

# *One Step Back, and Two Steps Forward*

Report of the  
Institute of Island Studies  
Futures Committee

14 February 2014

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## Introduction

The IIS "Futures Committee" was constituted in October 2013 by the Vice-President Research and Graduate Studies in consultation with the Vice-President Academic. The committee comprised:

Edward MacDonald, Department of History (chair)  
Jim Randall, Coordinator of the Master of Arts in Island Studies program  
Ann Greyborn, Chair of the Institute of Island Studies Advisory Council  
Neb Kujundzic, Interim Dean of Arts  
Harry Baglolle, founding Director of the IIS, representing the community

The Futures Committee was mandated to review the recommendations of the External Review Panel [submitted in September 2013]; to explore the feasibility of implementing some or all of the recommendations; to outline a process for restructuring the IIS or creating a re-defined unit including IIS; and to report its findings to the VPs and the President.

The Futures Committee has met almost weekly (with the exception of the Christmas holidays) since 14 November, a total of nine meetings. Over the course of our deliberations, we have consulted with the following individuals, either in person or by telephone/email:

Tim Carroll, School of Business  
Wendy MacDonald, Assistant Clerk of Executive Council and Secretary to Policy Board of Provincial Government  
Robert Gilmour, Vice-President Research and Graduate Studies  
Joan Sinclair, Island Studies Press  
Carolyn Peach Brown, Environmental Studies  
Adam Fenech, Climate Lab

Liette Vasseur, external consultant (by email)  
Teresa Hennebery, ACOA (by phone)  
Myrtle Jenkins-Smith, Interim Director, Department of Development and Alumni Engagement (by telephone)  
Robert Greenwood, Executive Director, Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Policy and Development (by email)  
Mike Hunter, Cape Breton University Press (by email)  
Laurie Brinklow, Chair, North Atlantic Islands Conference (email input)

In our advisory capacity we offer the following recommendations, organized according to the framing document created to categorize the external consultants' report. In reaching them, we shared a conviction that the Institute of Island Studies has a vital role to play in helping UPEI

fulfill its mandate, and we hope that these recommendations will both inform a process of renewal and suggest a template for re-launching the Institute of Island Studies.

## **I. Overarching Recommendations**

In endorsing this group of recommendations, we wish to ground them with reference to a catalytic document in the genesis of the Institute of Island Studies, Leslie Harris' assessment of the University of Prince Edward Island's first decade: "The University of Prince Edward Island: 'Ten Years Later'" (1979). At the time that he wrote his assessment, UPEI was still struggling to define its place within the Island community. While fully acknowledging UPEI's duty to be a "university" in its broadest, most global sense, Harris framed his report around the University's need as the provincial university to serve the community that had created it, that funded it, and that provided the bulk of its students. But he defined that service more broadly than simply the provision of diverse intellectual leadership, a ripple of spending, and solid academic training. This is how Harris put it:

It should offer programmes of continuing and adult education in response to demands from people in all walks of life and in all parts of the province; it should maintain contact with people through such mechanisms and citizens advisory groups; it should organize and conduct courses, seminars, and conferences that are related pragmatically to identified and articulated needs; it should be attuned to the interests of the rural and urban, of the poor and the prosperous, of the professional and the unskilled, of the businessman and of organized labour, of the bureaucrat and the technocrat; it should function as a catalyst for positive change; it should stimulate the creation of local organizations that can assume responsibility for pursuing their own goals; it should provide information, advice and training for citizens interested in self help situations, to question their circumstances, and to seek and develop knowledge and strategies that will allow them to participate in the shape and direction of their own lives; it should be a social animator without being politically partisan; it should provide the neutral ground upon which potentially divisive issues can be debated and encourage the processes of democratic action in an open society; it should stimulate and encourage the development of community leaders and assist in improving the efficiency of businessmen, administrators and professionals as well as that of primary producers. [p. 15]

Harris' rhetoric owes something to the vision of university extension programs that had been created a generation earlier, and some of the terminology that he uses has changed since 1979, but his work agenda for a global university rooted in a unique local community still resonates in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It provided the rationale for the formation of an institute of island studies, and the springboard for its leap into comparative international island studies. And it helps articulate the argument for maintaining an effective, empowered, engaged Institute of Island Studies as we move forward.

The other rationale for continuance is a recognition that Island Studies, writ large, has been and continues to be one of the University's constellations of excellence, and an area of niche strength in the highly competitive academic landscape of the new millennium. It is an area where UPEI has been a world leader, something appreciable at which we can be the best, an emerging field

where we lead instead of following. It is unfortunate that the University's Strategic Vision misses the opportunity to explicitly reference the comparative advantage offered by island studies, but the IIS does fall within the broad language of our school's stated aspirations.

## **II. Administration and Staffing**

### **The Bigger Picture**

In the past, for various circumstantial reasons and despite good intentions, the Institute of Island Studies has not been particularly well integrated into the larger life and work of the University. Given the current fiscal climate, the Institute's potential to serve the larger aims of the University, and the need for synchronicities, collaborations, and mutual reinforcement, this should change.

We recommend that the Institute of Island Studies be constituted along with congruent programs and institutes within a School of Island Sustainability. We are not wedded to names, yet feel "island" should be central to the school's conception, not only because it plays to a niche strength, islands, and a pressing issue, sustainability, but also, because it would resonate strongly with UPEI's community of support. It would make UPEI's take on sustainability unique.

The accompanying diagram (see Fig. 1) is merely notional, but it links together potential partners within such a School, e.g. the Climate Lab, the Institute of Island Studies, Bachelor of Environmental Studies program, the Master of Island Studies program, and the Tourism Research Centre. Each has its own mandate and priorities, but all recognize that social, cultural, and economic sustainability are inextricably entwined with ecological and environmental sustainability. Their collaboration would best be orchestrated within the structure of a school. It would also make it easier to access – and multiply -- potential funding sources.

If such a School were established, it is assumed that there would be a dean or equivalent coordinating position, and that it would report to the Vice-President Academic and/or the Vice-President Research and Graduate Studies, since the model mixes both academic programs and research/public engagement functions.

The Futures Committee has also explored the potential for involving the IIS in a possible Public Policy Institute, which might involve ACOA, the Province of PEI, and UPEI. While nothing would rule out the IIS having some role *vis à vis* such a body, which must have a regional focus and measurable economic impacts, it is clear that nothing is likely to happen with respect to this initiative in the current fiscal year. There is time for the re-constituted IIS to position itself as a potential partner in such an enterprise.

### **Institute Staffing**

After reviewing the external consultants' recommendations and discussing the staffing needs of the sort of IIS that is envisaged, we suggest three staffing options, each contingent on available and anticipated funding, and each allowing for temporary and contract positions as need and funds allowed. (See Fig. 2.)

1. The preferred model would envisage two full-time, paid positions: a Director and an Operations Manager working under the Director's supervision.
2. A Director, who would be a tenured member of faculty provided with course releases to allow for proper direction of IIS activities + a full-time Operations Manager, working under the direction of the Director and an Executive Committee.
3. Two full-time, paid positions: an Operations Manager and a Director, who would also function as the coordinator of the MAIS program (i.e. a tenured faculty member with some teaching responsibilities balanced by course releases to allow for administrative functions).

In any case, we envisage that the Director of the Institute of Island Studies would oversee the activities of the Institute, under the general direction of the Executive Committee of the Institute, and report to the Vice-President Academic and the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies. The Operations Manager is critical to all three of these options, to continue to seek out funding opportunities, to engage in knowledge translation, and organize community engagement activities from the local to the international. This is especially the case because we are not calling for the appointment of an Administrative Assistant in the short term

### **Interim Staffing**

Until a re-configured IIS can be worked into the budget process, it is essential that the IIS continue to operate and fulfill its mandate. Otherwise, momentum, opportunity, credibility, and support will be sacrificed. Until a more permanent staffing arrangement can be reached, we recommend that UPEI engage or assign an Interim Operations Manager, who would devote at least 22.5 hours per week to Institute business.

The following constitutes a tentative work agenda for the Interim Operations Manager over the course of 2014:

1. In its role as an 'honest broker', organize and host at least two Public Forums on issues topical to PEI and/or the Atlantic region.
2. With the assistance of the IIS Executive Committee, implement the recommendations of the IIS Futures Committee, as approved by UPEI
3. Revise/Update the content of the IIS website.
4. Liaise/Communicate with local, national and international island studies institutions and colleagues (to maintain the presence and reputation of the IIS).
5. Serve as a liaison to the Chair of the Organizing Committee for the 2015 North Atlantic Forum 2015.
6. Work with the Centre for Lifelong Learning (CLLL) to develop continuing education programming related to Institute of Island Studies issues.
7. Assist in pursuit of a possible UNESCO Chair in Island Studies and a Tier 1 Canada Research Chair with Island Studies as a component part.
8. Liaise with the Editor and the Publishing Committee of the Island Studies Press.

9. Be the contact person and liaison with UPEI administration and the IIS Futures Committee.
10. Be the contact person with UPEI Development and Alumni Engagement re fundraising for Island Studies.

### **Island Studies Press**

The Island Studies Press (ISP) provides an important service to UPEI, the Island community, and the community of islands. We concur that ISP should continue under the aegis of the Institute of Island Studies as an important component of the IIS program and a vehicle for disseminating research generated by the Institute, but also, other academics within the University. We do not think it feasible to combine in one position the functions of Operations Manager and Publishing Coordinator. Therefore, in addition to the positions of Director and Operations Manager, the IIS staffing model should include the position of Publishing Coordinator.

The ISP has potential to be self-supporting and to generate revenue for the IIS/UPEI, but to facilitate these outcomes, the ISP needs a fresh terms of reference and a business plan. At present, there are three distinct streams within its publishing program: a) commercially viable publications that generate revenue to help finance b) conventional academic publications with emphasis on scholarly quality rather than commercial prospects and c) e-books, that are marketed through a webstore and can fall under either type (a) or (b). Its publishing agenda includes books about islands as well as books specifically designed for use in the academic and scholarly Island Studies field. It is also considered that the ISP might offer a fee-for-service publishing business, utilizing where appropriate the print-on-demand technology.

A potential model going forward may well be Cape Breton University Press, located at another island-based university with a strong sense of place. Cape Breton University (CBU) occupies a parallel position to UPEI in terms of how it defines itself in relation to the local community and its felt duty to foster a greater understanding of that community as a lever for progress and development. To that end, CBU intends for its University Press to be self-supporting, but covers any ordinary shortfall between revenues and expenditures (including staff salaries). The CBUP reports directly to the Vice-President Academic, however, not to any intermediate body.

### **Island Studies Journal**

In terms of international status and academic networking, it is important to the future of the Island Studies constellation at UPEI that this premiere journal for the emerging discipline of nissology should remain housed at the University of Prince Edward Island and work closely with the IIS.

## **III. Governance**

We concur with the external consultants that a re-vamped governance model is in order, although our recommendations differ in some details.

1. The Advisory Council should retain its advisory role, but it should more accurately be re-named the Advisory Committee. Its membership should be re-defined to comprise the Director of the IIS, the coordinator of the MAIS (providing they continue to be separate positions), local members, national members, and international members. If a UNESCO Chair in Island Studies (see below) is obtained, that person would sit on the Advisory Committee (or, potentially, the Executive), but it is advisable to keep the membership to a manageable size.

The chair of the Advisory Committee would be chosen by its members from among those members. The size of the Advisory Committee, the selection criteria for its members, guidelines for its operation, and the length of terms for members (staggered) could be developed by the Interim Executive Committee (see below) during the interregnum preceding the launch of the permanent structure. However, as with most effective Boards, it is important that the appointments to this body be made on the basis of what they can contribute to the IIS and UPEI (e.g., networking, fundraising). The Advisory Committee would meet 3-4 times per year, taking advantage of virtual meeting technology on at least one of those occasions in order to involve both the on- and off-Island members.

2. An Executive Committee should be established to provide oversight and direction to the work of the Institute. The Executive would include the Director, the MAIS Coordinator (again, assuming these positions are not combined), a representative from the School of Island Sustainability, a representative (presumably the Chair) of the Advisory Committee, and possibly the Tier 1 CRC in Sustainability and the UNESCO Chair (if appointed). The Committee should be kept small, and would normally meet roughly six times per year.
3. Instead of a “Membership” category, which implies an expectation of benefits and shareholder ownership, as well as an obligation to report and consult on a regular basis, we propose a simpler model, perhaps dubbed “Friends” of the IIS (or “Affiliates”), which would provide a distribution list for promotion and information, a pool of potential partners, as well as a latent body of support for IIS activities.
4. To serve part of the function that the consultants envisaged for the categories of “Membership,” we recommend that the appellation of “Research Associate” be revived and regularized. “Research Associates” are scholars from outside UPEI whose work is congruent with that of the Institute and who wish to be associated with the IIS. (Examples that come to mind are Dr. Douglas Sobey, formerly of University of Ulster, and Dr. Claire Campbell, Dalhousie University and Bucknell University.) The designation should be for a fixed, but renewable term. It will also require explicit and rigorous terms of reference, and a defined process for appointment that leads through the office of the Vice-President Academic.

During this interregnum period, the current IIS Futures Committee is willing to continue as an Interim Executive Committee, if desired, to provide direction and leadership to IIS activities. Given the upcoming absence of the MAIS coordinator on administrative leave and the possibility that action will be taken towards the creation of a School of Island Sustainability, we recommend that the Interim Executive Committee be empowered to add up to two additional members to the

Interim Executive Committee as needed with the approval of the Vice-President Academic and the Vice-President Research and Graduate Studies.

#### **IV. Educational Initiatives**

We feel that the range of educational initiatives outlined in the external consultants' report would be best pursued through the MAIS, though with IIS knowledge and support. Indeed, the MAIS is already taking action on this front. We agree that the Director of the IIS should also teach in the Island Studies academic program.

#### **V. Administrative and Financial Support**

The external consultants suggest that the Institute of Island Studies should aspire to fiscal self-sustainability in the medium to long term -- in other words, that it should pay its own way -- but that the University should make some financial provision for a level of support staffing in the interim. Moreover, we have been advised by senior administrators that this is the norm for institutes at UPEI and across the country. Given UPEI's obligation to the Island community, we would prefer to think that this model is driven by fiscal reality rather than educational philosophy. And we do accept that fiscal realities impose limitations on support. It is worth pointing out, however, that two other island-based universities with deep roots in their host societies, Cape Breton University and Memorial University of Newfoundland, choose to invest core funding in similar institutes.

We have already referenced the Cape Breton University Press, which is funded on principle by its parent body. An even more pertinent example is Memorial University's Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Policy and Development (the Harris Centre), which was formed in 2004 by merging the Centre of Regional Development Studies with the Public Policy Research Centre. Working on the adage that "you have to spend money to make money," MUN provided core funding to the Harris Centre from the outset, and its base allocation from the university for 2013-14 totals \$989,744 (of which approximately \$189,000 represents new funding for expanded roles). The base funding has leveraged external funding from ACOA, the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, the RBC Blue Water Fund, and, according to its director, Rob Greenwood, "numerous projects with the private sector, NGOs, municipal government, etc." For every dollar invested by MUN, the Harris Centre has generated an additional \$1.89.

We do not suggest for a moment that UPEI is currently in a position to provide a comparable level of base funding for the IIS, but the Harris Centre example is a powerful testament to the multiplier effect if a critical mass of resources can be brought together.

The desirability of university support does not deny the necessity of finding external funding, and we fully endorse the strategy of seeking research funds and/or contracts, pursuing project and funding partnerships with external bodies, and fee-for-service work that is congruent with the IIS's mandate. The problem is that those sorts of contracts/partnerships/projects require time, time to work up funding applications and time to cultivate clients and collaborators. Time is money, but time also requires money.

Finally, any expectation that the IIS must somehow find the dollars to fund its operations also entails that the UPEI Administration make the IIS and the future School of Island Sustainability (SIS) priorities in its fundraising efforts. This is not currently the case, and it can only come to pass if senior administration so instructs its Department of Development and Alumni Engagement. We have a positive relationship with the Department, but it does not set its own fundraising priorities; it receives them. The IIS and the SIS cannot fundraise independently, and even if given the green light to cultivate donors, they must not fundraise at cross-purposes with the University's larger fundraising strategies. It is critical, then, that UPEI fundraise for its Institute of Island Studies and an exciting new School of Island Sustainability.

## **VI. Canada Research Chair and UNESCO Chairs**

We endorse the current plan to pursue a Tier 1 CRC in Sustainability with an emphasis on Climate Change, as being more likely to succeed than a Tier 1 CRC focussed solely on Island Studies. But we strongly urge that island studies be central to the conception of the Sustainability CRC. Again, this is the logical niche strength for UPEI in a research world where almost every university has a sustainability program or centre. We must be different – and better in our difference. We also recognize, as stated earlier, that “sustainability” must here link economy, society, culture, and environment.

We strongly support the idea of seeking the appointment of a UNESCO Chair in Island Studies. While it is an unfunded, largely honorary appointment, it would lend both status and prestige to the IIS and, through it, to UPEI. It would also enhance our potential for networking and leveraging partnerships internationally, and no doubt would make it easier to recruit funding.

Our preliminary inquiries reveal that there are several hundred UNESCO Chairs world-wide, but only fourteen in Canada, none east of Quebec, and none in Island Studies. We have made contact with the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, through Axel Meisen, its President, and now, Elizabeth Barot, Programme Officer, Education. The Canadian Commission has been encouraging. The first step, submission of a letter of intent, is due in the fall of 2015, but the process is involved, and work must begin soon. This, we feel, is an opportunity worth pursuing if we are to build the IIS's local and international reputation.

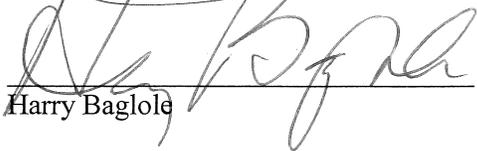
## **Conclusion**

The general perception over the past nine months has been that the Institute of Island Studies has taken a significant step backwards with the loss of its director and the curtailment of its activities. The IIS Futures Committee feels that with renewed commitment, an energetic re-booting, and the sheer plod of hard work, we can make this one step back -- and two steps forward.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Edward MacDonal, Chair

26 Feb. 2014  
Date

  
Harry Bagloli

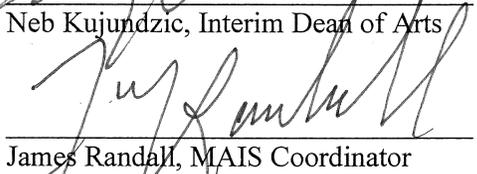
Feb. 26, 2014  
Date

  
Ann Greyborn, IIS Advisory Council

March 12, 2014  
Date

  
Neb Kujundzic, Interim Dean of Arts

Feb. 26, 2014  
Date

  
James Randall, MAIS Coordinator

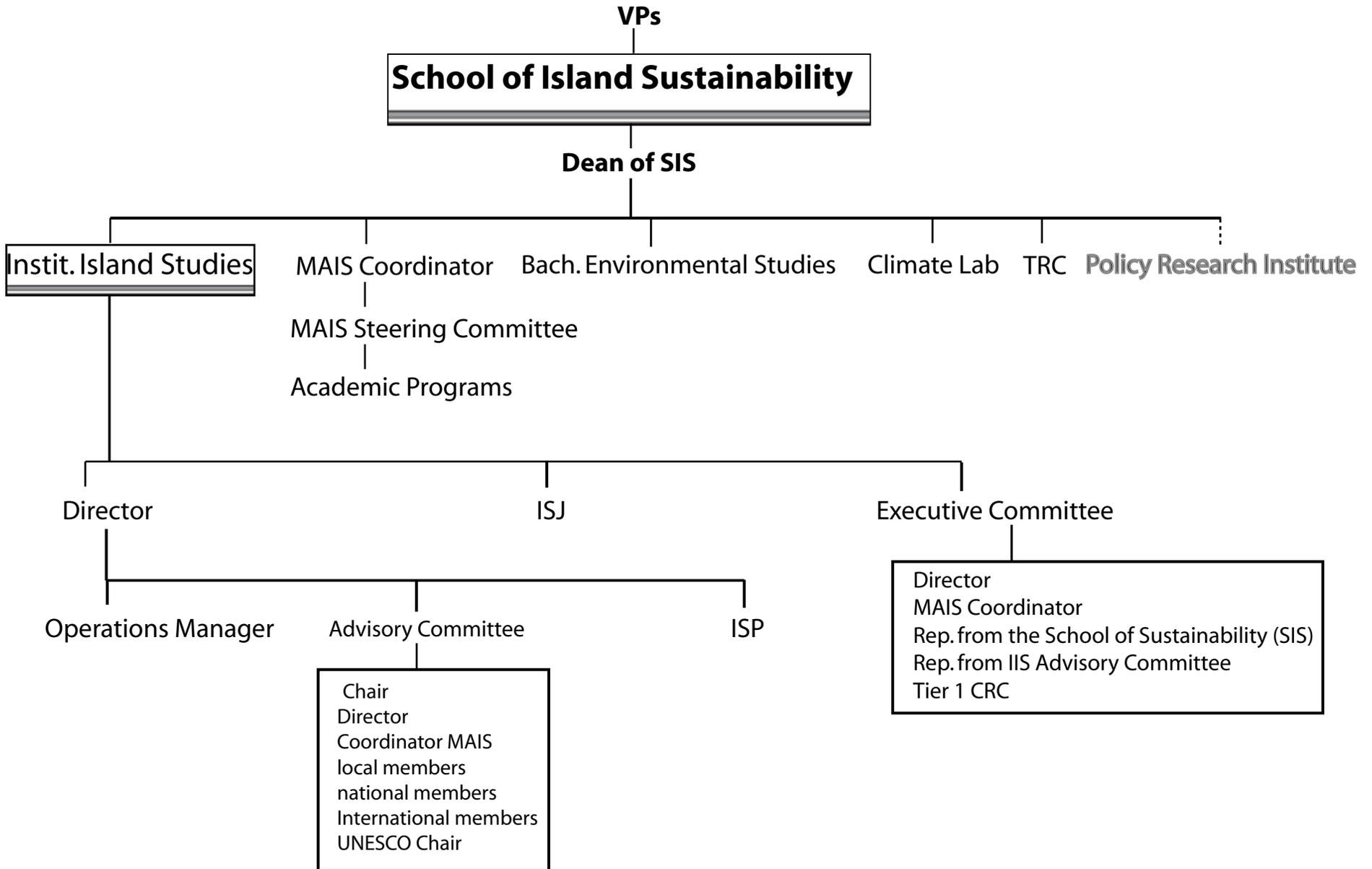
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## Summary of Recommendations

1. That the Institute of Island Studies continue with its current mandate for two principal reasons: a) as a vital means for the University of Prince Edward Island to fulfill its mission as the provincial university to serve the broad needs of its host community; and b) because it provides considerable value as part of a constellation of excellence at the University of Prince Edward Island, that is, in the international, comparative study of small islands.
2. That UPEI create a School of Island Sustainability, which would bring together under one umbrella a related set of programs and institutes, among them the Institute of Island Studies.
3. That Island Studies Press continue to operate under the aegis of the IIS with its own Publishing Coordinator.
4. That the Institute of Island Studies include a core staff of Director, Operations Manager, and Publishing Coordinator.
5. That the Director be a tenured faculty member, who would teach in the Island Studies program but be provided with course releases to allow time for IIS business.
6. That the full-time, paid position of Operations Manager be created to deal with day-to-day operations of the IIS, including fundraising and knowledge translation.
7. That the Island Studies Journal continue to be housed at UPEI with support from the IIS.
8. That a new model be adopted for an IIS Advisory Committee, which would comprise local, national and international members, and include the Director and the Coordinator of the MAIS program.
9. That an Executive Committee be established, to provide oversight and direction to the work of the Institute. The Executive would include the Director, the MAIS Coordinator, a representative from the School of Island Sustainability, and a representative (presumably the Chair) of the Advisory Committee.
10. That a “Friends of Island Studies” designation be created, which would provide a distribution list for promotion and information, a pool of potential partners, and a latent body of support for IIS activities.
11. That the IIS continue the designation of “Research Associate” for distinguished scholars from outside UPEI whose work is congruent with that of the Institute and who wish to be associated with the IIS, but that explicit and rigorous terms of reference and a defined process for appointment be introduced that leads through the office of the Vice-President Academic.

12. That new educational initiatives be pursued through the MAIS program in collaboration with the IIS.
13. That the IIS aspire to be self-sustaining in financial terms, but that it receive core funding for staffing from UPEI in the short and medium term.
14. That UPEI make fundraising to endow the IIS and a future School of Island Sustainability priorities for its Department of Development and Alumni Engagement.
15. That UPEI pursue the creation of a Tier 1 Canada Research Chair in Sustainability, with a special focus on islands, generally, and on Prince Edward Island, specifically.
16. That UPEI pursue the appointment of a UNESCO Chair in Island Studies, which would provide status and prestige to UPEI, while enhancing the IIS's potential for networking and leveraging partnerships internationally.

# Proposed Administrative Structure



## Figure 2: IIS Staffing Model Options

Figure 2a

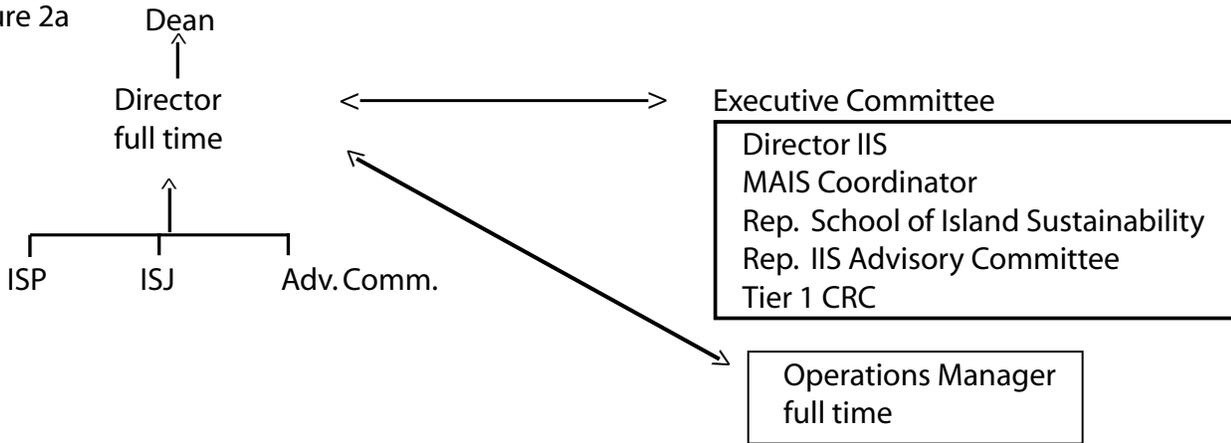


Figure 2b

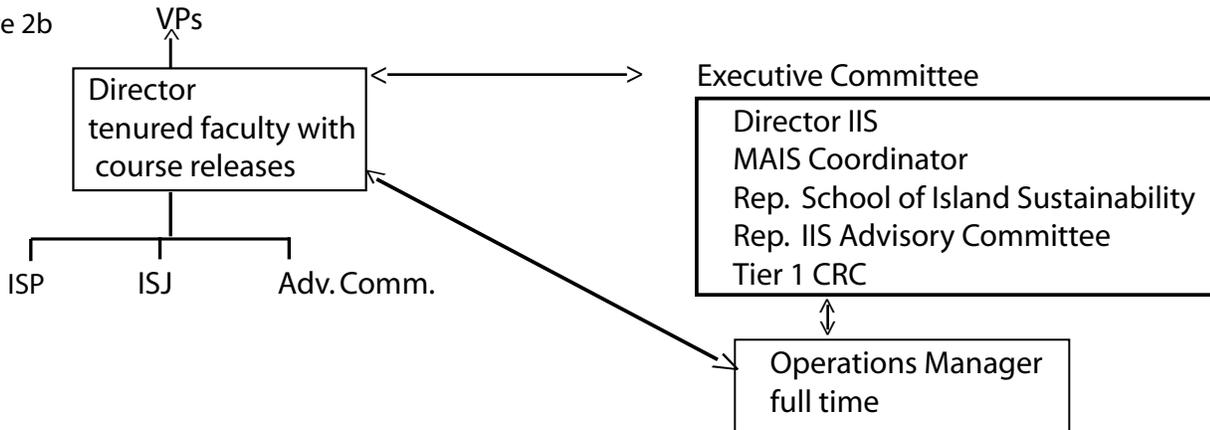


Figure 2c

