

ACADEMIC COUNCIL
Minutes of the Meeting of October 22, 2024
2:31 – 4:18 p.m. [videoconference](#)

Present:

Steven Murphy
(Chair)
Asifa Aamir
Scott Aquanno
JoAnne Arcand
Robert Bailey
Wendy Barber
Mihai Beligan
Mary Bluechardt
Amanda Cooper
Nicola Crow
Catherine
Davidson

Ana Duff
Mikael Eklund
Nawal Elshamiy
Jessica Hogue
Mehdi Hossein
Nejad
Brenda Jacobs
Les Jacobs
Hossam Kishawy
Lori Livingston
Janet McCabe
Carolyn McGregor

Fedor Naumkin
Scott Nokleby
Carol Rodgers
Robyn
Ruttenberg-Rozen
Gillian Slade
Peter Stoett
Joe Stokes
Jemma Tam
Dwight Thompson
Shannon Vettor
Ken Wilson

Staff & Guests:

Kirstie Ayotte
(Secretary)
Chelsea Bauer
Jamie Bruno
Stephanie
Callahan
Jacqueline Dupuis
Barbara Hamilton

Michelle Heslip
Krista Hester
Shanti Fernando
Andrea Kassaris
Jennifer MacInnis
Brad Maclsaac
Kimberley
McCartney

Niall O'Halloran
Darryl Papke
Jen Rinaldi
Sarah Thrush
Nick Wattie
Adam Wingate

Regrets:

Ahmad Barari
Toba Bryant
Krystina Clarke
Mitch Fraser

Sayyeed Ali
Hosseini
Breanne Mcalpin
Denina Simmons

Oghenetega
(Tega) Ubor

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:31 p.m. J. Tam began with a thoughtful Land Acknowledgement, sharing their personal reflection and then reading the University's Land Acknowledgement.

2. Agenda

A member requested Item 11.b. 2024-2025 Academic Council and Committee Work Plans be held for discussion.

Upon a motion duly made by M. Hossein-Nejad and seconded by A. Cooper, the October 22, 2024 Agenda and the Consent Agenda were approved as amended.

3. Chair's Remarks

The Chair opened by thanking participants for their involvement in the recent Ontario Universities Fair (OUF) and reminded everyone about the upcoming Fall Open House this Saturday, encouraging attendance. He highlighted the success of the recent Fall Convocation Ceremonies, noting it as a great opportunity to showcase the university. He also celebrated a successful weekend for varsity sports and mentioned that the university will host the men's National Soccer Championships from November 7-10, encouraging participation in the event.

In response to a question regarding an update for the Strategic Mandate Agreement Four (SMA4), the Chair noted that updates can be provided during Item 5.b) of the Integrated Academic-Research Plan update.

4. Inquiries and Communications

The Chair invited B. Maclsaac to discuss the question received regarding the banner migration that was asked at the September Academic Council meeting.

B. Maclsaac referenced the November 2023 budget report presented to Academic Council, that highlighted a plan to separate the university's system from Durham College's shared platform due to increasing delays and risks with upgrades. The project will involve migrating the system to the cloud over the next four years. A request for proposal (RFP) was issued over the summer, and a consultant has been hired. After reviewing different options and the numerous peripheral services, the decision was made to remain with the current provider, Ellucian.

He addressed privacy concerns, particularly regarding cloud hosting, and confirmed that the university's legal office reviews new software for privacy compliance. While the review is still underway we may use Amazon Web Services (AWS) as the data centre provider, with primary hosting in Canada East and back-up in Canada West, ensuring data remains hosted in Canada.

In response to a question about whether the university was still exploring options or had already decided to separate the enterprise system, B. MacIsaac clarified that separating from Durham College's platform was necessary due to associated risks. He confirmed that the recent summer evaluation focused on reviewing the main system, and the decision to move forward has been finalized. He also noted that the main data governance owners are the Registrar's Office for student data, Human Resources for faculty and staff, and Finance.

Some discussion ensued relating to a cloud-based platform including looking forward to the range of opportunities that will arrive from this.

The Chair addressed a question regarding QuadC software and if it was being considered. He noted that he was unfamiliar with the platform.

5. Provost's Remarks

L. Livingston recognized the contributions of the Registrar's Office, recruitment teams, and booth staff at OUF. She noted that, despite lower overall attendance at the event,, there were more interactions with potential students at our booth than in previous years. Additionally, she thanked the volunteers for their efforts in making the Fall Convocation a success.

a) Senior Academic Administrator Search Update

L. Livingston provided updates regarding the Senior Academic Administrator searches, noting that Dean Carol Rodgers has expressed interest to serve a second term as Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences. She mentioned that she will be requesting that the President's Office issue a call for expressions of interest in serving on the Renewal Advisory Committee. The work of this committee is expected to begin in January 2025.

She noted that the Deputy Provost Search Advisory Committee and the Dean of Engineering Renewal Advisory Committee have completed their work, with recommendations expected to be considered at the Board of Governors meeting in late November. Due to the timing of the November Board meeting, Dr. Mary Bluechardt's interim appointment as Deputy Provost has been extended to December 31, 2024, and Dr. Joe Stokes' acting role as Dean of the School of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies (SGPS) has been converted to interim status, as approved by the Board of Governors on September 26, 2024. She indicated that the plans to issue a call for expressions of interest for members to serve on the Search Advisory Committee for the next Dean of SGPS will be initiated shortly.

b) Integrated Academic-Research Plan Update (Sarah Thrush)

L. Livingston invited S. Thrush to present the Integrated Academic-Research Plan (IARP) update, reminding members that the IARP is a five-year plan evaluated annually.

S. Thrush presented key updates on the Integrated Planning process and timelines, noting that the new Strategic Research Plan (SRP) will be led by the Vice-President

of Research and Innovation (VPRI) as the current one is in its final year, and that a new Strategic Mandate

Agreement (SMA4) is currently under negotiation, advising that initial consultations with the Ministry are scheduled for early December.

She highlighted several differences between SMA4 and SMA3, including no planned enrollment growth for the first two years, a reduction in metrics from ten to eight, and an emphasis on STEM programming. She suggested bringing draft recommendations for the new metrics to the Academic Council for discussion in November, emphasizing the Ministry's interest in metrics related to investment and innovation that align with institutional goals.

She reported that Integrated Plan templates have been distributed to faculties and units to confirm the contents of the integrated plans, which will be evaluated at a later date. She advised that there are a total of 30 Integrated Plans submitted across the university : seven from academic faculties, including graduate studies, and 23 from various units.

She indicated that faculties and units will continue refining their plans, with the report-back cycle commencing this winter to summarize both qualitative and quantitative evaluations. Academic Council and the Board will receive a qualitative summary and dashboard of institutional metrics that highlights key achievements related to the IARP and research metrics as well as results from the SMA3 year five performance, including potential funding impacts .

In response to a question about how the SMA4 consultation process aligns with Academic Council, S. Thrush confirmed that the metrics will be presented to Academic Council in November. She explained that there is limited flexibility in negotiating the metrics, but the university will use its Integrated Academic-Research Plan (IARP) and SRP to shape discussions with the Ministry, focusing on aligning institutional priorities with SMA4. She noted that negotiations are primarily limited to two new metrics, with most data already defined by the Ministry.

The Chair added that unlike previous SMA negotiations, SMA4 has a more rigid framework that focuses on prescribed metrics and excludes key financial concerns, so no longer addressing financial matters typically negotiated in previous agreements.

6. Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC)

a) New Program Proposal – Faculty of Social Science and Humanities; Bachelor of Arts – Sociology, Technology and Innovation* (M)

M. Bluehardt presented the new program proposal from the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities (FSSH) for a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, Technology, and Innovation, which was recommended by the USC on October 15, 2024. She noted that the program is on an expedited approval path, with a soft launch planned for Fall

2025 and full promotion by 2026. She highlighted that the program will focus on the societal implications of technology, offering unique theoretical and

methodological approaches, while fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, cultural awareness, creativity, and leadership.

In response to a question asked regarding resources, P. Stoett explained that the Criminology program is currently underutilized, and existing faculty have the necessary expertise required to teach sociology courses. He notes that the hiring situation could be revisited if enrollment increases.

Motion:

Upon a Motion duly made by M. Bluehardt and seconded by P. Stoett, pursuant to the recommendation of the Undergraduate Studies Committee, Academic Council hereby approves the Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, Technology and Innovation program and recommends approval of the program to the Board of Governors.

7. Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)

J. Stokes provided the GSC report from September 24, 2024, noting that the committee reported a successful increase in enrollment this year and a record attendance at the Graduate Orientation. He also highlighted an upcoming Mental Health Workshop on November 7, 2024, encouraging attendance.

a) Duolingo English Proficiency Test – Interim Basis* (M)

J. Stokes presented the Duolingo English Proficiency Test, noting that it was adopted for undergraduate admissions during the pandemic and has since been used by many universities for both undergraduate and graduate studies. During GSC consultation, it was decided to implement Duolingo on a pilot basis to evaluate its effectiveness in relation to student success, specifically for professional degrees. He noted that additionally, some adjustments to current ESL requirements were made to ensure alignment across all programs.

In response to a question, J. Stokes clarified that the primary motivation for adopting the Duolingo English Proficiency Test is to enhance access for students. He noted that traditional tests require in-person attendance at testing centres, which can be challenging for students in rural areas, whereas Duolingo can be taken securely from home. While the test is also less expensive, the emphasis is primarily on improving accessibility rather than solely on cost reduction.

He also addressed concerns regarding data monitoring, explaining that the university tracks English scores with high school and first-year GPAs. Significant drops trigger further investigation, especially for outliers. Annual reports are submitted to the GSC for discussion. A similar approach will apply to the Duolingo test, with data analyzed after the first application cycle.

Motion:

Upon a Motion duly made by M. Bluechardt and seconded by J. Hogue, pursuant to the recommendation of the Graduate Studies Committee, Academic Council hereby approves the amended Duolingo English Test from applicants of non-thesis-based

programs as sufficient evidence of English language proficiency for a trial period of 2024-2025 admissions cycle.

The following are the recommended scores for Graduate Programs:

- Education (Med, EdD) – Minimum score of 130*
- All other non-thesis graduate programs – Minimum score of 120*

b) Major Program Change – Master of Health Science (FHSci)* (M)

J. Stokes presented the major program change for the Master of Health Science noting that the proposed changes come from extensive faculty consultation and an external review and includes plans for developing a course-based Master of Health Science.

Motion:

Upon a Motion duly made by M. Bluechardt and seconded by J. Arcand, pursuant to the recommendation of the Graduate Studies Committee, Academic Council hereby approves the Major Program Modification to the Master of Health Science program.

8. Governance & Nominations Committee (GNC)

L. Livingston presented two motions for Academic Council's consideration, noting their review and recommendation by the GNC during the October 15, 2024 meeting. She explained that these motions continue discussions from last month and pertain to the nomination of Faculty Council Vice-Chairs and the Faculty Council Membership lists, which are typically finalized at the first Faculty Council meeting of the year. She highlighted that, depending on timing, these appointments may not be finalized before the September Academic Council meeting.

a) Faculty Council Vice-Chair Nominations* (M)

Motion:

Upon a Motion duly made by P. Stoett and seconded by R. Bailey, pursuant to the recommendation of the Governance & Nominations Committee, the Academic Council hereby approves the appointment of the following individuals as Vice-Chair of their respective Faculty Council for the term of October 1, 2024 until September 30, 2025:

- Dr. Randy Fortier; Faculty of Science*
- Dr. Kanika Samuels Wortley; Faculty of Social Science and Humanities*
- Dr. Nooshin Rotondi; Faculty of Health Sciences*

b) Faculty Council Membership Lists* (M)

L. Livingston responded to a question regarding representation on the lists, explaining that the Deans are actively seeking additional nominations, especially for teaching assistants, to meet the required representation levels. She acknowledged that the timing at the start of the academic year, when new TAs are being onboarded, complicates the nomination process. Consequently, the current underrepresentation is due to timing issues rather than a lack of effort to fill the rosters.

Motion:

Upon a Motion duly made by A. Cooper and seconded by H. Kishawy, pursuant to the recommendation of the Governance and Nominations Committee, that Academic Council hereby approves the following 2024-2025 Faculty Council membership lists as presented:

- *Faculty of Science*
- *Faculty of Social Science and Humanities*
- *Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science*
- *Faculty of Health Sciences*

9. Research Committee

L. Jacobs noted that the Research Committee recently expressed unanimous support for a draft proposal concerning the Mindful Artificial Intelligence Research Institute, which will include representatives from each faculty and be led by Dr. Peter Lewis. He mentioned that Dr. Carolyn McGregor, Dean of the Faculty of Business and IT (FBIT), will host the institute, and its governance structure will enable directors to rotate among the faculties.

He noted that the Research Committee is finalizing its structure for contributing to the new SRP, with an update expected in January 2025. Additionally, he reported that the final research funding numbers from the Council of Ontario Finance Officers (COFO) reached \$28.4 million, marking an 18% increase from the previous year. He also mentioned that the advertisement for the Tier 2 Canada Research Chair (CRC) in Advanced Nuclear Engineering has been released.

Lastly, he announced that the Research Excellence Awards evening is happening next week, with posters displayed around campus and invitations being circulated. He encouraged everyone to attend to celebrate the achievements in research and the latest group of research chair winners, urging those who haven't RSVP'd to do so.

10. Policy Consultation

a) Risk Management Policy* (C)

J. Dupuis presented the updated Risk Management Policy for consultation at Academic Council, outlining revisions made since its last update in 2019. She explained that the revisions aim to clarify practices, integrate content from the retiring compliance policy, and strengthen the university's risk management framework. Key changes include the addition of compliance risk assessment definitions, the removal

of the risk management committee, expanded responsibilities for all university members, and a new training section to enhance risk awareness. She noted that the feedback from the online consultation period raised concerns about the policy being overly top-down, leading to amendments that encourage broader participation in addressing risk-related concerns.

After a comprehensive discussion, J. Dupuis and N. O'Halloran advised that they will review the feedback from this consultation and any additional questions or concerns could be directed to their offices. They confirmed that the policy will proceed to the Board's Audit and Finance (A&F) Committee for deliberation.

J. MacInnis addressed a question raised at the September Academic Council meeting regarding the review of the Postering Procedures and clarified that the procedures are not currently scheduled for review, noting that the last review was two years ago. She confirmed that there are no changes being proposed to the existing procedures and they remain as currently posted and available to view on the University website.

Concerns were raised regarding the recent removal of infrastructure for posting announcements, affecting ability to share event information. C. McGregor clarified that it is a one-off concern at this time due to the Wayfinding project and simultaneous construction in the new science and business buildings.

The Chair acknowledged concerns and reminded attendees not to confuse Communication and Marketing's Wayfinding Project with the Postering Procedures.

11. Consent Agenda

- a) Minutes of the Meeting of September 24, 2024* (M)
- b) 2024-2025 Academic Council and Committee Work Plans* (M)
- c) 2024-2025 Undergraduate and Graduate Calendar Amendments

Upon review, the request to remove item 11.b) for discussion was withdrawn and deferred for dialogue at the next Steering Committee meeting.

The Consent Agenda was passed with the original motion.

12. Other Business

- a) R. Ruttenberg-Rozen volunteered to provide the Land Acknowledgement for the November 2024 Academic Council meeting.

In response to a concern regarding unfilled Academic Council positions, N. Crow confirmed that standing committees are complete and that filling Academic Council positions requires a formal election process, noting that the next election timeline to be set by the GNC is in January 2025. She reiterated that this issue had been discussed at the last Steering Committee meeting and noted that nominations had closed for the current cycle, as also confirmed during the June Academic Council meeting.

In response to the suggestion to address the issue mid-year, the Chair emphasized that the matter had been fully discussed by the relevant governance bodies and that no further action would be taken this year.

13. Termination

Upon a Motion made by S. Nokleby, the October Academic Council meeting was terminated at 4:18 p.m.

Kirstie Ayotte, Assistant University Secretary