

## BOARD OF GOVERNORS

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

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#### Minutes of the Public Session of the Meeting of June 12, 2025 2:01 p.m. to 3:20 p.m. Videoconference

**Present:** Eric Agius (Chair), Lisa McBride (Vice-Chair), Ahmad Barari, Laura Elliott, Matthew Mackenzie, Peter Marchut, Steven Murphy, Michael Rencheck

**Regrets:** Mitch Frazer, Emily Whetung-MacInnes, Hannah Scott

**Staff:** Kirstie Ayotte (Secretary), James Barnett, Nicola Crow, Krista Hester, Les Jacobs, Lori Livingston, Jennifer MacInnis, Brad Maclsaac, Joe Stokes, Sarah Thrush

#### 1. Call to Order

The Chair called the Public Session of the S&P Meeting to order at 2:01 p.m. and read aloud the Land Acknowledgment.

#### 2. Agenda (M)

The Chair noted an amendment to the Public Minutes of the April 3, 2025 Public Session meeting, indicating that Dwight Thompson was in attendance. The minutes have been updated accordingly.

*Upon a motion duly made by M. Rencheck and seconded by M. Mackenzie, the Agenda was approved as presented, including approving and receiving the Consent Agenda and its contents as amended.*

#### 3. Conflict of Interest Declaration

None noted

#### 4. Chair's Remarks

The Chair began by reminding Committee members of some meeting protocols, and Public Session attendees were welcomed, though they were noted unable to participate or engage in the meeting.

He noted that this is the final S&P meeting of the year, and members were thanked for their contributions and engagement in advancing the University's priorities. He advised that the year's accomplishments are captured in the S&P Annual Report provided in the Consent Agenda. The Committee also thanked Peter Marchut, Student Governor, for his service as his Board term concludes in August.

## 5. President's Remarks

The President provided his remarks highlighting the recent Convocation ceremonies and thanked everyone who helped make this year's Convocation a success.

The President also noted that he had now concluded meeting with all Faculties and Units with the overarching message being that everyone has a role to play to help advance the University's strategic priorities as part of the Institution taking control of its own destiny. He expressed his appreciation to K. Hester, Chief of Staff for their support in these meetings.

## 6. Strategy

### 6.1 Integrated Academic-Research Plan: IARP Annual Report, SMA3 Performance (Year 5); SMA 4 Update\* (U)

L. Livingston provided a high-level overview of the ongoing work to evolve the University's Integrated Academic-Research Plan (IARP), emphasizing the importance of year-end reporting to ensure accountability for progress. She highlighted that over 450 milestone activities were identified, with 80% completed or on track, 18% behind or amended, and only 2% terminated.

S. Thrush provided an overview of the annual Reports contained in the materials. She highlighted the increased collaboration on advancing the strategic priorities across the University. She also noted that the IARP has been aligned with SMA3, helping to shape priorities and performance metrics. As SMA3 concludes, with all 10 metrics achieved or exceeded, the focus is now on finalizing SMA4. The new SMA agreement is more prescriptive than in the past with now only eight metrics, six of which are set by the province, and two selected by the University. She advised that the University chose the same two metrics that were in SMA3 and aligned with University priorities. SMA4 Negotiations with the Ministry are ongoing, with formalization of SMA4 expected by the end of June.

The ensuing discussion focused on how University performance metrics are communicated and the impact of other institutions on locally-based data metrics. S. Thrush advised that metrics are reported annually to Academic Council and shared with faculties and units through detailed data packages to help them understand their role and alignment with Institutional goals. Additionally, a committee of Directors, Managers, VPs, and Deans reviews the full reports to promote broader understanding beyond formal governance processes.

Through the discussion it was also noted there are increased provincial reporting and accountability requirements arising from SMA4, as well as opportunities to receive nominal additional funding if performance metrics are met or exceeded.

The Committee expressed kudos for all the hard work, not only for putting together the Reports, but for the outcome successes outlined in the Reports.

## **6.2 Annual Program Reports\* (I)**

- i) 2024-2025 Quality Assurance Process and Program Report\*
- ii) 2024-2025 Continuous Learning Report\*

L. Livingston presented the two Annual Program Reports, noting that the 2024-2025 Quality Assurance Process and Program Report details approved academic programs, while the 2024-2025 Continuous Learning Report covers professional development offerings. She emphasized that academic programs undergo a rigorous quality review every 7-8 years, with strict internal and external reporting requirements to ensure ongoing institutional quality assurance.

The Reports showcase the University's growth strategy, focusing on expanding capacity within existing programs and launching new ones. She highlighted that three new programs were recently approved and funded by the Ministry, with five additional programs in development, demonstrating a strong commitment to academic innovation and meeting increased student demand.

L. Livingston addressed balancing new program growth with organizational sustainability. While expansion meets industry needs, it raises costs and faculty workload. The University monitors program health regularly, pausing program admissions or reconceptualizing programs when necessary. She noted that the University remains open to program realignment as part of its careful oversight to manage resources effectively.

## **6.3 Annual International Student Strategy Report\* (I)**

J. Stokes presented this Annual Report and highlighted the significant challenges now being experienced with international student study permit approvals, which have recently worsened, causing delays and affecting enrollments.

He noted that reduced government support for promoting Canada as a study destination has contributed to a decline in the country's international reputation and international student interest. While the University has seen some improvement in

confirmation rates, overall enrollment declines are expected to continue for several years along with the ensuing impact. In response, the University is pursuing transnational education as a strategic adaptation, recognizing the complex regulatory and quality assurance issues involved.

The discussion on transnational education emphasized a combination of online delivery and partnerships abroad, underscoring the long-term, complex nature of this shift and the University's ongoing efforts to remain competitive in the evolving global education landscape.

## **7. Planning**

### **7.1 Strategic Research Plan\* (I)**

L. Jacobs presented the final Strategic Research Plan (SRP), which highlighted the University's unique strengths, including strong industry collaboration and adaptability.

He explained that the plan outlines seven strategic priorities and six research strengths building on existing capabilities, with a particular focus on AI, energy, advanced manufacturing, and mobility. The SRP also guides the alignment of research efforts with funding opportunities and supports key initiatives. He emphasized that both how the University conducts research and what it focuses on are key differentiators from other institutions, noting the plan is data-driven and tailored to the University's strengths, faculty expertise, and the needs of industry and community partners.

### **7.2 Asset Management Plan\* (I)**

B. MacIsaac presented the annual Asset Management Plan, explaining that it guides strategic infrastructure investments to support the University's growth and aligns with academic and research goals. He advised that the plan is structured into three parts: a long-term campus master plan (40+ years); a medium-term focus on the next 3 to 5 years to enhance planning; and, an annual budget overview to ensure transparency and alignment with strategic priorities. It was emphasized that major upcoming projects primarily involve essential building maintenance, highlighting the importance of proactive, long-term capital planning as the campus infrastructure ages.

The ensuing discussion focused on how anticipated growth from international students may be delayed for an extended period, prompting questions about whether campus expansion plans should be adjusted accordingly. There was emphasis on the need for careful capital planning to align with evolving enrollment projections and the need to change the approach for reserves to support future capital infrastructure needs. The

conversation also addressed deferred maintenance projects, with confirmation that they are being actively managed and remain regulatory compliant. Long-term facility planning, reserve funding, and the financial balance between maintaining operations and preparing for future infrastructure needs were also discussed.

### **7.3 Sustainability Plan\* (D)**

B. Maclsaac outlined the development of the 2025-2030 Sustainability Plan, emphasizing a broader, more integrated approach to sustainability across the University. He noted that unlike previous facility and environment focused plans, this version aims to reflect Ontario Tech's identity as "tech with a conscience," incorporating environmental, social, financial, teaching, and research aspects. He advised that the Plan uses guiding principles to provide direction without being overly prescriptive and will rely on a new centralized website to showcase sustainability efforts across the University.

A discussion explored the broader role of sustainability in the University's planning and research, with Committee members raising the need to consider connecting sustainability and research at the University to larger global challenges, such as wildfires. Suggestions were made to leverage the University's research strengths, particularly in energy and materials, to pursue areas where Ontario Tech could have distinct impact. There was also discussion about the importance of balancing broad guiding principles with focused goals and emphasizing areas where the University can stand out.

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

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

### **8.1 Minutes of Public Session of Meeting of April 3, 2025, as amended\* (M)**

### **8.2 2024-2025 S&P Annual Report\* (I)**

## **9. Adjournment (M)**

There being no other business, and upon a motion duly made by M. Rencheck, the Public Session of the S&P Committee Meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Kirstie Ayotte, Assistant University Secretary