As it does every year at this time, the University of Ottawa has begun its budget planning exercise for the coming fiscal year, 2015-2016. This process is undertaken with the degree of seriousness and thoroughness required, to ensure the University is well positioned and to further the ambitious goals we set for ourselves in Destination 2020.

The University is proud to be among the top 2% of universities in the world. This achievement is due of course to the energy and momentum generated by the numerous initiatives undertaken in recent years but, even more so, to the outstanding contributions of all our students, professors and support staff. We must now give ourselves the means to maintain this momentum.

However, we still face a number of significant challenges. Our main goal, of course, is to provide our students with the very best education possible. We must make some difficult decisions to ensure the University remains financially viable, allowing us to create an atmosphere conducive to an enriching and rewarding student experience. Costs at universities, due in large part to salary increases, are rising at a rate faster than revenue, which is limited by tuition fee caps and decreased government funding. Like all universities in Ontario, the University of Ottawa is operating under a structural deficit. If we do not take corrective actions, the situation will only worsen.

Earlier this year, the president communicated the University’s strategic priorities in Roadmap@Destination2020, a document that summarizes our major challenges and places them within the broader context of strategic mandate agreements (SMAs) and the Ontario government’s differentiation policy framework. The focus of the document is clear—how to increase revenue while improving the overall efficiency and effectiveness of our operations. A number of concrete initiatives came out of discussions for Roadmap, and in particular, a report on the operations of FGPS, replacement of the student information system (SIS) and a new major fundraising campaign, to be launched in the spring of 2015.

The University of Ottawa has held consultations in each of the past two years to communicate the University’s overall direction and hold discussions with key stakeholders on budget priorities for the coming year. The consultations were very successful and generated many excellent suggestions. This year, however, the University has decided to focus its efforts on implementing the recommendations of Roadmap@Destination2020, rather than on holding more consultations.

Rest assured that suggestions, ideas and comments received during the two consultations will remain at the heart of discussions over the coming months. Those interested in sharing their comments are invited to forward them to a member of the Financial Resources team.
Our University is constantly evolving and remains fully committed to offering its students the best education possible. The coming months will be critical for creating a climate conducive to achieving this goal.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Marc Joyal

Christian Detellier