

**ACADEMIC COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of March 26, 2024**  
2:31 – 4:32 p.m. [videoconference](#)

**Present:**

Murphy, Steven (Chair)	Fernando, Shanti	Nokleby, Scott
Aamir, Asifa	Frazer, Mitch	Partosoedarso, Elita
Aquanno, Scott	Hoornweg, Daniel	Rastpour, Amir
Arcand, JoAnne	Hosseini, Sayyed Ali	Rodgers, Carol
Azad, Nader	Hossein Nejad, Mehdi	Ruttenberg-Rozen,
Bailey, Robert	Jacobs, Les	Robyn
Barari, Ahmad	Jones, Ferdinand	Simmons, Denina
Barber, Wendy	Kay, Robin	Stoett, Peter
Beligan, Mihai	King, Alyson	Stokes, Joe
Bluechardt, Mary	Kishawy, Hossam	Thompson, Dwight
Christou, Ted	Liscano, Ramiro	Ubor, Tega
Crawford, Greg	Livingston, Lori	Watterworth, Michael
Davidson, Catherine	MacMillan, Patricia	
Duff, Ana	McGregor, Carolyn	
Eklund, Mike	Naumkin, Fedor	

**Regrets:**

Brown, Samantha	Felder, Ruth	Vettor, Shannon
Bryant, Toba	McAlpin, Breanne	
Giorgees, Ifrodet	Serote, MaryCae	

**Staff & Guests:**

Ayotte, Kirstie	Papke, Darryl	Thrush, Sarah
Bauer, Chelsea	Reeson, Dana	Townsend, Lisa
Bruno, Jamie	Nyaamine, Ruth	Turner, Lauren
Callahan, Stephanie	O'Halloran, Niall	Windsor, Shelley
Gottlieb, Sara	Hamilton, Barbara	Wingate, Adam
McCartney, Kimberley	Heslip, Michelle	
Maclsaac, Brad	Hester, Krista	

**1. Call to Order**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:31 p.m. M. Bluechardt read the land acknowledgement and shared two impactful stories, both emphasizing the profound impact of small acts of kindness, urging others to extend compassion as it can mean a lot to those in need.

**2. Agenda**

A member requested that item 12(a) be removed from the consent agenda and placed on the regular meeting agenda.

*Upon a motion duly made by S. Nokleby and seconded by M. Eklund, the Agenda was approved as amended.*

### **3. Chair's Remarks**

The Chair extended a warm welcome and provided an update on funding, emphasizing that decisions on allocations from the government are still pending. He noted concerns raised regarding the lack of information on student admissions, particularly concerning international students. It was mentioned that some provinces have already initiated offers to international students, raising concerns about potential delays and impact on student decisions. Additionally, the Chair highlighted the upcoming Teaching and Learning conference which will be followed by the annual Teaching Awards and announced that this Academic Council meeting would be the final meeting for Lauren Turner, the Secretariat. Attendees expressed gratitude to her for her service and wished her well in her future endeavors. The Chair thanked Lauren for her professionalism and contributions during her tenure.

### **4. Inquiries and Communications**

Nothing to report

### **5. Provost's Remarks**

L. Livingston commenced her remarks by acknowledging Epilepsy Day (Purple Day), noting Canada's unique recognition of this day. She also highlighted the upcoming end of term on April 8<sup>th</sup>, coinciding with the solar eclipse. Moving to the update on the senior administrator searches, she announced progress in the Dean of Science search, with two shortlisted candidates finalized for on-campus interviews on April 15 and April 16. Attendees will have the opportunity to review candidate CV's ahead of time and provide feedback. Regarding the Dean of Education search, L. Livingston mentioned that the Committee has begun despite two recent two resignations. Calls for expressions of interest have been issued to fill the vacant positions. The Committee will collaborate with the search firm to send out a stakeholder survey and finalize the job ad for posting.

Following a question from a committee member, L. Livingston confirmed that the candidate presentations will be available in a hybrid format, and the vacant positions for the Dean of Education search committee represent one faculty member from the Mitch and Leslie Faculty of Education and one faculty member from a cognate Faculty,

### **6. 2024-2027 Budget**

L. Livingston asked B. Maclsaac and S. Thrush to present the 2024-2027 Budget presentation in which they noted that the budget is based on conservative projections, with a focus on differentiated growth to ensure fiscal sustainability. The budget is set based on what we knew in February 2024. Tuition fees are expected to remain static for the near future and a one-time flat increase to operating grants received by the

government, which still leads to a decreased proportion of funding coming from the province. This is emphasizing the need for the University to control its revenue through enrollment growth. The enrollment plan is cautiously optimistic, balancing risks while considering uncertainties such as international enrollment caps. Overall growth for 2024-2025 is projected to be flat compared to 2023 and includes gradual increases in subsequent years driven by domestic growth and investments in new course based master's programs. The presentation also highlighted the need for long-term financial sustainability planning, as the institution enters a mature stage requiring initiative-taking foresight. Attention was drawn to the limited availability of reserves and a gap between current reserves and anticipated future requirements including a risk of insufficient funding for capital repairs which remain a concern.

L. Livingston thanked B. Maclsaac and S. Thrush for their presentation and highlighted two key messages: the importance of a differentiated growth strategy over the next three years to maintain fiscal sustainability and a need to establish reserves to mitigate fiscal uncertainty. She noted that proactive fiscal management will be essential to securing the university's financial future.

During the ensuing discussion, L. Livingston, B. Maclsaac and S. Thrush highlighted the importance of targeting reserves for capital investment and upgrades given the current landscape and the uncertainty regarding government guarantees. They noted that the current financial situation is challenging among the entire sector making it crucial to prioritize fiscal responsibility and reserve accumulation during times of relative stability.

## **7. Activity-Based Budgeting Information Session**

S. Thrush began the presentation by introducing Activity-Based Budgeting (ABB) as a tool to understand the link between revenue and cost drivers to inform budget allocations. The ABB model illustrates both activity and its generated revenue, along with associated costs. However, its purpose is not to incentivize Faculties to alter curriculum solely for revenue purposes. Instead, it aims to enhance transparency and comprehension of the internal support systems among Faculties. S. Thrush highlighted that the model's figures were based on Spring projections, and updates were planned to incorporate final numbers of analysis. Feedback raised constructive questions noting a recognition of the importance of accountability and oversight in decision-making processes, especially concerning consultations and implications on existing services. S. Thrush advised that efforts were underway to systematize and enhance accountability within decision making processes which would include adequate consultations. It was suggested that general formulas alongside numerical data would improve transparency and comprehension.

## **Committee Reports:**

### **8. Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC)**

M. Bluehardt presented the USC report, noting March's meeting was not very lengthy but contained crucial topics for discussion. She advised that the 18 Month Program

Review for the Bachelor of Science in Computer Science was approved, noting four of the five recommendations have been completed with the final recommendation currently being worked on.

**a) New Program Proposal**

**(i) Bachelor of Arts and Science in Sustainability**

M. Bluechardt presented the New Program Proposal for the Bachelor of Arts and Science in Sustainability and noted that this proposal was initially presented to USC in January 2024. Concerns had been raised regarding governance aspects of the course and the need for clearer outlines in the appendices. The proposal was brought back to USC for the March meeting with the amendments and clarification to the governance process.

In response to a question regarding the recommendation within the proposal to hire new faculty, G. Crawford confirmed this would be a small program, opportunities would be available for cross disciplinary courses. P. Stoett highlighted the already strong core of engagement across faculties that would be available. Replying to a question, R. Bailey noted there would be four new courses offered, two of which will be offered as electives.

*Upon a motion duly made by H. Kishawy and seconded by M. Bluechardt, pursuant to the recommendation of the Undergraduate Studies Committee, Academic Council hereby approves the Bachelor of Arts and Science in Sustainability program and recommends approval of the program to the Board of Governors.*

**9. Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)**

T. Christou expressed a heartfelt thank you to all faculty, staff and students who participated in the 3MT Competition. He expressed appreciation in not only recognizing the winners but also but also in celebrating the sense of community it fostered within the University.

**a) Major Program Modification**

**(i) Master of Information Technology**

T. Christou presented the Major Program Modification for the Master of Information Technology noting the changes reflected address the needs for students by opening up opportunities for them to pursue their degree in new ways.

*Upon a motion duly made by T. Christou and seconded by D. Thompson, pursuant to the recommendation of the Graduate Studies Committee, Academic Council hereby approves the Major Program Modification to the Master of Information Technology Security program.*

**10. Research Committee**

L. Jacobs reported positive developments in research security reporting requirements from the Province. He also emphasized the intricacies of separate reporting

obligations concerning provincial compliance and federal government reporting. While acknowledging the challenges posed by the reporting requirements, he recognized the University's hire of a full-time Research Security Manager to assist faculty to mitigate the compliance requirements effectively. He also noted that Canada has become an associate country in the European Union Horizon program, which creates significant funding opportunities for Canadian universities and hopes to discuss strategic investments to capitalize on that prospect.

P. Stoett highlighted the significance not only in terms of financial resources but also the complexity of the application process and emphasized the importance of providing adequate support and resources to facilitate successful engagement with Horizon Europe initiatives.

## **11. Policy Consultation**

### **(a) Finance Policy Reports**

- (i) Debt Management
- (ii) Consolidated Contract Management and Signing Authority
- (iii) Capital Projects

B. Maclsaac presented the three policy reports for information noting the following for each:

Debt Management memo presented to establish clear debt level indicators and ensure adherence to best practices.

Consolidated Contract memo presented to streamline expense reporting procedures into a single document for improved clarity and accessibility.

Capital Projects memo to outline and emphasize structured planning and reporting to provide transparency on fund allocation and project process.

When asked about capital projects and fundraising, B. Maclsaac emphasized the significance of fundraising campaigns. He assured that the capital projects policy is designed to encompass various funding sources, including contributions from fundraising efforts. While details about ongoing campaigns were not immediately provided, B. Maclsaac advised Academic Council would receive a comprehensive update as new priorities are introduced.

### **(b) Revised Grading System and Academic Standing Policy**

M. Bluehardt presented the Revised Grading System and Academic Standing Policy advising significant feedback from the USC was provided to the Registrar's Office prior to its presentation at the February 2024 meeting. During that meeting, A. Wingate discussed the policy and the requested additional amendments. The policy now for approval incorporates the requested changes.

*Upon a motion duly made by M. Bluehardt and seconded by H. Kishawy, pursuant to the recommendation of the Undergraduate Studies Committee, Academic Council*

*hereby approves the amended Grading System and Academic Standing Policy (Undergraduate).*

The request to remove item 12.(a) from the Consent Agenda, as previously amended has been withdrawn by the committee member. The agenda will proceed as initially presented with, with item 12.(a) included on the Consent Agenda.

## **12. Consent Agenda**

### **(a) Minutes of the Meeting of February 27, 2024\* (M)**

### **(b) Minor Program Adjustments from USC\* (I)**

- (i) Bachelor of Engineering in Nuclear Engineering and Engineering and Management in the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science
- (ii) Bachelor of Engineering in Automotive Engineering
- (iii) Facilitating Adult Learning with Technology Diploma
- (iv) Bachelor of Engineering in Software Engineering and Internet of Things Specialization
- (v) Co-operative Education in Faculty of Science
- (vi) Bachelor of Arts in Political Science
- (vii) Sustainability Studies Minor

### **(c) Minor Program Adjustments from GSC\* (I)**

- (i) Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science – Master of Engineering Management

*Upon a motion duly made by M. Hossein Nejad and seconded by H. Kishawy, the Consent Agenda was approved as amended.*

## **13. Other Business**

### **(a) Land acknowledgement for March Academic Council meeting**

D. Thompson volunteered to provide the land acknowledgement for March.

## **14. Termination (M)**

*Upon a motion made by S. Nokleby, the meeting was adjourned at 4:32 p.m.*

Krista Hester, Interim University Secretary