

## ACADEMIC COUNCIL

### MINUTES of MEETING of TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2020 VIDEOCONFERENCE, 2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

#### Present:

Murphy, Steven (Chair)  
Bliemel, Michael  
Crawford, Greg  
Davidson, Catherine  
Desaulniers, Jean-Paul  
Gaber, Hossam  
Habibi, Sarah  
Heydari, Shahram  
Hogue, Jessica  
Hossein Nejad, Mehdi  
Jacobs, Les  
Jones, Ferdinand  
Kay, Robin  
Kishawy, Hossam  
LeSage, Ann  
Liscano, Ramiro  
Livingston, Lori  
Lloyd, Meghann  
Mahmoud, Qusay  
Marques, Olga  
Mohany, Atef  
Mostaghim, Amir  
Murphy, Bernadette  
Murphy, Steven (Chair)  
Naumkin, Fedor

Nugent, Kimberly  
Partosoedarso, Elita  
Petrie, Olivia  
Pierce, Tess  
Rahnamayan,  
Shahryar  
Rinaldi, Jen  
Roy, Langis  
Scott, Hannah  
Shon, Phillip  
Stoett, Peter  
Stokes, Joe  
Tokuhiro, Akira  
Williams, Alyssa  
Woolridge, Lyndsay  
Wu, Terry

**Staff:**  
Dinwoodie,  
Becky  
Foy, Cheryl  
MacIsaac, Brad  
McCartney,  
Kimberley  
Molinaro, Nichole  
O'Halloran, Niall

#### Regrets:

Barari, Ahmad  
Davis, Owen  
Khalid, Osama  
McCabe, Janet  
Taylor, Noreen

#### 1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

## 2. Agenda

The Chair noted that a blacklined agenda was circulated the previous day with proposed amendments to the agenda to make time for a pandemic planning discussion. He shared that the amended agenda focuses on obtaining approvals where necessary and advancing priority items. Non-urgent items would be deferred until a later date. It was clarified that the goal would be to bring the deferred items forward at the next meeting, but that would depend on the circumstances. C. Foy added that the Office of the University Secretary will track the deferred items and ensure they will be brought forward.

*Upon a motion duly made by H. Kishawy and seconded by F. Jones, the Agenda was approved as amended.*

## 3. Chair's Remarks

The Chair thanked everyone and expressed his appreciation for everyone taking the time during an exceptionally busy period to ensure governance of the university continues. He thanked everyone for their efforts during this unprecedented time – everyone is coming together as a community during a public crisis. The university is doing a great job of servicing our students and the community in a responsible way. The Chair noted that there have been some exceptional contributions that will be recognized when things calm down.

The Chair shared that the university is getting out ahead of other institutions in moving learning online. He remarked that it is nice to see faculty and students sharing tips and best practices for the transition. The university seems to have transitioned more smoothly and seamlessly than other institutions. He advised that he is receiving more compliments overall than complaints. The Chair thanked everyone for working very hard in all areas to accomplish this, particularly when juggling the demands of the pandemic. He also noted that the university is playing an active role in responding to the COVID-19 crisis (e.g. engineering working on 3D printing and other aspects to ensure government has necessary PPE equipment on hand). Members of the university community are stepping up and making a difference in people's lives.

The Chair also expressed his appreciation for members participating in the special information session the previous week. Council members' comments and questions were reflected in the decisions made and the communications sent out to the community. Academic Council will continue to be looked to to guide the university to help make the best decisions possible. The university is working to keep everyone safe and to comply with the government's requests to support the nation's and province's responses to the COVID-19 crisis. New issues continue to emerge and the university's senior administration is working 24/7 to ensure the university community is looked after. While Academic Council will continue to have an important role, it is recognized that everyone is dealing with added demands and responsibilities during this time. Changes have been made at the Board level to reduce the length of Board and Board committee meetings by



focusing on priority items. In order to make the most of Council members' time, we are proposing to reduce the length of Academic Council and committee meetings by focusing agendas on those items requiring approval and advancing priority business until the state of emergency has passed. The Steering Committee will identify priorities with input from Academic Council.

As the situation evolves, Academic Council should also be prepared in case there comes a time when reaching quorum becomes a challenge. The worst is likely still in front of us and we must be prepared in case members of our community fall ill. Contingency planning is taking place across the institution and Academic Council must do so, as well. Other institutions are preparing for this eventuality by temporarily delegating decision-making authority to a standing committee of their senates/councils. The current plan is to continue holding full Council meetings by video conference. The Chair asked whether Academic Council members had an appetite to bring a motion delegating authority to the Steering Committee, which would be accomplished through an amendment to the Steering Committee Terms of Reference. He invited comments and questions from Council.

Comments from members of Council included:

- the proposed delegation of authority would constitute a significant change to the responsibilities of the Steering Committee and might require further consideration;
- if and when this becomes necessary, an online vote on the delegation could be taken;
- there is an urgency to make this change, but it would be helpful to have documentation to review prior to making a decision; and
- support expressed for delegating authority to the Steering Committee as the COVID-19 situation can change quickly.

The Chair clarified that the change did not have to be made that day, but emphasized the need for Academic Council to be prepared. C. Foy confirmed that a resolution in writing could be used to obtain Council's approval, but would require unanimous approval. She added that a special meeting of Council might need to be called on short notice to consider other urgent matters and if Council was supportive of a special meeting on short notice, then the delegation of authority could be included as an agenda item. It was noted that considering the delegation of authority during a special meeting would also give the members absent from that meeting an opportunity to vote, as well. Council members expressed general support for convening a special meeting on short notice.

#### **(a) 2020 Honorary Degree Recipients**

The Chair was pleased to announce the 2020 Honorary Degree recipients and provided a brief overview of their backgrounds.

**Andreas Apostolopoulos:**

Andreas Apostolopoulos is a Greek-Canadian billionaire businessman, primarily concentrated on real estate investment and redevelopment. He is Founder and Chairman of Triple Group of Companies, based in Toronto. Mr. Apostolopoulos, along with his sons, have created one of the most successful privately held companies in Canada. The family is known for buying properties in run-down areas and breathing new life into them. The Apostolopoulos family has become strong supporters of Durham Region through their investment in Durham Live. This investment will help Durham Region continue its trajectory of growth and development.

**The Right Honourable David Johnston and Sharon Johnston:**

The Right Honourable David Johnston and his wife, Sharon Johnston, are being honoured for their commitment to public service, philanthropy and volunteerism. Mr. Johnston also has an exemplary history of commitment to education as a researcher and writer, publisher, and holding senior level leadership positions in post-secondary institutions. He was the 28th Governor General of Canada, from October 1, 2010, to October 2, 2017. During his time as Governor General, Johnston became known for his motto, CONTEMPLARE MELIORA, meaning "To envisage a better world," refers to his belief in the abilities of all Canadians to imagine and create a smarter, more caring nation and contribute to a fairer, more just world.

**Paul Ralph:**

Paul Ralph is Oshawa's new city manager. He has worked for the city since 1986 and began his career as a planner. Mr. Ralph is among those leading a partnership among Ontario Tech University, the City of Oshawa, Durham College, the University of Toronto and the Canadian Urban Institute to establish Oshawa as a centre for urban innovation. He goes out of his way to make a positive difference and lifelong impact in his community. He is an excellent role model for the current generation and proof positive that collaboration, hard work and a commitment to your community, and its people, is of the utmost importance.

**Tanya Talaga:**

As an award-winning journalist and author focused on Indigenous issues, Tanya Talaga strongly aligns with our support of Indigenous education and culture. Ms. Talaga is an Anishinaabe Canadian journalist and author who has made outstanding contributions to Indigenous Issues as a columnist, author and speaker. For more than twenty years she was a journalist at the Toronto Star, where her reporting focus was on investigations, Indigenous issues, for which she has won numerous awards. She is also the bestselling author of two books All Our Relations: Finding The Path Forward and Seven Fallen Feathers, which was the winner of the RBC Taylor Prize, among many others.

#### **4. Minutes of the Meeting of February 25, 2020**

The Chair shared a correction received in advance of the meeting – S. Heydari was in attendance. It was confirmed that the correction was made.

*Upon a motion duly made by G. Crawford and seconded by H. Gaber, the Minutes were approved as amended.*

#### **5. Business Arising from the Minutes**

As stated in the e-mail confirming the details of today's meeting, a link to the Democratic Rules of Order website is available on the Academic Council Resources webpage. The library has purchased access to the ebook for unlimited Ontario Tech users and the link will be posted on the Academic Council Resources page.

#### **6. Inquiries and Communications**

There was none.

#### **7. Provost's Remarks**

##### **(a) Senior Academic Administrator Search Updates**

The Provost expressed her excitement about the appointment of the new Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Dr. Carol Rodgers, joining us on July 1 from the University of Saskatchewan. She advised Council that the first meeting of the search committee for the next Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science would be taking place that week. The search for the Dean of the Faculty of Education will be kicking off the week of April 12.

#### **Committee Reports**

##### **8. Research Board**

L. Jacobs thanked everyone in the research community for adapting to the COVID-19 situation. The Office of Research has fully transitioned to online support services. He also advised Council that last week, the Research Ethics Board approved several COVID-19 related research projects.

##### **(a) Strategic Research Plan**

L. Jacobs provided an overview of the draft Strategic Research Plan (SRP). The SRP was six months in the making and driven by the Research Board. He also discussed the consultation process. He noted that the university is committed to research intensification. He also highlighted that the SRP sets out objectives and metrics. The SRP was also drafted to align with the EDI priorities of the Tri-Council. L. Jacobs invited Academic Council's feedback on the SRP. Comments from Council members included:

- feeling that Faculty of Science is underrepresented in the SRP;
- seems to be a disconnect between institutional priorities, research strengths and research body priorities;

- the SRP seems to emphasize traditionally male dominated fields, which is a disconnect with EDI priorities;
- SRP has come a long way since the initial draft;
- the SRP does not really read as a strategic research plan – it should provide a vision for priorities that the university should focus on;
- the human dimension is missing – there is a disproportionate workload on professors supervising multiple graduate students; and
- would be helpful to add grant writers to help faculty obtain funding - without funding, difficult to attract grad students.

L. Jacobs clarified that it is not the final SRP document and welcomed the comments. He responded that it is impossible for the SRP to capture every area of the university's expertise. Further, the SRP is not an inward looking document and is not intended to guide the university as to allocation of resources.

The Chair noted the time constraints of the meeting. He remarked that the SRP would benefit from additional consultation and would be brought back to another meeting of Academic Council for further discussion.

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

### **(a) MEng in Nuclear Engineering, GDip in Nuclear Design Engineering, and GDip in Nuclear Technology Program Review Final Assessment Report**

L. Roy presented the report for approval.

*Upon a motion duly made by L. Roy and seconded by G. Crawford, pursuant to the recommendation of GSC, Academic Council unanimously approved the Final Assessment Report for the Master of Engineering in Nuclear Engineering, Graduate Diploma in Nuclear Design Engineering, and Graduate Diploma in Nuclear Technology Program Review, as presented.*

### **(b) Master of Arts, Master of Education, and Graduate Diploma in Digital Technologies Program Review 18-Month Follow-Up Final Assessment Report**

L. Roy presented the report for approval. There was a discussion regarding the action item "A mechanism (e.g., course credit or course release) be created to recognize faculty supervising students in the graduate programs in order that the burden of supervision is equitably shared and students have greater selection."

*Upon a motion duly made by L. Roy and seconded by A. Mostaghim, pursuant to the recommendation of GSC, Academic Council unanimously approved the 18-Month Final*



*Assessment Report for the Master of Arts, Master of Education, and Graduate Diploma in Digital Technologies Program Review, as presented.*

## **10. Governance & Nominations Committee (GNC)**

### **(a) 2020 Election Results - deferred**

### **(b) Committee Nominations**

*Upon a motion duly made by L. Livingston and seconded by H. Kishawy, pursuant to the recommendation of the Governance and Nominations Committee, Academic Council unanimously approved the appointment of the following faculty member to the Graduate Studies for the term of March 24, 2020 until June 30, 2020:*

- Min Dong, Faculty of Engineering & Applied Science

*Upon a motion duly made by L. Livingston and seconded by H. Kishawy, pursuant to the recommendation of the Governance and Nominations Committee, Academic Council unanimously approved the appointment of the following faculty members to the Research Board for the term of March 24, 2020 until June 30, 2022:*

- Shahryar Rahnamayan, Faculty of Engineering & Applied Science

S. Rahnamayan abstained.

### **(c) Comments Received in Advance of a Meeting - deferred**

### **(d) Honorary Degrees Committee Terms of Reference Review - deferred**

### **(e) Review of Academic Council Procedures for the Election Of Teaching, Non-Academic Staff and Student Representatives - deferred**

## **11. Registrar's Report**

### **(a) Posthumous Degree**

J. Stokes presented the report for approval.

*Upon a motion duly made by J. Stokes and seconded by A. Mostaghim, pursuant to the recommendation of the Registrar, Academic Council unanimously authorized the conferral of a posthumous degree to Fawwaz Khayyat.*

**(b) 2020-2021 Academic Calendar**

There were discussions regarding changes to several of the key academic dates for 2020-2021. The recommendation will be for the start of the academic year to continue to be the Tuesday after Labour Day. Concern was expressed that conducting orientation on the long weekend might deter attendance. L. Livingston noted that students move into residence on the Saturday of the long weekend. Many students are from out of town and to engage in minimal programming for two days following their arrival is not how we want to welcome our students. The change in dates can be revisited if it is found not to be working. Another major change to the calendar will be the release of grades following the December break.

**(c) Course Nomenclature Directives – Moribund Course**

The Directives were included for information.

**12. Pandemic Planning**

L. Livingston recognized everyone's cooperation in not coming onto campus unless absolutely necessary. She also shared a letter from a parent who has two children in university, one of them at Ontario Tech. The parent commended the university on the way we have responded to the COVID-19 crisis. L. Livingston remarked that this is a true testament to all of the faculty, staff and students at the university. She gave a special thank you to the Faculty of Education and the Teaching and Learning Centre for their support in transitioning to online learning.

The pandemic planning has been in full tilt since March 12. L. Livingston reviewed the timeline of COVID-19 developments. Ontario Tech was among the first universities to make the decision to cancel in-person classes and transition to online learning. The university tried to signal to international students as soon as possible that they could travel home. As of midnight that night, access to facilities would be restricted to essential personnel in compliance with government orders.

L. Livingston acknowledged the work of the Deans in helping with the transition to an online format. The Deans continue to deal with issues on a daily basis. She also acknowledged IT Services, the Library, and Student Life. The Deans are meeting twice a week to discuss issues. The following matters are currently being discussed:

- exam schedule;
- options of moving to pass/fail, late withdrawal;
- adding a week to the term to allow for final grading and alternative assessment;
- student accessibility requirements & reliable online access;
- grade submission & release timelines;
- virtual open house; and
- Respondus Monitor.



The decision was made to move the convocation ceremonies to the fall. Further, the university's Spring/Summer courses will also be conducted online.

L. Livingston advised Council that they have until 11:59 p.m. that evening to retrieve their essential items from campus. She also reviewed the new sign-in process for when visiting campus.

There was a discussion regarding international students on campus. B. MacIsaac clarified that international students leaving by Sunday would be refunded and that residence and food services remain open. If international students have any questions, they should be advised to contact the international office.

All information regarding building closures is on the university's COVID-19 update webpage. Faculty were reminded not to direct students who do not live on campus to come to campus if they are having internet issues, as this would be contrary to government orders. Students, faculty and staff should e-mail the Covid19 e-mail address to inform the university of internet issues.

The restricted access to the university's buildings will be for an indefinite period of time, in accordance with the government's orders. The restricted access to buildings has been communicated through the campus wide messages and by directing people to the COVID-19 update webpage. Daily updates are being sent out as the situation continues to evolve.

There was a discussion about who would be considered an essential worker and when would it be communicated to the campus community. Faculty were advised to contact their Dean if they believe they should be included on the list of essential workers. There was also a discussion regarding the pandemic planning process and how essential/sensitive equipment are being identified for ongoing maintenance. Faculty were encouraged to contact their Dean to ensure equipment that requires maintenance is identified as part of the Faculty's pandemic plan. Further, the Health & Safety Committee and the Office of the VP Research have been involved in developing the list of labs that need to be maintained.

There was also a discussion regarding summer employment opportunities for students on campus. It was confirmed that those students in the current term continue to be paid and have been working from home. As we are expecting to be off campus into the spring, the number of employment opportunities will be reduced. However, the student research awards are expected to go forward.

The Chair shared that it has been very encouraging how our students, faculty and staff have come together to face the crisis. The university will continue to keep people informed.

### **13. Other Business**

Q. Mahmoud followed up on a question he asked during a previous meeting regarding whether an instructor can require students to pass their final exam to pass a course or, alternatively, require them to complete all their course work in order to pass. J. Stokes advised that this question would be covered by the university's examination and grading policy, which is currently under review and will come to Council for discussion.

### **14. Termination**

*Upon a motion duly made by A. Mostaghim, the meeting terminated at 4:44 p.m.*

Becky Dinwoodie, Secretary

DRAFT

## ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Minutes of Special Meeting of Friday, March 27, 2020

10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Video Conference

### Present:

Murphy, Steven (Chair)

Bliemel, Michael

Crawford, Greg

Davidson, Catherine

Desaulniers, Jean-Paul

Gaber, Hossam

Habibi, Sarah

Heydari, Shahram

Hogue, Jessica

Hossein Nejad, Mehdi

Jacobs, Les

Jones, Ferdinand

Kay, Robin

Kishawy, Hossam

Livingston, Lori

Lloyd, Meghann

Mahmoud, Qusay

Marques, Olga

McCabe, Janet

Mostaghim, Amir

Murphy, Bernadette

Nugent, Kimberly

Partosodarso, Elita

Petrie, Olivia

Pierce, Tess

Rahnamayan,

Shahryar

Rinaldi, Jen

Roy, Langis

Scott, Hannah

Shon, Phillip

Stoett, Peter

Stokes, Joe

Tokuhiro, Akira

Woolridge, Lyndsay

Wu, Terry

### Staff:

Dinwoodie,

Becky

Foy, Cheryl

MacIsaac, Brad

McCartney,

Kimberley

Molinaro, Nichole

O'Halloran, Niall

### Regrets:

Hossein Nejad, Mehdi

Jacobs, Les

Kay, Robin

Khalid, Osama

LeSage, Ann

Liscano, Ramiro

Mohany, Atef

Naumkin, Fedor

Taylor, Noreen

Williams, Alyssa

### 1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

## **2. Agenda**

*Upon a motion duly made by G. Crawford and seconded by P. Stoett, the Agenda was approved as presented.*

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

The Chair thanked the Council members for taking time to participate in the special meeting. The pandemic is ramping up and he hopes everyone is keeping healthy. Another meeting will be scheduled for the following week to deal with delegating authority to the Steering Committee by amending its Terms of Reference. More special meetings might be required as the university continues to respond to the pandemic and urgent decisions might have to be reached. The Chair responded to questions from Academic Council. He reiterated the need for Council to be prepared in the event that reaching quorum becomes an issue.

## **4. Provost's Remarks**

The Provost echoed the Chair's comments about being appreciative for everyone making time to participate in the special meeting. She encouraged members to develop a sort of routine to help deal with the pandemic response and encouraged everyone to get outside.

## **5. Temporary Amendment to University Grading Policy**

L. Livingston presented the updated grading policy proposal for consideration. She advised that they have heard students' concerns about the transition to online learning and want to help alleviate the stress of the semester. Council members had the following comments and questions:

- A member expressed support for the proposal as it addresses many concerns - likes that the option is given to the students.
- How would students exercise the option?
  - J. Stokes advised that students will complete an electronic form to exercise the option.
- Would there be any implications for the drop date? Would this apply to graduate courses, as well? Would this apply to the Spring/Summer term?
  - Yes, applies to grad courses.
  - The drop date had been extended to March 27. The proposal is that students who receive an F will automatically be withdrawn from the course.
  - For now, the amendment only applies to the Winter 2020 term. If a similar adjustment is needed for the Spring/Summer term, will seek further amendment by AC.
- Suggestion made that student's choice for pass/fail should be all or none.
- Will students still have option to appeal grades?
  - If a student receives an F grade and has the option to withdraw, anticipated that all students who receive an F would appeal; accordingly, the proposal is

being made to help ease the burden on staff. Students will always have the option to appeal.

- Is there a possibility of extending the date for selection beyond May 6? If a student is ill, could have implications on submitting the form on time.
  - Extensions could be considered on a case by case basis.
- Would these changes affect accreditation?
  - CEAB has indicated that the switch to an online format would not affect accreditations – in times of crisis like this, the world rallies around common sense in dealing with the situation – other institutions are also moving to pass/fail grading without implications
  - with respect to the nursing program, this change in grading would not affect a student's progression through the program where a minimum standing must be met in order to advance in the program - would not pose an issue for the accrediting body – would be a greater concern if all students automatically passed
- What if student does not respond? Is the default keeping the letter grade?
  - If the student does not submit the required form, the letter grade will stand
  - L. Livingston clarified that this is a one time option
  - Clarified that could pass with at least D or above – F would be automatic withdrawal
- For courses that require 60% to pass, would a student need to get this to receive a pass?
  - Would be flagged in the student's file – would get a passing grade, but would be flagged as not having met the program progression requirement.
- Clarified that refunds are administrative in nature and will be included in student communications – not required to amend the motion to clarify that there will be no tuition refunds for withdrawal at this point.

B. Dinwoodie read out the motion, as amended.

*Upon a motion duly made by L. Livingston and seconded by H. Kishawy, Academic Council unanimously approved the following temporary amendment to the university's grading policy for the Winter 2020 term only, as follows:*

- *offer our students the choice of either accepting their final course grade OR credit recognition (PAS) as per our grading protocol;*
- *for undergraduate students, credit recognition (PAS) must meet the faculty minimum for degree or course progression requirements;*
- *for graduate students, a B- or better will be required to qualify for credit; and*
- *all "F" grades will automatically be given a retroactive withdrawal and students will receive a "W" notation on their transcript.*



## 6. Termination

*Upon a motion duly made, the meeting terminated at 11:00 a.m.*

Becky Dinwoodie, Secretary

DRAFT

## ACADEMIC COUNCIL (AC)

Minutes of the special meeting of Tuesday, March 31, 2020  
2:30 - 3:30 p.m., Video Conference Only

### Present:

Murphy, Steven (Chair)  
Bliemel, Michael  
Crawford, Greg  
Davidson, Catherine  
Desaulniers, Jean-Paul  
Gaber, Hossam  
Habibi, Sarah  
Heydari, Shahram  
Hogue, Jessica  
Hossein Nejad, Mehdi  
Jacobs, Les  
Kay, Robin  
Kishawy, Hossam  
Livingston, Lori  
Lesage, Ann  
Liscano, Ramiro  
Lloyd, Meghann  
McCabe, Janet  
Mostaghim, Amir  
Murphy, Bernadette

Naumkin, Fedor  
Nugent, Kimberly  
Partosoedarso, Elita  
Pierce, Tess  
Rahnamayan,  
Shahryar  
Rinaldi, Jen  
Roy, Langis  
Scott, Hannah  
Shon, Phillip  
Stokes, Joe  
Tokuhiro, Akira  
Woolridge, Lyndsay  
Wu, Terry

**Staff:**  
Dinwoodie,  
Becky  
Foy, Cheryl  
MacIsaac, Brad  
McCartney,  
Kimberley  
Molinaro, Nichole  
Pitcher, Cathy

### Regrets:

Barari, Ahmad  
Jones, Ferdinand  
Khalid, Osama  
Mahmoud, Qusay  
Marques, Olga  
Mohany, Atef  
Petrie, Olivia  
Stoett, Peter  
Taylor, Noreen  
Williams, Alyssa

### 1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

### 2. Agenda

A request was made to change the order of the agenda items to consider the conferral of nursing degrees before the Steering Committee Terms of Reference Amendment.

*Upon a motion duly made by A. Mostaghim and seconded by G. Crawford, the Agenda was unanimously approved, as amended.*

A question was asked about when the minutes from the special meeting of March 27 would be available. C. Foy advised that the goal is to present them all for approval at the next regular AC meeting.

A question was asked about the availability of the polling feature in BlueJeans. The Chair asked for the problem to be identified so that resolutions may be considered.

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

The Chair noted that we are going through an unprecedented time and that he appreciates how engaged the AC members have been. Council had a very nuanced discussion during the last special meeting regarding the amendments to the exam grading policy. Decisions need to be made quickly and thoughtfully and all universities and boards are thinking about how to accomplish this during the pandemic situation. As we look to public health for guidance on what we might expect, we might find ourselves in a further crisis situation than we are now. Accordingly, we must plan on how to continue operations in the most effective manner, and this includes the governing bodies. It is critical to focus on how to make decisions in a timely way.

He hopes that Council members feel that they were heard, as they were provided with more time and information. The Office of the University Secretary and General Counsel was asked to prepare draft amendments to the Steering Committee Terms of Reference (ToR) for consideration. The Chair thanked T. Pierce for her work on the ToR. He also thanked B. Dinwoodie and C. Foy for pulling the material together so quickly.

The Chair expressed his gratitude to AC for working together to ensure a contingency plan is in place prior to the current situation escalating. He has never felt prouder to lead this organization. He noted that the conferral of degrees to nursing students is one way to help with the pandemic response by getting our graduates in the field sooner.

### **4. Provost's Remarks**

The Provost echoed the Chair's sentiments by saying thank you to AC members. She hopes everyone is well and safe. She also thanked all faculty, staff and students for their willingness to be part of the solution and help transition online as quickly as we did. The Provost expressed thanks to the AVPs and Deans, Head of IT and the University Library for their outstanding leadership in terms of keeping academic operations moving forward. She shared some of the positive feedback received. She encouraged everyone to continue to be vigilant against the virus and to develop a daily routine. The Provost ended with one big thank you to everyone.

### **5. Conferral of Nursing Degrees for Winter Term 2020**

J. Stokes presented the report for consideration. J. McCabe added that the early conferral of nursing degrees would allow our students to become registered with a temporary licence and move them into positions with the hospitals and agencies they are working for

to assist with the pandemic response. A member asked that J. McCabe pass on thanks on behalf of AC to the nursing students and nursing colleagues for their efforts.

*Upon a motion duly made by J. Stokes and seconded by M. Lloyd, pursuant to the recommendations of the Faculty of Health Sciences and the Registrar, Academic Council unanimously confirmed the eligibility for graduation of those students who have fulfilled all nursing degree requirements at the end of the Winter Term 2020 and recommends the conferral of degrees by the Chancellor.*

The Chair thanked J. McCabe and J. Stokes for their work on making it possible for AC and the university to make this additional contribution to the front-line work to battle COVID-19.

## **6. Amendments to Academic Council Steering Committee (SC)**

The proposed amendments to the SC Terms of Reference (ToR) will allow AC to proactively delegate authority to a body of AC to make decisions in the event that AC cannot reach quorum. This would allow a committee of AC to participate in academic decision making during a time of crisis when we do not have the luxury of time. The Chair confirmed that the SC must always report decisions it makes on behalf of AC to AC for information.

C. Foy walked through the proposed amendments to the AC ToR. In addition to the motions set out in the report, a third motion would likely be required to address the scope and duration of the delegation of authority, depending on the outcome of the first motion. It was clarified that the delegation of authority to the SC could be for a limited period of time, as well as limited in scope. The delegation could also come into effect as of a date set by AC. The delegation is also reviewable by AC – any delegation of authority can be revoked by the delegating body at any time. All decisions made by the SC would be reported to AC. C. Foy clarified that there are two separate motions set out in the accompanying report.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding how long the delegation of authority would remain in effect. There was support for delegating the authority for a month and then reviewing it on a monthly basis (at the regularly scheduled monthly AC meetings). It was reiterated that the plan was to continue to hold the already scheduled AC meetings, as long as quorum can be reached. AC always has the power to revoke and/or limit the delegation of authority and the delegation of authority would not preclude AC from continuing to schedule meetings and trying to meet. In an ideal scenario, AC would continue to have the ability to meet but must also plan for the worst by recommending the changes to the SC ToR.

The changes to the Steering Committee ToR would not affect the schedule of AC meetings. The current membership of the Steering Committee was confirmed – there are currently five *ex officio* members and five elected members on the committee. There is one vacancy for an elected member of AC.

AC continued to engage in a robust discussion of the proposed amendments to the SC ToR. A summary of the comments and related responses follows:

- the delegation of authority set out in the ToR is too vague and the limits on the delegation should be included in the ToR – for these reasons, the member opposed the motion
  - the Chair noted that there would be measures put in place to avoid the potential for any abuse of authority
- a member of the Steering Committee expressed support for the spirit of the motion and disagreed with the suggestion of including limitations in the ToR – the proposed limitations would be reflected in the minutes and would be available for future reference; AC members should focus on the spirit of the motion first, and then wordsmithing can happen later – out of mutual respect, believes that people would not abuse the power that is granted
- what would happen the following month if the delegation of authority is triggered by AC's failure to reach quorum?
  - AC should be proactive rather than waiting to delegate the authority by failing to reach quorum – having the tool available to Council would be useful
  - if an AC meeting is called and quorum is not reached, a meeting of the Steering Committee would be quickly called
- ideally the delegation of authority would be time limited (approximately a month or so) and would be reconsidered by Council upon the expiry of the time period
- the amendment is being proposed based on the assumption that AC will continue with its monthly meetings – this implicitly provides at least a monthly opportunity for Council to reconsider the delegation
- a concern was expressed about the balance of elected versus *ex officio* members on the Steering Committee
- people must be able to be reached in a timely fashion – in an emergency situation, bodies must be able to make decisions quickly; it would be helpful to keep flexibility in the Steering Committee ToR
- there was general support from Council for enacting the delegation of authority for the period of a month
- there could be a situation where AC cannot meet due to problems with infrastructure (access to internet, phones, etc.) as opposed to health reasons
- the phone numbers of the members of the Steering Committee and AC should be shared to ensure governance continuity
- deciding to amend the ToR to give AC the right to delegate authority to the Steering Committee and proceeding with delegating that authority are separate considerations and should not be conflated
- a member commented that she was not comfortable voting on the proposal given the material was distributed only 24 hours in advance of the meeting
  - the Chair noted that the delegation of authority was discussed during last week's AC meeting and that AC members were aware the proposal was coming forward – 24 hours is a long time in the current reality
- expressions of interest should be solicited from Council members who would be interested in serving on the SC to ensure the committee could fill vacancies as they arise

- there was concern that AC could end up in a situation where it could not reach quorum in order to approve extending the delegation of authority to the SC
- a request was made to show in the minutes that the delegation of authority would be for a month and that the schedule of AC meetings would not change
- suggested including a provision in the ToR requiring the SC to make all efforts to continue to coordinate AC meetings as scheduled, or as soon as possible thereafter
- should not put the time limitation in the SC ToR to provide for flexibility to adjust to the emergency situation facing them
- what happens if the emergency continues over the summer when AC is not scheduled to meet?
- C. Foy drafted the following language to add to the ToR and circulated it in the chat feature and B. Dinwoodie circulated it by e-mail: *The Steering Committee will make all efforts to arrange Academic Council meetings such that this delegation of authority is reviewed monthly or as quickly thereafter as possible.*
- B. Dinwoodie circulated it by e-mail to all Council members.

*Upon a motion duly made by B. Murphy and seconded by M. Lloyd, Academic Council recommended the proposed amendments to the Steering Committee Terms of Reference, as amended, for approval by the Board of Governors.*

*One member opposed and one member abstained.*

It was noted that the meeting was already almost half an hour over the allotted time. Council members were asked whether they preferred to extend the current meeting or convene another special meeting to discuss the actual delegation of authority. The Chair advised that the meeting would be called soon. Given that a number of members had to leave if the meeting were simply extended, it was decided to convene another special meeting as soon as possible to consider the delegation of authority.

## **7. Termination**

*Upon a motion duly made by B. Murphy and seconded by J. McCabe, the meeting terminated at 3:56 p.m.*

Becky Dinwoodie, Secretary



## ACADEMIC COUNCIL (AC)

Minutes of the Special Meeting of Friday, April 3, 2020

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Video Conference Only

### Present:

Murphy, Steven (Chair)

Bliemel, Michael

Davidson, Catherine

Desaulniers, Jean-Paul

Gaber, Hossam

Habibi, Sarah

Heydari, Shahram

Hogue, Jessica

Hossein Nejad, Mehdi

Jacobs, Les

Jones, Ferdinand

Khalid, Osama

Kishawy, Hossam

Livingston, Lori

Lesage, Ann

Liscano, Ramiro

Lloyd, Meghann

Mahmoud, Qusay

Marques, Olga

McCabe, Janet

Mostaghim, Amir

Murphy, Bernadette

Nugent, Kimberly

Partosoedarso, Elita

Petrie, Olivia

Pierce, Tess

Roy, Langis

Scott, Hannah

Shon, Phillip

Stoett, Peter

Stokes, Joe

Tokuhiro, Akira

Woolridge, Lyndsay

Wu, Terry

### Staff:

Dinwoodie,

Becky

Foy, Cheryl

MacIsaac, Brad

McCartney,

Kimberley

Molinaro, Nichole

Pitcher, Cathy

### Regrets:

Barari, Ahmad

Crawford, Greg

Kay, Robin

Mohany, Atef

Naumkin, Fedor

Rahnamayan, Shahryar

Rinaldi, Jen

Taylor, Noreen

Williams, Alyssa



## **1. Call to Order**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

## **2. Agenda**

*Upon a motion duly made, the Agenda was approved as presented.*

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

The Chair thanked everyone for participating in the special meeting. He knows that the faculty are working very hard transitioning to online learning and preparing exams.

These are only some of the responsibilities that everyone is dealing with. He thanked everyone again for their efforts over the past few weeks.

Administration has been working around the clock to ensure they are engaged in every aspect of planning to ensure we can get through this. We are preparing for an unknowable future and it is integral to keep focused on the university's vision during this time.

This is another important step in the contingency planning for Academic Council. The Chair heard from some members that they are struggling to keep up with these meetings and the short turnaround time. The Chair noted that these are the times when we need to be nimble and quick. He also noted that this is one of the reasons a delegated authority to the Steering Committee (SC) would be helpful, as it would ease the burden on the broader Council.

We have also heard concerns about the way we are voting in these meetings. As mentioned during the last meeting, we are happy to look into a polling feature, but before doing so, would like to better understand the problem that polling purports to solve. In our ordinary AC meetings, members vote by hand and that is difficult to do virtually. Our rules allow us to modify our practice to suit electronic meetings. The practice we have adopted for meetings by video conference (asking for opposed and then abstentions first) is more efficient using this format. It has been suggested that people would like to remain anonymous if opposing a motion; however, that is not how AC does business when we meet in person. All members are free to vote as they choose. In fact, it is your responsibility to vote in accordance with what you think is best for the institution.

The Chair asked everyone to take a moment to reflect that as Council members, they belong to one of the two governance bodies at the university. We all belong to the same institution and members should keep the best interests of the university at the forefront of their minds when making decisions. We each bring perspectives and knowledge and the goal is that while each of us votes from our personal perspective, our vote is to be made in the interests of the university as a whole. The best decisions are made when we listen thoughtfully to the information being presented and then make our own decisions based



on that information. The Chair remarked that they have seen this exemplified over the past few weeks.

The Chair also shared that he couldn't be more proud of the university community in terms of how everyone has come together over the past few weeks (e.g. supporting the community, moving online, etc.). We are a better institution when we come together. The Chair thanked B. Dinwoodie and C. Foy for their work on this material and providing Council members with as much time as possible to review the materials. They are taxed during this time and their work is greatly appreciated.

The Chair invited questions from Council. A comment was made about the Democratic Rules of Order requiring votes in favour to be taken first. B. Dinwoodie referred to the Virtual Meetings section in the Democratic Rules of Order, which allows the rules to be modified for virtual meetings.

#### **4. Provost's Remarks**

The Provost reported on a recent meeting with the COU Council of VPs. She remarked that the university is miles ahead of other institutions in terms of our response to the pandemic situation. As classes near the end, she offered a big thank you to faculty, staff and students for adapting to this new reality. She encouraged everyone to find some levity this weekend and to get out and enjoy the weather, while remaining vigilant and staying safe.

She responded to questions from Council. When asked for an example of how we are ahead of other institutions, she used Respondus Monitoring as an example. We had already conducted a privacy analysis and responded to the concerns of students and faculty. It was suggested that guidelines for using Respondus would be helpful.

#### **5. Pandemic Planning – Delegation of Authority to Academic Council Steering Committee**

The Chair reviewed the motions for consideration.

##### **MOTION 1:**

It was suggested that this motion would not have any impact on the outcome of motion 5 and was unnecessary. C. Foy referred to Section 1(b) of the proposed SC Terms of Reference (ToR), which sets out that AC may delegate authority in an emergency situation as determined by AC. Accordingly, this motion is the first step in the delegation of authority as set out in SC ToR.

*Upon a motion duly made by B. Murphy and seconded by P. Shon, Academic Council formally recognized that the COVID-19 Pandemic is an emergency requiring appropriate pandemic planning.*



There were 2 abstentions.

**MOTION 2:**

C. Foy advised that since this is not consistent with the AC schedule, a motion is required. The proposal is being made in response to comments made during the last special meeting. Further, the summer meetings could be cancelled if not required. It was clarified that the new members of AC would be invited to participate in summer meetings, as their terms are set to begin on July 1.

*Upon a motion duly made by H. Gaber and seconded by F. Jones, Academic Council unanimously approved scheduling meetings for Tuesday, July 28 and Tuesday, August 25, 2020 to begin at 2:30 p.m. and end by 4:30 p.m.*

**MOTION 3:**

C. Foy provided an overview of the recommendations with respect to the delegation of authority, which were set out in the accompanying report. She clarified that if AC cannot reach quorum, that agenda would then be considered by the SC and the process would continue until AC could next achieve quorum.

AC had a robust discussion regarding the length and scope of the delegation of authority. A summary of the comments/questions and responses follows:

- Is it possible for members to give notice in advance if unable to attend a meeting to ensure AC can get quorum?
  - Generally, members are not good with confirming attendance in advance.
  - If people are very sick, they may not be able to confirm attendance.
- Suggestion that the delegation of authority should be reviewed at every meeting, regular or special.
  - Concern that this is not an efficient way to operate.
- Board of Governors must approve the recommended changes to the SC ToR before delegation of authority can be enacted.
- The delegated authority to the SC could not be further delegated to another body.
- Who would be able to fill a vacant position on the SC?
- Is it ethical to ask a student to serve on the SC? Are there any health concerns?
  - Meetings will continue to be held virtually, so there are no health concerns about a student serving on the SC.
- It would be beneficial to have the student perspective represented on the committee – student representation balances the power dynamic.
- A student representative has already expressed interest in the vacant position on SC.
- With the SC reporting requirements, we are trying to be as transparent as possible.



*Upon a motion duly made by A. Mostaghim and seconded by M. Lloyd, Academic Council delegated its authority to the Steering Committee on the following terms:*

- *the delegation of authority comes into effect upon Academic Council failing to achieve quorum at either a special meeting or a regular meeting of Council. Failure to achieve quorum will not be declared until at least fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled start time of the meeting in question;*
- *delegation of authority will continue for one month or until the next scheduled Academic Council meeting, whichever is earlier. However, should Academic Council be unable to reach quorum, the delegation of authority will continue. The Steering Committee, with the support of the Secretariat, will arrange for the next Academic Council meeting as quickly thereafter as possible;*
- *the scope of the Steering Committee's delegated authority includes the Steering Committee will have the authority to exercise AC's responsibilities as set out in Article 1.1 of By-law No. 2, including the appointment of replacement members to the Steering Committee, if necessary; and*
- *the reporting requirements relating to the delegation of authority are the Steering Committee agenda and material to be circulated to AC to provide AC members with an opportunity to provide feedback for consideration by the Steering Committee; the Steering Committee meetings will be public and available AC members may join virtually to listen; notice of decisions made by the Steering Committee on behalf of AC will be distributed immediately following the meeting, with the relevant minutes to be provided to AC after approval.*

There was one abstention.

AC members supported sharing alternate e-mail addresses and phone numbers in order to be contacted. It was also suggested that members share emergency contact details, if they are willing to do so. A form will be prepared for completion. C Foy will provide her cell phone number to Council.

There were a number of comments from Council thanking S. Murphy, C. Foy and B. Dinwoodie for their work.

## **6. Termination**

*Upon a motion duly made by F. Jones, the meeting terminated at 12:27 p.m.*

Becky Dinwoodie, Secretary