ACADEMIC COUNCIL
Minutes of the Meeting of May 23, 2023
2:30 – 4:39 p.m., Videoconference

Present:

Murphy, Steven (Chair)	Felder, Ruth	Nokleby, Scott
Bailey, Robert	Frazer, Mitch	Peters, Manisha
Barari, Ahmad	Hosseini, Sayyed Ali	Rastpour, Amir
Barber, Wendy	Hossein Nejad, Mehdi	Rodgers, Carol
Bliemel, Michael	Jacobs, Les	Roy, Langis
Bradbury, Jeremy	Jones, Ferdinand	Ruttenberg-Rozen,
Bryant, Toba	King, Alyson	Robyn
Carmichael, Carla	Kishawy, Hossam	Sankarlal, Joshua
Christou, Ted	Liscano, Ramiro	Serenko, Alexander
Duff, Ana	Livingston, Lori	Stoett, Peter
Easton, Brad	Lloyd, Meghann	Watterworth, Michael
Eklund, Mike	MacMillan, Patricia	

Regrets:

Azad, Nader	Fernando, Shanti	Serote, MaryCae
Crawford, Greg	Kay, Robin	Stokes, Joe
Davidson, Catherine	Law, Corey	
Dubrowski, Adam	Partosoedarso, Elita	

Staff & Guests:

Bauer, Chelsea	Hester, Krista	Papke, Darryl
Bruno, Jamie	MacIsaac, Brad	Scanga, Franco
Callahan, Stephanie	McCartney, Kimberley	Townshend, Lisa
Cantrell, Sarah	McLaughlin, Christine	Turner, Lauren
Gottlieb, Sara	Nyaamine, Ruth	Windsor, Shelly

1. **Call to Order**
   The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. L. Roy read the University's land acknowledgement and shared some personal reflections on the land.

2. **Agenda**
   Upon request, the Minutes of the Meeting of April 25, 2023 were 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
   #### (a) Strategic Discussion De-Brief
The Chair combined his remarks with his thanks to those who presented and participated in the strategic discussion on micro-credentials. Looking ahead to 2023/2024, he advised Academic Council that in discussion with the University Secretary, there is a proposal to have strategic discussions presented as part of the regular Academic Council agenda. He invited members to submit topics of interest. Turning to the renewal of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation, the Chair advised that the Renewal Advisory Committee has yet to meet, but that feedback can be submitted to them. A campus-wide e-mail was distributed and feedback, which will be anonymized, is requested by 5 p.m. on May 31, 2023. He went on to share that a campus-wide invitation to submit an expression of interest in serving on the Renewal Advisory Committee for the Provost has been distributed. He closed by congratulating Sarah Rijkenberg on placing second at the Ontario 3MT competition and noting that Convocation is right around the corner.

4. Inquiries and Communications
None.

5. Provost's Remarks
   #### (a) Senior Academic Administrator Search Update
The Provost combined her general remarks with an update on the Senior Academic Administrator Search. She began by welcoming Ruth Nyaamine to Ontario Tech University. She went on to share that Hunter Johnson, a fourth-year Health Sciences student and Indigenous STEM instructor with the Engineering Outreach Program, has received the 2022 Actua Instructor Recognition award for teaching and being a positive role model. Turning to the search for a Dean of the Faculty of Business and Information Technology, the Provost advised that a short list has been created with the intent to narrow it down to two candidates. In person meetings with the candidates have been tentatively scheduled for June 5th and 6th. In response to a question about access to candidate curricula vitae and other information, the Provost advised that the earliest that information will be available is the end of next week (i.e. the first or second of June) with more information to follow as the schedule is firmed up.

6. 2023-2026 Budget
B. MacIsaac presented the 2023-2026 Budget, highlighting efforts to balance (i) the budget; (ii) spending in-year vs reserving for future years; (iii) priorities; and (iv) messaging to the external community. He then provided an overview of expected revenues and expenses for 2023-2024, including an expected revenue increase of $15 million that will be largely ($9.6 million) dedicated to labour costs.

The Provost discussed prioritization of limited discretionary funds in the budget. She advised Academic Council that there were twice as many asks for funds as dollars available and that allocations were guided by the four strategic pillars. She

then provided some examples, including innovative programming, which incorporated hiring additional faculty members and expanding co-operative and experiential learning; and investments in student scholarships and mental health supports. She highlighted that most of these investments are necessary to support growth and activities on campus that maintain the quality of the experience the University delivers.

Looking to out-years, B. MacIsaac shared with Academic Council that a "bare minimum" approach is taken, which begins with a realistic and conservative enrolment estimate along with moving international enrolment towards system averages. He noted that labour costs are a significant focus as all of the University's unions will be going through negotiations in the 2023-2026 period. He also noted inflationary pressures on certain costs such as utilities. Using this modelling, the University will move into a deficit situation next year which will reach an estimated $5 million in 2026-2027. He then discussed actions being taken now to address this trend in the University's finances, including investigating options for land use. With respect to risks, he highlighted the importance of reaching enrolment targets as a 1% disparity equates to approximately $1 million in revenue, and the risks of delayed repairs of physical and virtual infrastructure, some of which is now 20 years old and at or past end-of-life.

A discussion then ensued on the 2023-2026 Budget. In response to a question about the role of strategic priorities, B. MacIsaac confirmed that they are embedded in the budget. In response to a further question about graduate tuition revenue versus undergraduate, B. MacIsaac advised that new programs are reviewed by the Provost's Office through the lens of strategic growth and provincial grant funding. For existing programs, S. Cantrell added that the type of graduate program and the University's location in the funding corridor are considered and reflected in budget projections; while there may be tuition and fees received by the University, not every student will bring in provincial grant dollars.

When asked if the budget would be updated in the event of a positive development such as unfreezing tuition, B. MacIsaac confirmed that notwithstanding the budget now covering three years, only the current year is approved whereas the out-years are approved in-principle. The leadership team will annually (generally in late October/early November) present a fiscal blueprint highlighting new budgetary assumptions or changes and will return later in the year with the budget. A question was asked regarding the $8.1 million allocated for innovative programming, which was described as being principally for hiring. B. MacIsaac clarified that the funds do not reflect just net new hires; instead, they include salary increases for continuing faculty and staff. In response to a question about the allocation of $4.5 million for physical spaces and IT, B. MacIsaac advised that Appendices H and D provide more detailed information but noted that the latter does not have out-year data; providing such is a work in progress. In response to a further question about costs allocated to strategic priorities versus what is required for the day-to-day running of the University, B. MacIsaac provided an example from the IT budget,

but acknowledged that the two types of costs could be better separated in the budget. He committed to making the delineation between the two more clearly in the next fiscal blueprint.

7. **Discussion: Integrated Academic Research Plan 2023-2028**
   The Provost thanked Academic Council for feedback received on the Integrated Academic Research Plan 2023-2028 (IARP). She shared that feedback received from Academic Council and the town halls fell into six or seven general categories and some fell outside of the purview of the development of the IARP. She advised that all feedback was appreciated, considered, and retained. She highlighted research as a source of significant feedback and reminded Academic Council that the IARP works in tandem with the Strategic Research Plan produced by the Vice-President, Research and Innovation. She also noted the term "STEM" versus the term "STEAM", adequate levels of resourcing for growth, and queries about how the objectives of the IARP will be achieved as common feedback themes. With respect to queries about approval authority, she advised that the Board of Governors has the power to approve plans of this nature, after consultation with Academic Council.

   A discussion then ensued on the IARP. In response to a question about whether the IARP is a directive of the Board of Governors, the Provost explained that the President is responsible to the Board, which expects a plan to move the University forward. The plan is not pushed down from the Board, but rather built from the ground up by institutional leaders using templates and documents to have open and transparent conversations within academic units to identify priorities. A member noted an error in the Provost's earlier remarks regarding the contents of the University's legislation; she agreed that STEM does not appear in the University's Act. She clarified that the last three Integrated-Academic Research Plans have contemplated a differentiated university with commitment to STEM, professional degree offerings, and innovative humanities and social science programs to ensure that students are career-ready. In response to concerns about consultations on the IARP, particularly its 5-year outlook and sharing of a marked-up draft, the Provost advised that when the last two versions of the IARP were created, there were consultations on strategies, a practice that was mirrored in this year's town halls. She noted that full drafts were not released prior to Board approvals in the past. She acknowledged that not every aspect of the consultative process went smoothly, and thanked Academic Council for feedback that will improve the process when the next iteration of the IARP is approved. In response to a concern about undue emphasis on technology and perceptions at the Ministry level, the Provost acknowledged that a new diploma program was recently denied funding, but expressed the view that other factors were at play as evidenced by other institutions also having similar programs rejected. At the close of the discussion, a member supported having discussions about how to improve approval and consultative processes; a request to see a full draft of the next iteration of the IARP prior to Board approval was made.

8. Institutional and SMA3 2022-2023 Metrics Annual Report

S. Cantrell presented the Institutional and SMA3 2022-2023 Metrics Annual Report (Report), providing an historical overview of consultation and feedback received on institutional metrics along with an explanation of the dashboard tracking them in the materials package. With respect to the SMA3 metrics, she provided an overview of the periods of time tracked, how each was weighted for that year, and how much funding was attributed to a particular metric in a given year. She also noted the unachieved allocation for each year of each metric, highlighting the value of the miss and the impact thereof.

A discussion then ensued on the Report. In response to a question about student satisfaction data and some concerns about the frequency with which it is collected, S. Cantrell advised that the University is moving towards an annual graduate survey that will invite students to reflect on the experiences, skills and competencies they received from the University and their specific programs. She went on to advise that the data collected will be incorporated into the SMA3 skills and competencies metric. A member noted a possible error on the Ontario Government website with respect to the differentiation envelop and performance-based grant for the University; S. Cantrell committed to reviewing the data. In response to a question about metrics related to Ministry enrolment-based corridor funding, S. Cantrell clarified that the numbers do not translate into the number of students, but rather the amount of grant money the province will provide and is an indication of the restrictions within the corridor and the University's performance thereafter. S. Cantrell indicated that a legend could be added to the table to clarify the data. In response to a follow-up question about the University's intent to go outside of the corridor, S. Cantrell confirmed that the University's enrolment is pushing it above the corridor; she attributed the majority of the overage to enrolment in teacher education and Master's programs. In response to a question about Ministry metrics and specific terminology, S. Cantrell explained how some units of measurement changed over time to allow for accurate comparisons of results from each institution. In response to a question about transfer students, S. Cantrell clarified that the University is still trending normally in transfer student admissions, however, we are overachieving in direct from high school enrollment (101 intake) so the proportion of transfer students to 101 intake students has switched related to original targets. In response to a question about the differentiation metric, S. Cantrell clarified that the University is only permitted to frame one metric as a truly institutional metric; Ontario Tech University has selected experiential learning.

9. Academic Programs Update
(a) 2022-23 Quality Assurance Process & Program Annual Report
(b) 2022-2023 Continuous Learning Annual Report

The Provost presented the Quality Assurance Process & Program and Continuous Learning 2022-2023 Annual Reports. She noted that the Quality Assurance report is prepared by the Centre for Institutional Quality Enhancement (CIQE) which coordinates the development of new programs, program approvals, and quality

assurance follow-up through program reviews. With respect to the Continuous Learning report, the Provost noted that it covers non-academic curricular programming and was developed by the new Director of Continuous Learning. In response to a query about a new program that was not approved by the Ministry, the Provost advised Academic Council that it is included in the report. In response to a further question about appealing the Minister's decision, S. Cantrell advised that an inquiry has been made to the Associate Deputy Minister. A brief discussion then ensued on program alignment with the University's vision, mission and values as well as the importance of institutional autonomy.

Committee Reports:

10. **Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC)**
    L. Roy presented the Undergraduate Studies Committee report, drawing members' attention to a minor program adjustment contained on the consent agenda.

11. **Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)**
    T. Christou reported on Graduate Studies Committee, noting that the call for nominations for the Graduate Excellence Awards has gone out. He advised Academic Council that a call for expressions of interest for two Associate Deans of SGPS has gone out; he thanked Jeremy Bradbury and Ami Mamolo for their service. He closed by noting the upcoming Grad Pro Skills workshops.

12. **Research Committee**
    L. Jacobs presented the Research Committee report, noting that the Intellectual Property Policy Committee has been revived and has produced a draft Intellectual Property Policy (IP Policy) for consultation. Most recently, the Committee received feedback from the Faculty Association; over the coming months other bodies including Academic Council will have the opportunity to provide input. He thanked members of the Committee for their efforts. He went on to announce that a tier two Canada Research Chair, Kanika Samuels-Wortley, a graduate of Ontario Tech University, will be joining the University on July 1 in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities and that Khalid Elgazzar, another tier two Canada Research Chair, has been renewed for a second term in the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science. He closed with an update on efforts to diversity research funding beyond the Tri Council, including the University's receipt of a $1 million grant for innovation and research in agricultural technology.

13. **Minutes of the Meeting of April 25, 2023**
    The Chair opened a discussion on the April Minutes. A member expressed a number of concerns about the Minutes, including that only comments and responses from the University's administration or guest presenters are recorded, that Academic Council members' comments were reflected only as responses to questions, and that specific questions or positions of dissent were not captured. The member found the content regarding the Campus Master Plan and potential sale of land particularly troubling, acknowledged amendments made prior to the

Minutes being presented for approval, and requested that more details regarding discussions be recorded. He then stated an intention to vote against approving the Minutes. Following this, two other members raised concerns about the adequacy of the capture of their contributions to the discussion in the minutes.

The Chair commented on the view that the University Secretary competently captures the proceedings of Academic Council. He expressed concern that a trust gap has opened in the University and that the Minutes are an example of it. The University Secretary then explained her methodology for preparing minutes. She informed Academic Council that while each member's contribution is important, it is the body as a whole that has decision-making authority. She explained that minutes are meant to be neutral and senior leaders' names and responses are recorded in the minutes for both accountability and to demonstrate that Academic Council relied upon suitable subject matter expertise when deliberating on the matters before it. She expressed the view that feedback on, and correction of, minutes is healthy and appropriate – governance professionals prepare minutes to the best of their abilities and look to members of governance bodies to review minutes, make corrections as needed, and approve them. She advised Academic Council that this very feedback mechanism was followed for today's meeting; a member's concerns were received and considered, and a revised set of minutes were posted. She advised Council of her objectivity and neutrality as a governance professional. In response, the member who opened the discussion about the minutes apologized, stating it was not their intent to call the Secretary's objectivity into question; they subsequently decided to vote in favour of approving the minutes. In closing, and to address the other concerns raised by members throughout the discussion, the Secretary agreed that more detail about the questions posed by members could be included in future minutes.

Upon a motion duly made by J. Bradbury and seconded by J. Sankarlal, the Minutes of the Meeting of April 23, 2023 were approved.

One member abstained from voting.

14. Consent Agenda
    (a) 2023-2024 Graduate and Undergraduate Academic Schedules Update*
    (b) Minor Program Adjustments from USC
        a.   Bachelor of Engineering in Energy Engineering *

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.

15. Other Business
None.

16. Termination (M)

Upon a motion made by S. Nokleby, the meeting was adjourned at 4:39 p.m.

Lauren Turner, University Secretary