



# RAISING OUR SIGHTS

Priorities and Directions for  
the Faculty of Public Affairs

2020



Approved by FPA Faculty Board on April 30, 2020



**Carleton**  
UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF  
Public Affairs

# Message from the Dean

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The COVID-19 pandemic has forced a shorter focus on us all. Thinking about the future has come to be dominated by the latest information on the pandemic and efforts to address its implications. In an amazingly short period of time, we transitioned to working from home; we celebrated – and rightly so – the herculean efforts that went into completing the Winter term of 2020. Our students have responded by enrolling in record numbers in courses delivered by units of the Faculty of Public Affairs in Summer 2020. Through it all, your willingness to adjust to this new reality and your commitment to the well-being of our students have been steadfast and nothing short of inspirational. I am grateful to all those in the FPA community – faculty members, support staff, contract instructors, teaching assistants, visitors and the like – who have contributed to this wondrous demonstration of individual and collective will. Thank you.

Here we are in May. I do not wish to minimize in any way the challenges and the importance of addressing the situation that we are facing. However, to imagine the future of our Faculty, we must raise our eyes from the immediate and consider possibilities and opportunities over a longer time frame. The Faculty has been involved in just such an exercise since Summer 2018 and this document is the culmination of some 20 months of consultation, thinking, discussion, and synthesis. An initial discussion at the August 2018 retreat of FPA Chairs and Directors eventually led to the creation of a committee with a mandate to develop a statement of priorities and directions for our Faculty. A series of consultations with the on-campus FPA community (faculty members, support staff, contract instructors, and students) and with alumni and friends of the Faculty followed. Successive drafts were shared with FPA Chairs and Directors for their feedback. The resulting statement was adopted by Faculty Board on April 30, 2020. And thus *Raising Our Sights* came to be.

Meanwhile, the University launched its own process to develop an institution-wide strategic integrated plan and a leadership transition in the Faculty became increasingly imminent. As the process that led to *Raising Our Sights* proceeded, committee members were acutely aware of the context in which this was occurring and, in the end, produced a statement of priorities and directions for FPA wholly situated in that context. Please allow me to thank committee members for their hard work over these many months: Nicolas Carrier (Criminology and Criminal Justice), Susan Harada (Journalism and Communication – Journalism), Meredith Lilly (Norman Paterson School of International Affairs), Kyla Reid (FPA Research Facilitator), Jenelle Williams (Kroeger College – Bachelor of Global and International Studies), Benjamin Woo (Journalism and Communication – Communication and Media Studies), Amanda Wright (Economics); Laurie Jaeger and Karen Kelly, both in the Dean’s Office, provided support. I am especially grateful to Jonathan Malloy who “held the pen” through numerous drafts; that the end product is a coherent whole testifies to his skill and determination. Thank you, Jonathan. Finally, I would like to thank all of you in the Faculty’s on-campus and off-campus communities who participated in what led to *Raising Our Sights*. Your attachment and dedication to the Faculty is palpable – and greatly appreciated. I hope the document speaks to you about the exciting future in store for our Faculty of Public Affairs.

*André Plourde*



**The Faculty of Public Affairs (FPA)** was created in 1997 to bring together the exceptionally strong array of academic programs at Carleton University dedicated to the study of “the structures, processes, policies and interactions of the private, governmental and non-profit/volunteer sectors of civil society.” Public affairs have been at the heart of Carleton since its founding in 1942, with the first Carleton degrees awarded in journalism and public administration. The creation of FPA reflected both this historic legacy and Carleton’s ongoing and unmatched strength in the study of public affairs.

The Faculty of Public Affairs is unique among Canadian universities as the only faculty-level unit devoted to the study of public affairs, and with few counterparts in the world, is also exceptional internationally. It has continued to grow and flourish since its creation. And its leadership and community are committed to ongoing reflection and planning on how to continue to maximize FPA’s impact locally, nationally, and internationally.

In 2013, the Faculty adopted a far-reaching strategic plan, *Moving FPA Forward*, which boldly built on the strengths of the Faculty with a vision to “**build better democracy and foster informed citizenship.**” *Moving FPA Forward* set out five priority areas for 2013-2018: online learning; faculty and student engagement; engaging the broader public; increasing training and education of public officials and citizens; and enhancing internal capacity and effectiveness. The Faculty made significant progress in all of these areas and continues to advance on all fronts.

At the same time as *Moving FPA Forward*, Carleton University set out and completed its own five-year Strategic Integrated Plan, *Collaboration, Leadership and Resilience: Sustainable Communities – Global Prosperity*. After a time of leadership transition, the university has now embarked on a new exercise of strategic planning renewal. This presents an opportunity to discuss and formulate possible new priorities and directions for the Faculty following the completion of *Moving FPA Forward*.

Given that the Faculty is facing its own leadership transition, and in anticipation of a renewed university-wide plan, this document is not a full strategic plan in the mode of *Moving FPA Forward*. However, it is a statement of aspirations and possibilities for how the Faculty of Public Affairs can continue to advance, based on consultations with the FPA community.

This document does not aspire to cover all possible FPA activities, especially those undertaken by individual units and faculty. Rather, it focuses on strategic meso-level areas in which the Faculty is best positioned to play the role of convener and facilitator. For each of these areas, we identify several possible actions at the level of the Faculty. We also invite units and colleagues to consider additional actions within each area.

FPA’s core mission remains clear – to be a research-intensive teaching Faculty committed to building better democracy and informed citizenship. The challenge we face is how we can raise our sights: How can the Faculty of Public Affairs, as an academic community, build on its existing strengths and momentum? What should our top priorities be as a Faculty that is growing and aiming ever higher?

## Approach and Key Themes and Values

The starting point of this document was a broad online consultation of the FPA community – faculty, staff, students, contract instructors, alumni, and other friends of the Faculty. The community was asked to consider questions about FPA’s most important activities, opportunities, and challenges, and to offer their own vision for the FPA of the future. The committee considered the many responses carefully and identified **four themes** that stood out in the consultations:

- > Grounding Our Mission in Research
- > Digital Technology as Tool and Topic
- > Advancing Diversity and Inclusion
- > Expanding Our International Footprint

Two key overarching values were also identified – **Community** and **Collaboration**. A commitment to meaningful connections with society and having local, national, and international impact has long been critical to the core Faculty mission of the study of public affairs. Similarly, collaboration both internally as a Faculty, and externally with partners and citizens, is key to the Faculty’s activities and mission. These values of **Community** and **Collaboration** are in turn equally vital to the long-standing mission of Carleton University as a whole.

The themes were shared with the FPA community for feedback and discussion. Initial drafts of this document were shared with unit chairs and directors, and it was then distributed online to the entire FPA community. Town halls were also held for faculty, staff, and students. Together, this feedback informed further revisions leading to the final document.

We present the four themes below. Each theme concludes with a list of possible actions that the Faculty of Public Affairs might pursue as it seeks to raise its sights. FPA units and colleagues are urged to consider identifying and implementing actions that support these four themes and contribute to “Raising Our Sights.”

### > Grounding Our Mission in Research

Educating the next generation of public sector leaders has long been an integral part of FPA’s mission with our unmatched range of undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs dedicated to public affairs and making society better. We also have tremendous prowess in research, with an exemplary and growing track record of Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) funding, scholarly publications, community-engaged applied research, and broad and innovative forms of knowledge mobilization. Research

“My ideal FPA of the future is a faculty that is internationally-renowned for providing its students with many enviable opportunities to gain research and work experience.”

–FPA undergraduate student

is integral to the FPA mission and makes universities different from other available avenues of education and training opportunities. Yet research and teaching are sometimes framed as trade-offs in contemporary discourse, with research seen as separate, rather than at the core, of the educational mission, especially for undergraduate and graduate professional programs.

FPA already has a strong commitment to experiential learning and placement opportunities for students. We also have considerable achievements already in promoting undergraduate research opportunities, such as our IPAF 4900 course (“Research Experience Course”) that allows faculty members to advertise research opportunities to undergraduate students who can then earn course credit for working on a research project designed by the faculty member. Similarly, FPA’s continuing Carleton University Research Opportunity Program (CUROP) allows undergraduate students to identify their own research projects and complete them over the summer under the supervision of a faculty member. But there is an opening and thirst for a more systematic, strategic focus across the Faculty that places research at the heart of our programs and our classrooms, brings in more students at all levels, and engages widely with all forms of research including theoretical and frontier research.

“The FPA of the future is leading the way for a new direction in research and teaching.”

-FPA faculty member

A key challenge is ensuring that students can themselves articulate the value of research. We must help students connect the dots, understanding better the value of research and the research process to their own learning and professional development. Research and the development of skills must be seen as deeply integrated and reinforcing each other, rather than separate processes or trade-offs.

Accordingly, a key first step in moving to a more systematic and transformational level of integrating research into our teaching is to listen to students and understand how they see research.

Engaging students in research projects and different steps of the research process will give them a greater sense of engagement and understanding of the relevance and link between research and learning and the frontiers of knowledge. At the same time, it will also help them build specific skills and competencies of value to their professional development and to employers. This can be a key value that can set FPA apart, increasing our relevance and appeal to students, again particularly for undergraduate and graduate professional programs that have traditionally been less connected to the research mission. Integrating research more broadly into the rest of the Faculty’s activities can also contribute to greater student engagement, retention, and completion rates.

### Potential Faculty-level actions for **Grounding Our Mission in Research**:

- Make new funding available to course instructors to support in-class student research projects, prioritizing holistic projects with potential to continue after the course is done, and to lead to publications and other outputs/impact
- Support the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) specifically in FPA
- Establish awards that recognize research in teaching and research leadership
- Expand experiential learning to include “research-driven education”
- Hire an experiential learning coordinator in the Faculty
- Maintain a central website listing for research assistant (RA) opportunities in the Faculty

## > Digital Technology as Tool and Topic

“Increasingly every public policy issue is being impacted by the rapid changes that technology [is] bringing to our world. For FPA to remain relevant, I am convinced that it needs to look at building a more focused digital governance component to its work ... If a focus is put on this now, this could be a way for FPA to differentiate itself going forward into the future.”

—FPA alumnus

Digital technology is transforming our world, presenting both encouraging and disturbing challenges to democracy, governance and citizenship. The Faculty of Public Affairs has long recognized this with cutting-edge research projects and in both new and long-standing programs. Some examples are the recently established Bachelor of Media Production and Design, the inclusion of digital surveillance issues in Criminology and Criminal Justice courses, and the participation of Communication and Media Studies, Economics, and Public Policy and Administration in Carleton’s collaborative master’s program in Data Science.

The opportunity is now to broaden this digital focus and integrate it across the Faculty in all our programs and efforts. This involves increasing technical understandings and skills in using digital technology. But it also means increasing our thinking theoretically and holistically about digitization and public affairs in broad ways, including its potential for disruption and threats to security, privacy, and democracy.

This is again a distinct opportunity for FPA as Canada’s only university Faculty dedicated to public affairs and one of the few in the world. How can we build on our incredible depth and capacity in public affairs to create transformative and innovative new understandings of the impact of digital technology on democracy, governance, and citizenship? How can we integrate this into our teaching and learning, both as a means and an end? And how do we ensure that our student have the critical skills they need to navigate their use of these digital technologies?

We have exciting opportunities to uncover new intellectual frontiers, to equip students with new and valuable skills, and to utilize technology as an instrument of learning and knowledge mobilization. The Faculty of Public Affairs has the intellectual depth and track record to approach these questions systematically and thoughtfully, rather than reactively to the latest short-term developments.

Steps to take here could include a systematic inventory of the Faculty’s current digital efforts on various axes – research, curriculum, teaching methods, knowledge mobilization, and more – and searching for ways to deepen and integrate capacity. Resources and incentives could also be dedicated to helping faculty and staff upgrade and refresh their own digital skills and knowledge, both for their own development and to boost their ability to train and mentor students.

#### Potential Faculty-level Actions for **Digital Technology as Tool and Topic**:

- Offer regular workshops and short courses to refresh and upgrade our digital skills, especially new digital research tools
- Develop protocols and resources to support online activity by FPA members and to deter and address online abuse
- Expand digital access to courses, both through more online courses and more digitally accessible content in all courses
- Deepen the development of “blended” courses, working with Carleton’s Educational Development Centre (EDC) and sponsoring workshops and shared learning
- Break down silos with open-ended collaborative events to share ideas about digital technology in the style of the Faculty’s “Bagels and Banter” series
- Launch a targeted internal funding opportunity to seed an interdisciplinary research group in digital public affairs

## > Advancing Diversity and Inclusion

The Faculty of Public Affairs prides itself on educating tomorrow’s leaders in government, civil society, and the private sector. It is essential that these leaders not only understand but also reflect Canada’s diversity.

“I think there is a longing for community and a longing for new interactions and new ideas.”

–FPA faculty member

Consequently, FPA is committed to increasing access to higher education for students from under-represented groups and communities, including women, racialized persons, persons identifying as LGBTQ2IA+, persons with disabilities, and those disadvantaged by socio-economic circumstances. Furthermore, we seek to contribute to reconciliation between Canada and Indigenous peoples, especially the Algonquin nation on whose traditional and unceded territory Carleton University is located.

Building a diverse and inclusive Faculty enriches all aspects of our mission. We all benefit when research takes difference within and across societies into account and when classrooms make space for perspectives informed by a range of experiences of the world. Thus, increasing the diversity of our faculty and staff complement and curricular renewal are necessary but not sufficient steps toward these goals. It is easy enough to say we support equity, diversity, and inclusion; FPA must demonstrate our commitment by challenging barriers to inclusion and championing diversity, both within the university and beyond. This includes building support systems that enable diverse forms of success within the Faculty and the institution. There are grassroots initiatives to advance diversity and inclusion in the Faculty of Public Affairs, such as a new student-led diversity and inclusion committee in Global and International Studies, and the School of Social Work's committee on Indigenization, Decolonization and Reconciliation that combines faculty leadership and student participation. The Faculty must also prioritize responses to the "Calls to Action" by the Carleton University Indigenous Strategic Initiatives Committee (CUISIC). A key step in all of the above is to listen to diverse voices and to build on current initiatives in a way that leads to truly meaningful and effective change.

#### Potential Faculty-level actions for **Advancing Diversity and Inclusion**:

- Make it mandatory for hiring committees in FPA to include a designated Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) champion who is empowered to raise concerns and illuminate dimensions of equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout the hiring process; in doing so, leverage existing educational and training opportunities already on campus, as appropriate
- Expand the range of the Faculty's recruitment efforts to attract more students from diverse backgrounds
- Expand "experiential learning" to include diverse conceptions of knowledge and its acquisition and application
- Develop working groups/communities of practice on developing and sustaining inclusive curricula
- Institute formal mentorship programs for faculty, staff, PhD students, and others in the FPA community



## > Expanding Our International Footprint

“We could capitalize significantly on the international linkages of our programs especially given that we already possess such great connections within the government institutions here in the nation’s capital.”

—Respondent from the FPA community

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The Faculty of Public Affairs has long embraced and utilized its location in the nation’s capital, Ottawa. But an increasingly important question for the Faculty is how we can expand and increase our focus on international themes and audiences, moving to a new level of global visibility and impact.

Once again the Faculty builds here on existing strength. Our Ottawa advantage is twofold, putting us at the heart of national affairs, while also providing a gateway to international institutions and opportunities. We have strong and long-standing relationships with international institutions, embassies, high commissions, and other entities in Ottawa. We have also made international student experiences a key priority through, among others, the Bachelor of Global and International Studies (BGInS) program, which includes an international experience element as part of the core program requirements, and increased opportunities in the Faculty as a whole, such as courses that award academic credit for international internships.

The challenge is to expand and deepen this international focus throughout the Faculty, in all our programs and activities. Our Ottawa location serves as a gateway in both directions and our international focus must be both external and internal. In addition to international research, partnerships, and sending our students abroad, there is considerable opportunity to host more programs and international visitors in the Faculty. Raising our sights globally must also involve engaging and deepening the international impact and presence within FPA itself.

In particular, FPA has a chance to take a more sustained and systematic focus on international students: not only in attracting more to Carleton, but also to engage and collaborate with them, as their presence and contributions make the Faculty more diverse and intellectually stronger and richer. More broadly, we can establish more systematic exchanges and partnerships at the faculty and researcher level with international universities and institutions, both sending FPA members abroad and hosting more international visitors on campus. And programs and individual faculty can be incentivized to invest the necessary time and capacity to expand individual and short-term linkages into broad, institutionalized relationships with international partners.

Potential Faculty-level actions for **Expanding Our International Footprint:**

- Institute a new Faculty-level program promoting international research partnerships by sponsoring visiting international scholars to Carleton
- Develop collaborative and globally linked online courses to provide all students with further forms of international exposure and experience
- Strengthen infrastructure to allow more global collaborations and joint classes
- Accelerate the development of joint programs with international universities
- Enable opportunities within FPA for more peer-to-peer knowledge exchange about international experiences and opportunities, for both faculty and students

## Raising Our Sights

The Faculty of Public Affairs is dedicated to questioning and improving all elements of our public lives. It brings that focus to itself as well. We continually reflect on what we have achieved and look ahead to the future. This document embodies our commitment to continue raising our sights even further.