11:

So what’s next? The plan is almost complete. We will be doing a little more work to polish the plan document and will be revising the language to support the “Applied Research” priority. The plan will be presented to Academic Council for endorsement and to ELT for approval. Work on the detailed plans for Years 1 to 3 will wrap up in a few more weeks. Work has already begun many of the Year 1 deliverables. We will take stock each June to ensure that we are on track and to refine plans for subsequent years. Finally we will take the time to celebrate our accomplishments.

## Slide 12:

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the work of the Academic Planning team who began this work a year ago. They have spent many hours researching, designing consultation sessions, presenting and gathering feedback on the plan. I would also like to acknowledge all of you who attended one or more of the consultation events; your active participation is greatly appreciated. Our Academic Council and Academic Leaders Team deserve special mention. The Academic Plan was a standing agenda item for these groups over the past year. They provided feedback as the plan was being shaped and I see these groups as being integral to guiding the work going forward.

Finally, I am very excited that we have a robust academic plan that respects our history and accomplishments, is grounded in theory and practice and looks to a bright future for our students and graduates.

Thank you for listening!