

ACADEMIC COUNCIL
MINUTES of the MEETING of TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 2021
Videoconference, 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Present:

Murphy, Steven (Chair)
Al-Shawesh, Yousef
Barari, Ahmad
Barber, Wendy
Bradbury, Jeremy
Crawford, Greg
Davis, Owen
Davidson, Catherine
Easton, Brad
Eklund, Mike
Elliott, Laura
Fernando, Shanti
Gaber, Hossam
Heydari, Shahram
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
O'Rourke, Nicholas
Pierce, Tess
Rahnamayan,
Shahryar
Rodgers, Carol
Serenko, Alexander
Shon, Phillip
Stoett, Peter
Stokes, Joe
Tokuhiko, Akira

Staff & Guests:

Babb, Shay
Bruno, Jamie
Callahan, Stephanie
Cote, Pierre
Crouse, Dan
Dinwoodie, Becky
Drinkwalter, Andra
Foy, Cheryl
Hamilton, Barb
Hester, Krista
Livingstone, Clarissa
MacIsaac, Brad
McCartney, Kimberley
McGovern, Sue
McLaughlin, Christine
Molinaro, Nichole
Nickle, Joanne
O'Halloran, Niall
Scanga, Franco
Secord, Krista
Shah, Alena
Sunstrum, Andrew

Regrets:

Bliemel, Michael
Dubrowski, Adam
Frazer, Mitch
Mostaghim, Amir
Obasohan, Jacinta
Partosoedarso, Elita
Roy, Langis
Sami, Ramin
Scott, Hannah
Sheikh, Jahan

1. Call to Order

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

2. Agenda

The Chair noted the deferral of the Research Board Terms of Reference coming forward from the Governance and Nominations Committee.

Upon a motion duly made by F. Jones and seconded by O. Davis, the Agenda was approved as amended.

3. Chair's Remarks

The Chair thanked everyone for their work and contributions during what was a very challenging year. We are starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel as vaccination rates continue to rise. When we started out 15 months ago, we would not have thought that we would still be dealing with COVID at this time. As more and more people are fully vaccinated, there is a renewed sense of optimism. The Chair expressed his appreciation for Council's commitment to governance during this time. He noted that we were able to achieve quorum at every meeting.

The Chair reminded Council that it is the time of year when he would normally thank everyone for their participation in this year's convocation ceremonies. While we could not celebrate in person this year, our Convocation Team worked exceptionally hard to coordinate virtual convocation ceremonies for the first time in the university's history. The celebrations included delivering graduation boxes to the graduands and also offering a pick-up option on campus. A separate virtual ceremony will be held for each Faculty for the 2021 celebrations and the Chair encouraged everyone to participate in the virtual ceremonies and congratulate our students. He thanked everyone for their hard work to ensure our students could complete their year and graduate on time. The Chair congratulated the Classes of 2020 and 2021.

The Chair noted that meetings have been tentatively scheduled for the summer and they will try not impinge upon people's schedules over the summer. However, where we will be four weeks from now is very difficult to predict.

The Chair provided his observations on the blended learning strategic discussions. He shared that the sessions helped shape his thinking with respect to blended learning, in addition to the focus groups that were held throughout the year. Some of the key takeaways from the discussions were:

- Focus on continuous improvement;
- Importance of flexibility;
- Necessity of a robust digital platform; and
- The university community is up to the challenge – innovative practices were developed throughout the past year.

The Chair confirmed that the plan is to continue these discussions in 2021 and beyond. The more that we can continue to engage AC in something as strategic as pedagogy the better.

4. Minutes of the Meeting of May 25, 2021

Upon a motion duly made by H. Gaber and seconded by J. Bradbury, the Minutes were approved as presented.

5. Business Arising from the Minutes

None.

6. Provost's Remarks

The Provost congratulated the Ontario Tech Enactus Team, which was recognized as the most media savvy and most improved team. She thanked the team advisors and congratulated the team for this outstanding accomplishment for a relatively new group on campus.

The Provost advised AC that the call for honorary doctorate nominations was recently released and reviewed the criteria for nominees. The deadline for nominations is Monday, August 9. She also reminded Council that the next virtual planning information session is Monday, July 12 and the final session is on August 31.

The Provost thanked students, staff and faculty for their adherence to the continuously evolving public guidelines. She wished everyone a restful, safe and fun summer and hopes everyone is looking forward to a different campus experience in the fall.

The Provost responded to questions from Council members:

- Any idea as to whether there is a drop-dead date for finalizing courses for the fall?
 - The Provost advised that about 60% of courses have at least one component on campus. If students are concerned about the offerings, she encouraged them to contact the director and managers of advising.
 - If we experience another outbreak and public health guidelines change, we may have to shift back online.

7. Inquiries & Communications

(a) COU Academic Colleague's Report

A. King provided an overview of the COU Academic Colleague's Report, which was included in the meeting material. She noted that the report covered two sets of meetings. COU continues to advocate for policies that support the sustainability of

universities. She reported on the session with the Executive Heads that focused on planning for the post-pandemic university experience. During the most recent COU meeting, the Academic Colleagues discussed McMaster's targeted hiring initiative. A. King directed Council to the report for additional details.

8. 2021-2022 Budget Update

The Provost and B. MacIsaac delivered the budget presentation and responded to questions from Council. The questions and comments from AC included:

- suggestion to provide support for robust program enrolment;
- Has any hiring been done in the area of recruitment?
 - the Provost confirmed that there has been some hiring to support recruitment efforts; the Registrar's Office has done a good job of converting applications to confirmations (increase of 8% in confirmations compared to this time last year)
- In the budget, some funds were set aside for technology in teaching - what is the recommendation with respect to this year's surplus?
 - \$2m to be restricted for faculty start up
 - \$1.5m for learning re-imagined
 - Just over \$2m for physical and virtual re-imagined for next year
- Any consideration to set reserve funds aside to cover operating costs in the future?
 - Recommendation is to bring more info to AC about use of reserves in the fall – important to set aside operating reserves to get through any uncertainty over next few years
- Suggestion to include information about budget breakdown by Faculty (faculty:student ratio, hiring plans, etc.) when presenting to AC
 - the Chair noted that the budget information being presented is consistent with what is presented to the Board, as they are both governing bodies – more disaggregated information is presented at the Faculty level

9. Steering Committee: (a) Delegation of Authority Review

H. Gaber presented the delegation of authority for consideration. Council had a lengthy discussion about the continuing risks of COVID and of not reaching quorum. A suggestion was made to consider implementing a more permanent delegation of authority to the Steering Committee that could also be enacted during for non-COVID related reasons (e.g. difficulty achieving quorum due to vacations). The Chair noted that there is little risk associated with renewing the delegation of authority and, given the concerns about a fourth wave, this is likely not the time to end the delegation of authority.

H. Gaber informed Council that the Steering Committee also had a robust discussion of this item and acknowledged that the delegation of authority is important for business continuity purposes. A member cautioned against setting something up that could potentially be abused. The Chair discussed the process that would be followed in exercising the authority and assured the authority would not be abused.

Upon a motion duly made by H. Gaber and seconded by G. Crawford, Academic Council renewed the delegation of authority to the Steering Committee on the following basis:

- o 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;*
- o the delegation of authority will continue until September 28, 2021 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;*
- o 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*
- o 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.*

22 members voted in favour, 1 opposed and 9 abstained.

(b) Blended Learning Strategic Discussions

The Chair shared additional thoughts on yesterday's blended learning session. He thought it was a helpful, fun, and great way to cap off the year.

(c) Annual Board Report

B. Dinwoodie presented the Annual Board Report for approval.

Upon a motion duly made by L. Jacobs and seconded by P. Stoett, pursuant to the recommendation of the Steering Committee, Academic Council unanimously approved the Annual Board Report, as presented.

Committee Reports

10. Research Board:

(a) Proposal for the Institute for Disability and Rehabilitation Research

L. Jacobs provided a high-level overview of the proposal for consideration.

Upon a motion duly made by L. Jacobs and seconded by H. Gaber, pursuant to the recommendation of the Research Board, Academic Council unanimously recommended the Establishment of the Institute for Disability and Rehabilitation Research (IDRR) for approval by the Board of Governors, as presented.

The Chair congratulated everyone involved in this initiative.

11. Undergraduate Studies Committee

(a) Professional Suitability Policy and Procedures

J. Stokes presented the policy and procedures for consideration.

Upon a motion duly made by H. Kishawy and seconded by J. Bradbury, pursuant to the recommendation of the Undergraduate Studies Committee, Academic Council unanimously approved the Undergraduate Professional Suitability Policy and Procedure.

12. Graduate Studies Committee

(a) Faculty of Social Science and Humanities: New Graduate Diploma in Police Leadership Program Proposal

J. Bradbury presented the proposal for consideration.

Upon a motion duly made by J. Bradbury and seconded by A. Tokuhiro, pursuant to the recommendation of the Graduate Studies Committee, Academic Council unanimously approved the Graduate Diploma in Police Leadership and recommended approval of the program to the Board of Governors.

13. Governance & Nominations Committee

(a) Review of Research Board Terms of Reference - deferred

14. Policy Consultation:
(a) Workplace Violence Policy & Procedure

J. Bruno provided an overview of the policy and procedure. He advised that the documents were prepared in consultation with the Director of the Human Rights Office. The redlined sections indicate those sections that have been moved into the discrimination and harassment policy documents. J. Bruno provided an overview of the consultation process. He clarified that policy documents apply to students employed by the university. He confirmed that the documents will also be posted for public consultation.

15. Consent Agenda:
(a) Academic Council & Standing Committee Nominations
(b) Academic Council Committee Appointments
(c) COU Academic Colleague Alternate
(d) Undergraduate Academic Appeals Policy

A request was made to discuss the Undergraduate Academic Appeals Policy. There was a discussion about how decisions that overturn a Faculty-level decision are communicated to the Faculty and how the faculty involved in the case can learn from that decision.

Upon a motion duly made by H. Gaber and seconded by J. Bradbury, the Consent Agenda was unanimously approved.

16. For Information:

USC:

- (a) Cyclical Program Review - Faculty of Science – Bachelor of Science in Forensic Science
- (b) Cyclical Program Review - Faculty of Social Science and Humanities – Bachelor of Arts in Forensic Psychology

GSC:

- (c) Cyclical Program Review - Faculty of Energy Systems and Nuclear Science – Master of Engineering in Nuclear Engineering, Graduate Diploma in Nuclear Design Engineering, and Graduate Diplomas in Nuclear Technology

Registrar's Office:

- (d) Scholarships & Major Award Recipients

17. Other Business

18. Termination

There being no other business, upon a motion duly made, the meeting terminated at 4:13 p.m.

Becky Dinwoodie, Secretary