

# Moving FPA Institutes Forward

## *Overview, Reactions, and Next Steps*

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### **Context**

One of the initiatives pursued by the Faculty of Public Affairs in the wake of the approval by FPA's Faculty Board of *Moving FPA Forward: Priorities and Directions for the Faculty of Public Affairs, 2013-2018* (hereafter, *Moving FPA Forward*) was the establishment of summer institutes. What came to be known as the "FPA Professional Institute" has been supported by the Office of the Dean of FPA (ODFPA) on a pilot-project basis for three years: 2014, 2015, and 2016. The focus of the FPA Professional Institute has been to allow FPA units, colleagues, and others with connections to the Faculty to offer a number of short professional development programs in the summer months of those three years.

*Moving FPA Forward* also mandated the establishment of a number of ad hoc committees aimed at examining broad, longer-term issues of relevance to the Faculty. One of these committees was to be concerned with the future of "the development of new approaches and implementation of new approaches to public officials and citizens of Canada and abroad, including professional development programs and summer institutes." A key aspect of the mandate of this committee was thus to assess the experience with the FPA Professional Institute and reflect on the future of these and related activities. Such a committee was duly established and, following extensive consultations within FPA and with other parts of the Carleton community, released its report, entitled *Moving FPA Institutes Forward* (hereafter, the Report), in October 2015. A copy of the report can be accessed by [clicking here](#). Please allow me to thank all committee members – Stephen Azzi (Kroeger College, Political Management), Susan Harada (School of Journalism and Communication), Bryan Henderson (NPSIA), Cassie Smith (ODFPA), Anna Riethman (SPPA), and Barry Wright (Kroeger College and ODFPA) – for their hard work on the Report.

The Report was then posted on the FPA website and comments were invited from all colleagues – faculty members and professional staff – in the Faculty. A total of four written comments were received. The contents of the Report were also discussed at meetings of FPA Chairs and Directors on 9 November 2015, 7 December 2015, and 2 May 2016. Earlier versions of the present document were also discussed with FPA Chairs and Directors on 6 June 2016 and 26 September 2016.

The overall purpose of this document is to provide a high-level overview of key elements of the Report, especially as these relate to comments received, and to identify next steps, mainly about the future of the FPA Professional Institute.

### **Overview of Findings and Comments**

The Report documents broad, but shallow, support for the notion of FPA-sponsored institutes, including the piloted FPA Professional Institute. There are clearly remnants of a guarded attitude amongst FPA colleagues toward undertakings of this kind, based largely on past experiences with a similar Carleton-wide undertaking. It is also clear that the FPA Professional Institute pilots for 2014 and 2015 were positively perceived and thus led to the building of some goodwill.

A distinction is drawn, in the Report, between academic (for-credit) and professional (not-for-credit) institutes; the possibility of creating pathways between professional and academic institutes is mentioned. The idea of an “FPA Summer School” which would bring together a number of academic institutes on related topics is also explicitly raised. This latter possibility is consistent with suggestions in two of the comments received, with one emphasizing the need to think more ambitiously about the scope and size of academic institutes, and focus these in areas of strong demand.

The Report identifies a clear demarcation of roles between ODFPA (or FPA) and proponents (including FPA units) of academic and professional institutes. ODFPA is seen as providing basic infrastructure (or access to it), logistics, marketing, selection of institutes (including a clear process and rules through which these are selected), and support during delivery. The role of proponents (including FPA units) is seen as resting with the inception, contents, and delivery of institutes. There is general agreement that the downside financial risk should be assumed by ODFPA, with the upside flowing to institute proponents and supportive FPA units. This basic approach (which lines up well with the actual experience of the FPA Professional Institute) is supported explicitly in one of the comments received and implicitly in another. The author of one comment goes further and sees ODFPA as providing more extensive infrastructure support (“overarching structure”) and a broader role (namely, what is being done now plus the coordination of all unit-delivered professional training activities and of all activities that showcase research undertaken within FPA, with key items identified in the latter role being post-award grant administration support and assistance with dissemination). Other issues raised in the comments include the means of reaching out to potential clientele by asking about delivery mechanisms (what role for online?) and formats (hybrid? compressed time frames?).

Two of the comments raise issues relating to overall objectives: what does FPA seek to do / accomplish through institutes? What opportunities does FPA want to pursue and what constraints will the Faculty face in doing so? The comments received suggest that no clear answers to these questions can be found in the Report and note that such answers would help to define and shape next steps. These two comments (and perhaps another one) provide views consistent with an overall objective that would be the provision of “world-class training” in areas where there is sufficient demand. Within that context, the need to work with partners who would provide a base clientele is highlighted in one of the comments.

Finally, another comment is quite negative on the prospects for professional institutes (the issue of academic institutes is not addressed). Higher potential is seen for events such as “lunch-time roundtables” since competition is too strong for more involved training.

### **Recommendations**

The Report contains a total of 15 recommendations: six are short-term and general in nature; four others, also focused on the short term, are more specific; five further recommendations are aimed at the longer term and formulated at a general level.

In essence, the six short-term, general recommendations are as follows. First, internal and external communication aimed at raising awareness about and the visibility of academic and professional institutes should be a Faculty-level responsibility. This is supported by most of the comments received. Second, the marketing of institutes should also be a Faculty-level responsibility. Here again, support for this recommendation can be found in most of the comments received.

Third, the Faculty should develop and implement protocols and processes for encouraging and selecting proposals for academic and professional institutes. This Faculty-level responsibility is seen as extending to the development of consistent practices and procedures to support the delivery of institutes. While these matters are not addressed explicitly in any of the comments, it is clearly possible to see in these implicit (and indeed, assumed) Faculty-level support of this kind.

Fourth, to the extent that academic institutes are offered, these should move away from a rigid delivery structure and, for example, explore 0.25-credit courses, consider compressed delivery and weekend-only offerings. Some support for such delivery structures are expressed in a few of the comments.

Fifth, the Faculty should work with University instances to access better facilities for the delivery of academic and professional institutes. Sixth, there is a perceived need to enhance the role of Faculty-hired personnel fulfilling administrative functions. Here again, some support for both of these recommendations can be found in the comments provided by colleagues.

The four short-term, specific recommendations can be summarized as follows. First, it should be a Faculty-level responsibility to negotiate more favourable cost structures for University-provided services. This issue is not raised in any of the comments received. Second, ODFPA should sponsor more research on markets and our capacity to deliver before considering expanding the number of institutes offered. There is strong support for this recommendation in at least one of the comments provided by colleagues.

Third, there is a need to undertake a comprehensive scan of all academic and professional institutes offered by FPA units. Fourth, ODFPA should undertake work with partners within FPA and elsewhere at Carleton to explore pathways between professional and academic institutes. There were no comments made on these two recommendations.

Finally, the key aspects of the five longer-term, general recommendations made in the Report can be outlined as follows. First, ODFPA should encourage the development and delivery of integrated, academic multi-institute “Summer Schools” around identified sets of themes or topics. This recommendation is mentioned in a few of the comments and strongly endorsed in at least one of these.

Second, ODFPA should sponsor a market study to determine the professional training needs of key groups and organizations (e.g., public service, NGOs). Support for this recommendation is expressed, in one way or another, in all of the comments received. A third recommendation follows from this one, namely that this market study should lead to the development of a plan to engage these groups and organizations in professional training opportunities offered by FPA. Explicit support for this recommendation can be found in one of the comments provided by colleagues.

Fourth, there is a need to get the necessary human and physical resources in place to support the delivery of institutes. And, on a related note, a fifth recommendation highlights the need to address shortcomings of the physical spaces where institutes are offered. There are no specific references to these two recommendations in the comments received.

Most of the matters outlined above were also raised, in one form or another, in discussions with FPA Chairs and Directors and within ODFPA. One additional issue raised in the course of discussions with Chairs and Directors relates to the temporary nature of the piloted FPA Professional Institute. Views

were expressed that the temporary nature of the pilots was a disincentive to colleagues (and others) when it came to developing proposals that could be included and delivered as part of the FPA Professional Institute. Were the pilot not to be renewed or the specific proposal not offered again, for example, time and effort would have been invested by proponents and the return to them for their investment of time and effort severely curtailed. This climate of uncertainty was seen as acting to discourage the generation of proposals. It would thus be important to act to resolve this uncertainty as we move forward.

### **Next Steps**

When the ad hoc committee prepared its report, members had access to the data from the first two years of activity of the FPA Professional Institute. Since then, the Institute has been held a third time, in 2016. The data from this third instalment of the FPA Professional Institute reveal a broadly similar pattern of activity and outcome. In total, 10 short programs were selected for inclusion in the activities for 2016. Six of these proceeded to the development stage and eventually five were offered at various times between April and June 2016 and attracted a total of 60 paid participants. The financial results of this third year of operation were also similar to those in previous years: four offerings ran small surpluses and one realized a deficit. There were no marked departures in the third year of the pilot from what occurred in the first two years of the FPA Professional Institute.

One complicating factor arose as the committee was completing its work. Although the idea of a Carleton Global Academy (hereafter, the Global Academy) had been discussed for some time, it is only in the second half of 2015 that serious conversations about potential activities got under way. The mandate of the Global Academy is such that a key area of focus for its activities rests with the delivery of Carleton-based professional development (i.e., not-for-credit) initiatives aimed at clientele located primarily off campus (for more information on the Global Academy, [click here](#)). While much broader than what was envisaged for the FPA Professional Institute, there is no doubt that elements of the proposed sphere of activity for the Global Academy overlap that envisaged for the Institute. Given the timing of the release of the Report, it is not surprising that this development is not directly addressed in the text of *Moving FPA Institutes Forward*. However, now that the ambitions for the Global Academy are taking shape much more clearly, it is important that these be taken into consideration in the articulation of the response to the Report.

In the course of discussions with Diana MacKay, Executive Director of the Global Academy, it became clear to me that there was also an area of overlap between some of the recommendations and comments on the expected role of ODFPA in support of the FPA Professional Institute and services provided by the Global Academy staff. Specifically, the Global Academy is connecting with off-campus groups to assess their professional training needs (first long-term recommendation) and is considering initiatives to target opportunities for which a market can be discerned (second short-term, specific recommendation and third long-term recommendation). The Global Academy has in place dedicated staff (consistent with the sixth short-term, general recommendation) and is pursuing a communication and marketing strategy for its sponsored activities (first and second short-term, general recommendations).

Given the areas of overlap, additional discussions were held with Diana MacKay and within ODFPA as to possible arrangements that would see increased collaboration between the Global Academy and the FPA Professional Institute. As these discussions proceeded, it became clear that the Global Academy could provide a fitting “home” for the Institute. This idea was explored more fully in a meeting that

brought together Diana MacKay and Pauline Rankin (Associate Vice-President, International), within whose portfolio the Global Academy falls, as well as ODFPA staff (Sharon Johnston, Cassie Smith, and me). Additional information on the processes and logistics underlying the FPA Professional Institute, the assessment documents for the 2015 and 2016 Institutes, and the financial results for all three years were provided to the Global Academy. **In the end, there was agreement on both sides that the FPA Professional Institute will be transferred to the Global Academy, which will take over the role played by ODFPA in fostering and supporting the development and delivery of future editions of the Institute.** Diana MacKay and her team will thus be in contact with FPA colleagues, units, and others with connections to the Faculty and the Institute about plans for the 2017 FPA Professional Institute. Determining the business model for the Institute, the application and selection processes to be followed, and the level and types of support to be provided will now be the responsibility of the Global Academy.

The “next step” outlined in the above paragraph provides a comprehensive response to the recommendations and comments dealing with professional (not-for-credit) institutes. It does not, however, address the case of academic (for-credit) institutes. At this stage, I feel that there is not enough information available on the potential for and the interest across the Faculty in developing and delivering for-credit institutes. As a result, I will engage FPA Chairs and Directors as well as ODFPA staff in discussions about the future of academic institutes within the Faculty over the course of the current academic year and will report back to you before the end of April 2017.

In closing, please allow me to thank all those who have actively engaged with the efforts that led to the production of *Moving FPA Institutes Forward* and all colleagues who provided comments either formally or informally on the Report. I am very grateful for your dedication and your engagement with issues affecting the future of the Faculty of Public Affairs.