

ACADEMIC COUNCIL
Minutes of the Meeting of January 24, 2023
2:30 – 4:07 p.m., Videoconference

Present:

Murphy, Steven (Chair)	Fernando, Shanti	Peters, Manisha
Azad, Nader	Hossein Nejad, Mehdi	Rastpour, Amir
Bailey, Robert	Jacobs, Les	Rodgers, Carol
Barari, Ahmad	Kay, Robin	Roy, Langis
Bliemel, Michael	King, Alyson	Ruttenberg-Rozen, Robyn
Bradbury, Jeremy	Kishawy, Hossam	Sankarlal, Joshua
Bryant, Toba	Law, Corey	Serenko, Alexander
Carmichael, Carla	Liscano, Ramiro	Serote, MaryCae
Christou, Ted	Livingston, Lori	Stoett, Peter
Crawford, Greg	Lloyd, Meghann	Stokes, Joe
Davidson, Catherine	MacMillan, Patricia	
Duff, Ana	Nokleby, Scott	
Eklund, Mike	Partosoedarso, Elita	

Regrets:

Barber, Wendy	Frazer, Mitch
Dubrowski, Adam	Hosseini, Sayyed Ali
Easton, Brad	Jones, Ferdinand
Felder, Ruth	Watterworth, Michael

Staff & Guests:

Bauer, Chelsea	Hester, Krista	Papke, Darryl
Bruno, Jamie	Lin, Sylvia	Townshend, Lisa
Callahan, Stephanie	Livingstone, Clarissa	Turner, Lauren
Cantrell, Sarah	MacIsaac, Brad	Wingate, Adam
Gottlieb, Sara	McCartney, Kimberley	

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. R. Kay shared some reflections on the land acknowledgements.

2. Agenda

Upon request, the Council of Universities of Ontario (COU) Academic Colleague Report item was removed from the consent agenda and added to the regular agenda.

Upon a motion duly made by M. Hossein Nejad and seconded by H. Kishawy, the Agenda was approved as amended.

3. Chair's Remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first Academic Council meeting of 2023. He provided some updates, including the success of Project Arrow at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, Ontario Tech's province-leading numbers in high school applicants, a celebration for 2020 and 2021 graduates who missed out on convocation, and Ontario Tech's sponsorship of the 2023 Parasport games. He also welcomed Ted Christou to

Academic Council and reminded members of the upcoming strategic discussion on governance scheduled for February 1, 2023.

4. Provost's Remarks

- a. Senior Academic Administrator Search Update
- b. Integrated Academic-Research Plan

The Provost made overarching remarks, encompassing both items a. and b. as well as other updates. She welcomed everyone back and expressed the hope that the holiday season was restful. She advised Academic Council that the advisory committee for the appointment of the next dean of the Faculty of Business and Information Technology has been constituted. She gave an update on the Integrated Academic-Research Plan, including the integrated planning retreat in November 2022 and ongoing consultations. She congratulated Dr. Angela Cooper Brathwaite on her appointment to the Order of Canada.

5. 2023-2024 Tuition Framework

S. Cantrell presented the 2023-2024 Tuition Framework. She highlighted the impacts of provincial cuts and freezes on funding and tuition, reporting that the reduction in government spending resulted in a \$9.4 million impact on the University's budget. The additional freezes have resulted in a further \$12 million impact. She advised Academic Council that significant investment has been made in scholarships appreciating the impact any increase in tuition will have on students.

The 2023-2024 Tuition Framework is based on the assumption that all domestic tuition fees at both the undergraduate and graduate levels are frozen. Out-of-province rates are proposed to be increased by 3% but may increase to 5%. International undergraduate fees are proposed to increase by 5% with a commitment to international students that the University will not increase fees by any more than 5% so that they can reliably budget for their education. International graduate programs fees are not increasing.

The Chair noted that the University and the COU have been lobbying for a lift of the tuition freeze. In response to a question, S. Cantrell agreed to return with data regarding the percentage of total tuition fees represented by international graduate tuition. A brief discussion ensued on international graduate student tuition. An undergraduate student member commented on the alignment between the University and the Ontario Tech Student Union with respect to lobbying efforts, but expressed concern about the increase in international student tuition. In response to a question, S. Cantrell advised that the University is using a number of strategies to mitigate impacts on international students and enhance financial sustainability. For the former, there is a tuition set-aside and the aforementioned maximum 5% increase in tuition per year. For the latter, the University is taking measures to manage or cut costs; increasing alternate revenue generating programs such as course-based professional master's programs, micro-credentials, and continuous learning; and broadening philanthropy. In response to a question, S. Cantrell confirmed that the tuition set-aside comes out of bursaries and scholarships. In response to a further question, J. Stokes confirmed that international students are eligible for the same scholarships as domestic students as well as dedicated scholarships awarded on entrance but renewable based on academic merit.

6. Student Success

The Provost presented a report on Student Success. She noted that prior to the pandemic, the University would report on retention rates, particularly in the transition from first- to second-year for undergraduates. Reporting over the pandemic has shifted in recognition of the ethical obligation to support student success. Noting that a number of success-oriented initiatives are discussed in the materials, the Provost highlighted the Learner Engagement Academic Program (LEAP). Overall, LEAP has resulted in 59% of participating students returning to good academic standing and proceeding with their programs. The Provost also highlighted the centralization of academic advising and the changes to service delivery to reflect student preferences.

In response to a question, the Provost advised Academic Council that there are multiple layers of support on campus to respond to non-academic issues such as mental health and stress. She shared that academic advisors are trained in mental health first aid and are well acquainted with additional resources to which they can direct students, including peer advising services and peer learner programs in Student Life. In response to a question, the Provost described the predecessor program to LEAP and its significantly lower rate of returning students to their programs. In response to a further question, the Provost explained that the plan for each student is individualized in LEAP. In response to a question, J. Stokes confirmed that the fee to participate in LEAP is purely cost recovery for one-on-one coaching. In response to a question, the Provost agreed to bring information about student satisfaction with academic advising to a subsequent Academic Council meeting.

Committee Reports:

7. Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC)

a. Major Program Modification – Bachelor of Science in Biological Science – Environmental Toxicology specialization

L. Roy presented the proposed Major Program Modification to the Environmental Toxicology specialization, advising Academic Council that the dissolution of the specialization is not expected to have a significant impact as identical material is covered in another specialization under Biological Science. In response to a question, G. Crawford confirmed that there will be no loss of resources or courses as a result of the proposal.

Upon a motion duly made by L. Roy and seconded by G. Crawford, Academic Council approved, pursuant to the recommendation of the Undergraduate Studies Committee, the Major Program Modification to remove the Environmental Toxicology specialization from the Bachelor of Science in Biological Science.

8. Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)

T. Christou provided a brief update on GSC, noting that the Committee had its first meeting of the year earlier that day. He advised Academic Council that a report on the major and minor program modifications approved at GSC will be presented at the February meeting.

9. Research Committee

L. Jacobs updated Academic Council on recent activity at Research Committee. He highlighted that Ontario Tech University has been designated a research university of the year for the second year in a row. He highlighted improvements to research funding, opportunities for international funding – particularly from the European Union – as well as increased funding opportunities for innovative research. He advised Academic Council

that further details and information about the student research summer program will be forthcoming in early March.

L. Jacobs discussed internal funding to support research centres and institutes. He noted the quality of funding submissions and expressed the intent to fund as many proposals as possible using the \$600K available. He then drew Academic Council's attention to collaborative research events on campus, citing the upcoming Tech with a Green Conscience as an example. In response to a question, L. Jacobs described efforts to ascertain societal impacts outside of research funding and publications. He shared that a report is expected by the summer on sustainable development goals, commented on the University's impact on industry via its many partnerships, and noted impact on students in the form of opportunities to participate in research. In response to a question, L. Jacobs commented on the funding opportunities pertaining to engineering, highlighting successes with industry partners.

10. Governance and Nominations Committee (GNC)

The Provost reported on the January 17, 2023 GNC meeting, noting three newly-appointed members. She advised Academic Council that GNC reviewed and approved the election process for vacancies to be filled for the 2023-2024 academic year. GNC also discussed oversight of governance and members' willingness to support work in this area. The Chair encouraged Academic Council members to watch for, and share, upcoming communications about elections.

11. COU Academic Colleague Report

A. King presented the COU Academic Colleague Report. In response to a question, she confirmed that the report captures a discussion amongst COU academic colleagues who were reporting on happenings at their universities. A discussion then ensued on skill gaps for high school students entering first-year. J. Stokes advised the Committee that there was 6.7% grade inflation on prerequisite courses between 2017 and 2022. He noted the need to upskill students over the summer, prior to entering university. Members commented on the cascading effect into upper years of undergraduate studies and the benefits of a universal design for learning.

12. Consent Agenda

- a. Minutes of the Meeting of November 22, 2022
- b. Conferral of Degrees – Fall 2022
- c. Elections Process and Key Dates*
- d. Minor Program Adjustments from USC*
 - a) Bachelor of Commerce in Finance
 - b) Bachelor of Commerce in Finance - Pathways
 - c) Technology Management Minor
 - d) Bachelor of Engineering and Bachelor of Engineering and Management in Energy Engineering
 - e) Bachelor of Science in Health Physics and Radiation Science
 - f) Bachelor of Science in Biological Science - Environmental Biology specialization
- e. Cyclical Program Reviews from USC*
 - a) Bachelor of Science in Forensic Science 18-Month Follow-up

Upon a motion duly made by M. Hossein Nejad and seconded by H. Kishawy, the contents of the consent agenda were received for information or approved as appropriate.

13. Other Business

There was none.

14. Termination (M)

Upon a motion made by G. Crawford, the meeting was adjourned at 4:07 p.m.

Lauren Turner, University Secretary