

ACADEMIC COUNCIL
Minutes of the Meeting of April 25, 2023
2:30 – 3:48 p.m., Videoconference

Present:

Murphy, Steven (Chair)	Felder, Ruth	Rastpour, Amir
Azad, Nader	Fernando, Shanti	Rodgers, Carol
Bailey, Robert	Hosseini, Sayyed Ali	Roy, Langis
Barari, Ahmad	Jacobs, Les	Ruttenberg-Rozen,
Bradbury, Jeremy	Jones, Ferdinand	Robyn
Bryant, Toba	Kay, Robin	Sankarlal, Joshua
Carmichael, Carla	King, Alyson	Serenko, Alexander
Christou, Ted	Law, Corey	Serote, MaryCae
Crawford, Greg	Liscano, Ramiro	Stoett, Peter
Davidson, Catherine	Livingston, Lori	Stokes, Joe
Duff, Ana	Nokleby, Scott	Watterworth, Michael
Easton, Brad	Partosoedarso, Elita	
Eklund, Mike	Peters, Manisha	

Regrets:

Barber, Wendy	Frazer, Mitch	Lloyd, Meghann
Bliemel, Michael	Hosseini Nejad, Mehdi	MacMillan, Patricia
Dubrowski, Adam	Kishawy, Hossam	

Staff & Guests:

Bauer, Chelsea	MacIsaac, Brad	Scanga, Franco
Bruno, Jamie	McCartney, Kimberley	Townshend, Lisa
Callahan, Stephanie	McLaughlin, Christine	Turner, Lauren
Cantrell, Sarah	O'Malley, Grace	Windsor, Shelly
Hester, Krista	Papke, Darryl	Wingate, Adam

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. S. Nokleby read the University's land acknowledgement.

Further to a discussion at the Governance and Nominations Committee this month, the Chair reminded Academic Council that a vote will be taken whenever there is a lack of unanimity on an issue or whenever a member requests it.

2. Agenda

Upon request, the Update to the Directives on the Use of Digital Learning Resources for Assessment Purposes was removed from the consent agenda and added to the regular agenda.

Upon a motion duly made by S. Nokleby and seconded by G. Crawford, the Agenda was approved as amended.

3. Chair's Remarks

The Chair provided a number of updates, including that the masking mandate will be paused effective May 1st, that the University will have its first fall convocation this year, and that the Moose Hide Campaign's National Campaign Day is May 11th. He congratulated all students, faculty and staff on another exemplary semester.

(a) 2023 Honorary Degree Recipients

The Chair shared that the following individuals will be conferred honorary degrees at June convocation: Sheldon Levy, Mike DeGagne, Adrienne Clarkson, John Ralston Saul, Samir Sinha, Christine Elliott, Christina Sorbara, and Edward Sorbara. He shared short biographies of each and thanked the Honorary Degrees Committee for their work this year.

4. Inquiries and Communications

(a) COU Academic Colleague Report

A. King presented the COU Academic Colleague Report, starting with an overview of the presentation she and two colleagues delivered on artificial intelligence (AI) and ChatGPT. She highlighted the ethical aspects of such technologies, the importance of developing critical thinking skills, and opportunities to enhance equality through their use. She then provided a brief update on advocacy efforts by the COU, including engagement with the provincial government's Blue-Ribbon Panel. In response to a question, A. King acknowledged that the cost of AI is an important larger conversation, including environmental impacts and sustainability. In response to some further comments, A. King advised that the presentation at COU also examined some of the negative aspects of AI.

5. Provost's Remarks

The Provost opened her remarks with thanks to faculty and staff for helping students through another year and thanking the university community for revitalizing the campus. She went on to provide an update on the 2023-2028 Integrated Academic Research Plan, thanking all those who attended town halls or submitted questions or feedback. She advised that a full draft plan with narrative has been posted to the Planning Office website and will be available until May 1st for viewing. Written feedback may be submitted to the Planning Office.

(a) Senior Academic Administrator Search Update

The Provost advised Academic Council that the search advisory committee received an update on the pool of applicants for the role of Dean of the Faculty of Business and Information Technology. A strong and increasing number of highly qualified applicants has been assembled and the committee plans to meet in the second week of May to begin the process of short-listing.

(b) Teaching Award Recipients

The Provost shared the Teaching Award Recipients with Academic Council, noting that the group emerged from a record number of nominations. She congratulated both winners and nominees and thanked them for their hard work and dedication.

6. Campus Master Plan Update

B. Maclsaac presented the Campus Master Plan Update, providing Academic Council with a summary of significant events over the last year. He highlighted the purchase of lands adjacent to Charles Hall, the Charles Hall renovation, and the purchase of the building at 55 Bond Street. He noted the savings in lease costs associated with these developments.

Looking ahead, B. Maclsaac discussed a potential growth scenario where the University reaches an enrolment of 15,000 students. In that scenario, assuming no change to space allocations, six more buildings the size of the Energy Systems and Nuclear Science Research Centre (ERC) will be required. He advised that while steps, such as clearing potential building sites, are being taken to accommodate such a future, there is significant financial pressure on the University. To this end, he discussed the need to look for revenue sources other than grants and tuition, one of which is strategic use of land. He advised that there will be consultation with Academic Council on the next iteration of the Campus Master Plan as it takes shape.

A discussion then ensued on the Campus Master Plan. In response to a question, B. Maclsaac confirmed that administrative space allocations have been reduced with the pandemic an accelerating factor; instructional spaces have not reduced significantly. In response to a different question, B. Maclsaac confirmed that leadership's preference is to look at long term land lease rather than selling land. Academic Council members commented on underutilized space, particularly food service locations, and the need for student housing. Some members of Academic Council at this point expressed concern about, and opposition to, selling land. In response, B. Maclsaac clarified that the 2015 plan had large portions of land unallocated. Even if some land was sold, which is not the leadership's first choice option, there was a large portion of the north campus location designated as a "research park". In response to a further question, he clarified that more optimistic growth projections reflect a change in the 18-21-year-old demographic in Ontario; it is increasing after seven years of decrease. He added that increasing international student enrolment is also a factor in enrolment projections. A brief discussion ensued about the walkability of the campus, both current and future. In response to a further concern about selling land and a future in which the University finds itself without sufficient space for further growth, B. Maclsaac advised that under the current Campus Master Plan, both Ontario Tech and Durham College could grow to over 40,000 students combined with dedicated research space, commercial services and still have green space and further land for buildings. B. Maclsaac advised, in response to a different question, that the Integrated Academic Research Plan is the driver of strategic directions, including land and

space use. He went on to clarify that a market review in the summer will be the start of a multi-year process with significant further consultation planned before any further buildings are constructed.

Committee Reports:

7. Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC)

L. Roy presented the Undergraduate Studies Committee report, drawing members' attention to the minor program adjustments contained on the consent agenda.

8. Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)

T. Christou reported on Graduate Studies Committee, announcing that the School of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies excellence awards have launched. He encouraged members to submit nominations. He further shared that a recent Ontario Tech graduate won the 2023 Northeastern Association of Graduate Schools and ProQuest Dissertations Master's Thesis Award.

9. Research Committee

L. Jacobs presented the Research Committee report, reminding Academic Council to submit applications for research excellence chairs. He advised members that nominations for the research excellence awards are open.

10. Governance and Nominations Committee (GNC)

L. Livingston presented the GNC report, drawing Academic Council's attention to the materials on a second round of nominations contained in the consent agenda. She advised that nominations are open until May 10th. She also noted that the Committee continued its discussions on meeting practices.

(a) Consultation: Academic Appeals Committee Terms of Reference; Academic Appeal (Undergraduate) Policy and Procedures

L Livingston presented the consultation materials, the next set of documents under review as part of the ongoing governance review by the Secretariat. She highlighted efforts to bring the materials up to date and the Secretariat's prior consultation with both GNC and the Ontario Tech Student Union (OTSU). She invited members to provide feedback today or via e-mail and advised that the documents under consultation will return at a later date for approval.

11. Update to the Directives on the Use of Digital Learning Resources for Assessment Purposes

In response to a question, the Provost confirmed that the Ministerial guidelines referred to in the materials are current. In response to a further question, she advised that feedback on the Directives was voluminous and originated from students, faculty and staff. She also noted extensive discussion with USC. Feedback was incorporated into the package before Academic Council for information today, which was approved unanimously by USC in March. The OTSU President thanked the Provost and the Deputy Provost for their work and

responsiveness to student concerns. In response to a final question, the Provost confirmed that the Directive is undergraduate-facing, but it might be useful for SGPS to consider the need for a graduate equivalent.

12. Consent Agenda

- (a) Minutes of the Meeting of March 28, 2023*
- (b) Conferral of Degrees - Winter Term 2023*
- (c) Minor Program Adjustments from USC
 - a. Bachelor of Health Science in Medical Laboratory Science & Medical Laboratory Science Bridge for Biotechnology Advanced Diploma*
 - b. Bachelor of Science in Nursing and RPN to BScN Bridge*
 - c. Bachelor of Science in Computer Science & Specializations in Data Science and Digital Media*
- (d) Key Dates - Second Call for Nominations*

Upon a motion duly made by S. Nokleby and seconded by G. Crawford, the contents of the consent agenda were received for information or approved as appropriate.

13. Other Business

L. Roy noted that the terms of the OTSU leadership are ending and the handoff to the new leaders is taking place. He recognized the contributions of the OTSU leaders serving on Academic Council.

14. Termination (M)

Upon a motion made by S. Nokleby, the meeting was adjourned at 3:48 p.m.

Lauren Turner, University Secretary