



## BOARD OF GOVERNORS

### Strategy & Planning Committee (S&P)

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#### Minutes of the Public Session of the Meeting of November 14, 2024 2:00 p.m. to 3:14 p.m. Videoconference

**Members:** Eric Agius (Chair), Laura Elliott, Matthew Mackenzie, Peter Marchut, Michael Rencheck, Hannah Scott, Emily Whetung-MacInnes

**Regrets:** Ahmad Barari, Mitch Frazer, Lisa McBride, Steven Murphy

**Staff:** Kirstie Ayotte, James Barnett, Nicola Crow, Krista Hester, Les Jacobs, Lori Livingston, Jennifer MacInnis, Brad MacIsaac, Sarah Thrush

#### 1. Call to Order

The Chair called the public session of the S&P meeting to order at 2:02 p.m. and read aloud the land acknowledgment.

#### 2. Agenda

*Upon a motion duly made by M. Mackenzie and seconded by M. Rencheck, the Agenda including the Consent Agenda items were approved as presented.*

#### 3. Conflict of Interest Declaration

No conflicts were declared.

#### 4. Chair's Remarks

The Chair welcomed attendees to the first meeting of the academic year, expressing gratitude to the outgoing Chair, Lynn Zucker, for her leadership. He noted the Committee's expansive role and key agenda items, including strategic enrollment and planning. Additionally, he highlighted the successful launch of the 'Tech with a Conscience' fundraising campaign, which aims to raise \$250 million to support students and the University's vision.

## **5. Review of Strategy and Planning Terms of Reference\* (D)**

N. Crow presented the S&P Terms of Reference for annual review, noting their last comprehensive update in 2021, which introduced the Vice-Chair role. She emphasized that the review helps clarify the Committee's responsibilities and underscores its broad mandate.

In response to a question raised, N. Crow confirmed that the Chair and Vice-Chair position appointment process is detailed within By-law No. 1.

## **6. Strategy**

### **6.1. Strategic Discussion: Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Plan (D)**

L. Livingston highlighted the challenges and significance of strategic enrollment planning, noting Ontario Tech's growing reliance on enrollment revenue amid unpredictable externally imposed factors such as provincially legislated tuition freezes and recently imposed federal caps on international student study permits. To address these issues, the University launched efforts to expand enrollments through differentiated growth, a central priority of the 2023-2028 Integrated Academic-Research Plan, supported by interconnected strategies, including the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan.

S. Thrush explained that the Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plan is a dynamic process, aligning Ontario Tech's academic and research goals with program offerings, student mix, and outcomes like degree completion and career readiness. SEM covers the entire student life cycle, from recruitment to retention, and involves a community-wide effort to enhance the student experience. She highlighted the importance of graduation and alumni mentorship, as well as enrollment plans that support differentiated growth strategies, and balancing undergraduate and graduate programs. She also discussed expanding learning options, such as micro-credentials and pilot programs, and initiatives like the Early Alert System and Learning Engagement Academic Program (LEAP) program to support student success. She noted that enrollment planning focuses on projections and budget impact, factoring in scenarios related to domestic and international students, while aiming for flexible, long-term growth.

She continued by explaining that the University uses conservative projections to prevent financial over-extension and that the reduced growth outlook stems from difficulties in filling the gap left by limited international student intake. Efforts are underway to increase the University's market share of domestic students through innovative program options and new programs. She noted that government funding for domestic growth remains limited and domestic tuition alone is not financially sustainable. B. Maclsaac added that scenarios are carefully monitored, and some fund allocations may be delayed until actual student enrollments are realized.

In response to a question regarding changes to programs or courses that are no longer yielding the number of students required, S. Thrush explained that the University gathers input from various sources, such as recruitment events, student surveys and feedback from students who leave programs to assess what students want and identify potential mismatches. She noted when an enrollment issue arises, or a program is not meeting targets, discussions are held with the Deans and faculty members to understand challenges, including factors like prerequisites or course difficulties. The data received from these discussions helps inform decisions to modify or discontinue programs. L. Livingston noted that the ultimate decision to add or discontinue academic programs falls within the purview of Academic Council.

S. Thrush acknowledged concerns raised that highlighted the challenges for the downtown campus, including travel burdens and student disconnection. She suggested that ideas from Student Life and other areas help improve engagement and bridge the geographical divide.

## **7. Planning**

### **7.1 Enrollment Update\* (U)**

L. Livingston invited S. Thrush to present the Enrollment Update based on Day 10 numbers, highlighting that these preliminary numbers are accurate but subject to change as they are earlier than the fall official count and students drop out during the early weeks of the fall term.

S. Thrush provided an update on undergraduate and graduate admissions, highlighting positive outcomes despite challenges. Undergraduate applications rose by 8.6% year-over-year, with strong domestic interest, though international student registrations declined due to federal policy changes and delays. This resulted in a 2.9% overall increase in fall registrations, though the target was not fully met. Graduate registrations increased, but the University fell short of intake targets for some programs, particularly research and course-based masters, due to impacts from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) policies. Enrollment projections, including conservative assumptions for international students, were integrated into the budget, with retention tracked using a three-year average. She also noted that Ontario Tech rated No. 1 in the Mitacs program.

### **7.2 Integrated Academic-Research Plan Timelines and Milestones\* (U)**

S. Thrush outlined the University's progress towards its goals, emphasizing the Committee's role in evaluating this progress. She highlighted the importance of the Integrated Academic-Research Plan (IARP), which focuses on tech with a conscience, reimagining the campus, and partnerships. She detailed the planning process, which includes multiple strategic documents, such as the IARP, the Strategic Research Plan, and the government's strategic mandate agreement (SMA3) which is in its final annual

evaluation phase. She explained that departmental strategies drive implementation, guide budgeting and resource allocation. S. Thrush further advised the Committee that they will review a summarized qualitative report on strategy outcomes, including successes, challenges, and funding implications, as well as a quantitative dashboard linked to the IARP and SMA3 performance at year-end.

### **7.3 Board Retreat Planning**

N. Crow updated the committee on the upcoming board retreat planned for April 2025, focusing on the University's AI strategic priority. The retreat will address AI's potential, its governance and ethical considerations, helping the Board understand its role in AI governance. She highlighted that the format will promote strategic discussion to support informed decision-making and governance responsibilities.

Further updates and feedback will be provided as planning progresses.

### **8. Significant Project and Contract Oversight**

The Chair noted that there were no items for discussion.

### **9. Consent Agenda\* (M)**

9.1 Minutes of Public Session of Meeting June 20, 2024\* (M)

*The Chair confirmed that the contents of the Consent Agenda were approved and received under Agenda Item #2.*

### **10. Adjournment**

*There being no other business, and upon a motion duly made by M. Rencheck, the public S&P meeting adjourned at 3:14 p.m.*

Kirstie Ayotte, Assistant University Secretary