

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

MINUTES of the MEETING of TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2021 Videoconference, 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Present:

Murphy, Steven (Chair)
Al-Shawesh, Yousef
Barari, Ahmad
Bliemel, Michael
Bradbury, Jeremy
Crawford, Greg
Davis, Owen
Davidson, Catherine
Dubrowski, Adam
Easton, Brad
Eklund, Mike
Elliott, Laura
Fernando, Shanti
Frazer, Mitch
Gaber, Hossam
Heydari, Shahram
Hogue, Jessica
Hossein Nejad, Mehdi
Jacobs, Les
Jones, Ferdinand
Kay, Robin
King, Alyson
Kishawy, Hossam
Livingston, Lori

Lloyd, Meghann
Mahmoud, Qusay
Marques, Olga
McCabe, Janet
Naumkin, Fedor
Obasohan, Jacinta
O'Rourke, Nicholas
Pierce, Tess
Rahnamayan,
Shahryar
Rodgers, Carol
Roy, Langis
Scott, Hannah
Serenko, Alexander
Shon, Phillip
Stoett, Peter
Stokes, Joe
Tokuhiko, Akira

Staff & Guests:

Abou Ziki, Jana
Babb, Shay
Bauer, Chelsea
Bignell, Paul
Bruno, Jamie
Crouse, Dan
Dinwoodie, Becky
Drinkwalter, Andra
Foy, Cheryl
Freeman, Jenn
Hamilton, Barb
Heslip, Michelle
Hester, Krista
Levy, Melissa
Liscano, Ramiro
Maclsaac, Brad
McCartney, Kimberley
McGovern, Sue
McLaughlin, Christine
Molinaro, Nichole
Nickle, Joanne
Pitcher, Cathy
O'Halloran, Niall
Sankarial, Joshua
Scanga, Franco
Secord, Krista
Shah, Alena
Sunstrum, Andrew
Yardy, Kevin
Wright, Sharifa

Regrets:

Barber, Wendy
Mostaghim, Amir
Partosoedarso, Elita
Sami, Ramin
Sheikh, Jahan

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:31 p.m.

2. Agenda

Upon a motion duly made by P. Stoett and seconded by H. Kishawy, the Agenda was approved as presented.

3. Chair's Remarks

The Chair welcomed Y. Al-Shawesh and N. O'Rourke, the new graduate student members, to their first Academic Council meeting. The Chair encouraged everyone to remain vigilant in following COVID preventative protocols. He reported that he has spent a lot of time listening to students, faculty, and staff about the lessons COVID has taught us, as well as the lessons learned from being online. The sense of optimism is palpable. Everyone is looking forward to getting back together in person, as is he. It is going to be a slower return to normal than people would like, but it is important to do it right and safely. He thanked those who provided written feedback and those who have participated in focus groups on the future of the university.

4. Minutes of the Meeting of January 25, 2021

There was a question about the request for an update on the Student Experience Guarantee not being reflected in "Other Business". B. Dinwoodie clarified that the request was reflected under item 12, as the minutes were pulled from the Consent Agenda for discussion.

Upon a motion duly made by G. Crawford and seconded by L. Elliott, the Minutes were approved as presented.

5. Business Arising from the Minutes **(a) Vision, Mission and Values**

L. Elliott, the governor member of Council, noted that during the last meeting of Academic Council (AC), members had a robust discussion regarding the updated version of the vision, mission and values (VMV). Some members expressed concerns about the changes made in the amended version. She affirmed that the Board of Governors respects and values the views of the university community, and AC in particular, as a key partner in university governance. She emphasized the importance of AC seeing that the Board respects and considers their advice.

L. Elliott informed AC that she has prepared a report for the upcoming Board meeting to ensure that the concerns and comments of AC are given full consideration by the Board before approving the refreshed vision, mission, and values. This is in keeping with process, as the Strategy and Planning Committee was aware that the document was going back to AC and might be subject to further comment. She advised that the motion passed by Strategy and Planning supporting the version presented to the

committee at the time reflects the committee's awareness that changes were possible after the final consultation with Academic Council.

L. Elliott advised that following a thorough review and consideration of Academic Council's feedback, the President and Provost prepared an amended version of the VMV. She reviewed the amendments and advised that she feels that they address the points raised by AC and improve the document overall. She reviewed the proposed amendments with Council:

VISION: Embracing technology with a conscience to advance knowledge and promote sustainability.

MISSION: Tech with a conscience: Innovating to improve lives and the planet by incorporating technology-enhanced learning strategies and promoting the ethical development and use of technology for good through intensive research and inquiry.

Partnerships: Uncovering innovative solutions for their most pressing problems through purposeful research and collaboration with industry, community, government and academic partners especially as it relates to all facets of global sustainability and well-being.

L. Elliott informed Council that the amended version of the VMV will be presented to the Board for approval at the upcoming meeting. She informed Council that her report and the updated version of the VMV are available publicly on the Board meetings webpage. L. Elliott responded to questions from Academic Council. A member commented that the document should be further amended to reflect that faculty create/develop technology in addition to using it.

(b) Student Experience Guarantee

L. Livingston provided an update on the student experience guarantee. She informed Council that students had until October 9 to withdraw and receive a full tuition refund. The university had 92 students withdraw in full from their programs, which is less than 1% of the overall student body. Of those students, 52 were new students and 40 were continuing. In 2019, 42 students withdrew by the same date. It is difficult to determine the exact reasons why students withdrew in 2020, as it could be due to a number of factors. L. Livingston responded to questions from Council members. She emphasized that it was a very student-centric option and was pleased that the number was as small as it was.

6. Provost's Remarks

The Provost commented that as we approach the end of February, we are approaching the end of Black History Month. She thanked those students, staff and faculty who participated in the events this month and thanked the Library and Student Life in particular. The Provost referred Council members to the website listing the remaining events and encouraged members to participate.

The Provost thanked those who submitted proposals to take advantage of the recent eCampus Ontario funding. She confirmed that 62 proposals were submitted with a total ask of \$6.2m. These are only the proposals that are being led by Ontario Tech and there are a number of others where the university is participating but not the lead.

The Provost also thanked the members of the university community who have been attending the budget consultations and integrated academic planning sessions. If members were unable to attend a session, the documents are available for review online and written feedback will be welcomed. She invited B. Maclsaac to comment on the budget consultations. B. Maclsaac advised that coming out of a discussion at last month's AC meeting, they were asked to review tuition fees for the MASc program. They anticipate the domestic fees will be reduced by \$1000 and international fees reduced by \$2000. The 2021-2022 tuition fees will be presented to the Board's Audit and Finance Committee in April. They are also looking at a proposal to bridge the gap for international student tuitions.

7. Steering Committee:

(a) Delegation of Authority Review

T. Pierce presented the renewal of the delegation of authority for approval.

Upon a motion duly made by T. Pierce and seconded by A. Tokuhiro, Academic Council renewed the delegation of authority to the Steering Committee on the same basis as it was approved on April 3.

One member abstained.

(b) Blended Learning Strategic Discussions

The Chair reminded Council that the third blended learning discussion, focused on the challenges of blended learning, took place on February 9. The session involved 5 breakout rooms, with each room assigned one of the key themes coming out of the challenges identified during the jamboard session. Members were asked to discuss the specific challenge and identify the issues that need to be addressed to resolve the challenge. The next session will be held on Friday, March 5 and will be confirmed in the next few days.

The Chair shared that positive feedback has been received about the format of the last session. The Chair responded to questions from Council. A member expressed concern about intellectual property in the context of a blended learning model (example of a dead professor teaching a course at Concordia). The Chair suggested that intellectual property (IP) could be discussed in the context of opportunities. Another comment was made that IP is broader than the faculty's own IP and must also be considered in online lectures.

8. Integrated Plan Update

L. Livingston provided a brief update on the integrated academic research plan consultations. She reported that they had a good session last week and have another coming up on February 25. She advised that the Student Union has also issued an open call for students to participate in the upcoming session. A draft of the updated plan is posted and she invited written feedback on the plan if members are unable to attend a consultation session. L. Livingston confirmed that the draft updated plan will be presented to Academic Council in March. L. Jacobs reminded Council that there is a commitment in the 5-year research plan to report back to AC annually at the end of April, which will provide an opportunity for AC to provide feedback.

L. Livingston responded to comments and questions from Council members. There was a discussion regarding the impact of COVID on research. L. Jacobs advised that when the Strategic Research Plan was finalized, we were already into COVID and it is reflected in the plan. The research task force is still active and continues to meet every 3-4 weeks in order to monitor and address some of those issues. The nimbleness on the part of our faculty has been notable. There was approximately 40 faculty members who adjusted their research programs to take advantage of COVID research opportunities (e.g. wastewater testing program).

9. Policy Consultation: (a) Accommodation Policy

A. Sunstrum presented the Accommodation Policy for consultation. He provided a brief overview of the policy and responded to questions and comments from Council. The comments and questions included:

- The language of disability is taken from Ontario legislation - the language is outdated and ableist; the member encouraged the community to take a more positive and inclusive approach in communications, documents, website, etc.
 - A. Sunstrum advised that as part of establishing the Human Rights Office, he is working on creating a webpage and providing a resource guide on how to make a request for accommodation – more information is on its way; there is a commitment to using more inclusive language outside of the legal policy document.
- the training referred to in the Respectful Campus policy is no longer available due to the elimination of Adobe Flash.
 - C. Foy advised that the USGC is working with HR to identify training priorities.
- Concern about including pregnancy in the document and referring to pregnant women as “disabled”.
- Concern about the reference to instructors as “persons of authority” and the responsibilities of those identified as such.
 - A. Sunstrum advised that in the Accommodation Policy, faculty members are included as “persons of authority” as it is anticipated that students would go to their instructor first and it is important to ensure

faculty members are aware of the process and know who to reach out to if a student comes forward with a request.

- He emphasized that accommodation is a group activity and requires a lot of people working together.
- one who is pregnant should not have to go to SAS for assistance – should be able to work with their instructor.
- How is accommodation reflected in the workload of course instructors and TAs?
 - Requires further discussion beyond the context of the policy.
- OHRC has been developing a policy that is intended to guide the interpretation of the Code – now approximately 15 policy documents produced by OHRC.
- If not SAS, where should students be sent?
 - A. Sunstrum advised that part of the rationale for these policy updates is to improve role clarity and this is the first step in the process.

(b) Respectful Campus Policy

A. Sunstrum provided an overview of the policy and responded to comments and questions from Council, which included:

- Why is the university doing such a sudden and drastic change to the policy documents?
- Are there definitions of “disrespect” and “microaggressions” in the policy documents?
- Will there be an opportunity to provide written feedback on the policy documents?
 - C. Foy reminded Council that the policy documents were circulated to AC before the winter break for written feedback - it is important to move the policy instruments forward as a demonstration of the university’s continued commitment to human rights protection. The online consultation period will be extended.
 - There is a requirement under the legislation to review the procedures annually and these policy instruments will be reviewed again fairly soon.
 - A. Sunstrum clarified that disrespect and microaggressions were included in the policies in order to try to minimize this type of behaviour so it does not escalate to the point of harassment.
- There is a fast pace of generating policies – while they were circulated before Christmas, everyone is busy and has limited time to spend reviewing policy documents.
- Member commented that they feel uncomfortable defining respect and expressed concern about this impacting academic freedom to debate freely.
 - C. Foy referenced the consultation process set out in the Policy Framework.
 - USGC identifies policy gaps and policies developed accordingly.

- Have seen an increase in complaints related to Human Rights and this is a remedial effort and an effort to improve the culture of the university.

(c) Harassment and Discrimination Procedures for Employees

A. Sunstrum responded to questions and comments from AC members, which included:

- Is there overlap between student and faculty interaction?
 - A. Sunstrum advised that the starting point was the original procedure documents and then additional processes were added to make it clear that there are informal options available to try to resolve conflict, as well.
 - If there was a complaint made by a faculty member about a student, then the employee procedures would apply to the faculty member and student procedures would apply to the student.
- If a bully is careful with their behaviour and language, they can bully, and as the policy is currently written, this would be allowed.

(d) Radiation Safety Policy

J. Freeman provided an overview of the Radiation Safety Policy, as well as the consultation process. In response to a question from an AC member, J. Freeman explained why the policy did not go to the Health and Safety Committee for consultation.

Committee Reports

7. Research Board

L. Jacobs provided a research board update. He highlighted the upcoming Black Entrepreneurship event and encouraged people to attend. Federal Minister Ahmed Hussen will be participating in the event. L. Jacobs informed Council that the university was designated as part of the United Nations International Atomic Energy Agency Collaborating Centre, which fits within the climate change agenda and sustainable energy scheme. He encouraged members to review the initiative and to think about collaboration opportunities.

8. Undergraduate Studies Committee

(a) Major Program Modification - Faculty of Business and Information Technology – Bachelor of Information Technology in Game Development and Entrepreneurship

L. Roy presented the proposal for approval. M. Bliemel responded to questions from Council. M. Bliemel clarified that by having a lighter core, this will provide additional career paths for our students and will also be able to accommodate students with varying degrees of technical ability. He also explained that by making the Game Development Workshops for credit, this will reduce the amount of work required per semester.

Upon a motion duly made by L. Roy and seconded by O. Davis, pursuant to the recommendation of the Undergraduate Studies Committee, Academic Council unanimously approved the Major Program Modifications to the Bachelor of Information Technology in Game Development and Entrepreneurship, as presented.

9. Graduate Studies Committee

(a) Graduate Calendar to Policy Migration Project:

(i) Graduate Student Supervisory Committee Policy

(ii) Doctoral Candidacy Examination Policy

(iii) Thesis Oral Examination for Master's and Doctoral Candidates Policy

(iv) Graduate Project or Major Paper Evaluation Policy

(v) Graduate Submission of Thesis, Project or Major Paper Policy

L. Roy presented the policy documents for approval. He explained that SGPS is moving documents from the Graduate Academic Calendar into the Policy Framework. L. Roy responded to questions and comments from Council members, which included:

- Conflict of interest language: excludes faculty members from being external examiners (example of being excluded as an external examiner due to name appearing on same paper as other researcher but never collaborated with the individual).
- Concern that SGPS is too bureaucratic – frustration expressed with the university examiner policy/procedures.
 - L. Roy clarified that no substantive changes were being made to the policy documents and that any substantive changes must go through the proper consultation and approval process.
 - L. Roy offered to discuss the issues identified offline.
- Sections 7.2(a) and 8.1 – request to schedule an examination must be made 3 months in advance of examination – seems like a long time and risks that the student might be responsible for another term of fees.
 - L. Roy advised that there are many reasons for establishing a 3 month timeline and that GSC also suggested that this might need further review.
- Section 11.3 – non-voting advisor is unable to vote, which is redundant.
- Suggestion to revisit the section that excludes someone who has taught the student from being an examiner.
- Language around examiner in 7.2 “normally is a member of the university”

Upon a motion duly made by L. Roy and seconded by L. Jacobs, pursuant to the recommendation of the Graduate Studies Committee, Academic Council unanimously approved the following policy documents:

- i. Graduate Student Supervisory Committee Policy*
- ii. Doctoral Candidacy Examination Policy*

- iii. Thesis Oral Examination for Master's and Doctoral Candidates Policy*
- iv. Graduate Project or Major Paper Evaluation Policy*
- v. Graduate Submission of Thesis, Project or Major Paper Policy*

(b) Major Program Modifications:

(i) Faculty of Health Sciences – MHSc in Health Sciences – Community, Public, and Population Health; Health Informatics; Kinesiology fields

L. Roy provided a brief overview of the proposal. As a result of changes due to COVID, the mixed mode of delivery was favourable to student learning outcomes and in future, the program would like to continue to have the option of offering multiple modes of delivery. There was a discussion regarding how it was assessed that the outcomes of online learning were favourable. C. Rodgers advised that the instructors observed much more engagement in the seminar course (increased attendance, flexibility allowed more students to attend and participate).

Upon a motion duly made by L. Roy and seconded by H. Kishawy, pursuant to the recommendation of the Graduate Studies Committee, Academic Council unanimously approved the Major Program Modifications to the MHSc in Health Sciences, as presented.

One member abstained.

(ii) Faculty of Health Sciences – PhD in Health Sciences

L. Roy presented the proposal for approval and responded to questions from Council. A comment was made that it is a challenge to assess the effectiveness of a change in mode for graduate courses as we do not have a graduate course survey. L. Roy advised that graduate course surveys are currently being developed.

Upon a motion duly made by L. Roy and seconded by M. Bliemel, pursuant to the recommendation of the Graduate Studies Committee, Academic Council unanimously approved the Major Program Modification to the PhD in Health Sciences, as presented.

(G. Crawford, J. McCabe, and S. Fernando left at 4:38 p.m.)

(iii) Faculty of Health Sciences – Work Disability Prevention Graduate Diploma

L. Roy provided an overview of the proposal.

Upon a motion duly made by L. Roy and seconded by C. Rodgers, pursuant to the recommendation of the Graduate Studies Committee, Academic Council unanimously approved the Major Program Modification to the Work Disability Prevention Graduate Diploma, as presented.

One member abstained.

10. For Information:

(a) USC Minor Program Adjustments:

- (i) Faculty of Education – Bachelor of Education - Intermediate/Senior
- (ii) Faculty of Health Sciences – Bachelor of Allied Health Sciences Bridge
- (iii) Faculty of Science – Bachelor of Science in Forensic Science

(b) GSC Minor Program Adjustments:

- (i) Faculty of Education - Education and Digital Technologies, Graduate Diploma
- (ii) Faculty of Energy Systems and Nuclear Science – MASc and MEng in Nuclear Engineering
- (iii) Faculty of Energy Systems and Nuclear Science – PhD in Nuclear Engineering
- (iv) Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science – MASc, MEng, and PhD in Electrical and Computer Engineering
- (v) Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science – MASc, MEng, and PhD in Mechanical Engineering

11. Other Business

12. Termination

There being no other business, upon a motion duly made by F. Jones, the meeting terminated at 4:43 p.m.

Becky Dinwoodie, Secretary