

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of September 26, 2023

2:30 – 4:45 p.m., 5th Floor Boardroom – 55 Bond St

Present:

Murphy, Steven (Chair)
Aquanno, Scott
Arcand, JoAnne
Bailey, Robert
Barber, Wendy
Brown, Samantha
Bryant, Toba
Christou, Ted
Crawford, Greg
Davidson, Catherine
Duff, Ana
Eklund, Mike

Fernando, Shanti
Hosseini, Sayyed Ali
Hossein Nejad, Mehdi
Kay, Robin
King, Alyson
Kishawy, Hossam
Liscano, Ramiro
Livingston, Lori
MacMillan, Patricia
Partosoedarso, Elita
Rastpour, Amir
Roy, Langis

Ruttenberg-Rozen,
Robyn
Serote, MaryCae
Simmons, Denina
Stoett, Peter
Stokes, Joe
Thompson, Dwight
Ubor, Tega
Watterworth, Michael

Regrets:

Azad, Nader
Barari, Ahmad
Felder, Ruth
Frazer, Mitch
Gorgees, Ifrodet

Jacobs, Les
Jones, Ferdinand
McAlpin, Breanne
McGregor, Carolyn
Naumkin, Fedor

Nokleby, Scott
Rodgers, Carol
Vettor, Shannon

Staff & Guests:

Bruno, Jamie
Freeman, Jennifer
Gottlieb, Sara
Hayes, Lee

Hester, Krista
Jahan, Celine
Levy, Melissa
Maclsaac, Brad
McArthur, Fiona

McCartney, Kimberley
McLaughlin, Christine
Nyaamine, Ruth
Thrush, Sarah
Townshend, Lisa
Turner, Lauren

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. and read aloud the land acknowledgement. He welcomed the new members of Academic Council.

2. Agenda

Upon request, the Minutes of the Meeting of May 23, 2023 as well as the Minutes of the Meeting of June 27, 2023 were removed from the consent agenda and added to the regular agenda.

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

3. Chair's Remarks

The Chair welcomed members to the first Academic Council meeting of the academic year. He noted that the University's 20th anniversary celebrations are underway and reminded members that the first fall Convocation is taking place on October 12, 2023. He provided an update on new student applications, sharing that the University has led the province in application growth for the third year in a row.

The Chair then discussed the financial context in which the University currently operates, reminding Academic Council of the 10% tuition cut in 2019 and continued freeze. He advised that while the Blue-Ribbon Panel has provided its report to the provincial government, it is extremely unlikely that funding will be forthcoming sufficient to offset the years of the cuts and freezes. The Chair expressed the view that the higher education sector is at a crossroads; some institutions are running deficit budgets and others are on the brink of insolvency. While provincial funding has been made available to some institutions, it has come at the cost of increased government control. Despite this, opportunities exist for the University to continue to shine and to drive differentiated growth. The Chair highlighted quality as a key aspect of differentiated growth and pointed to avenues to drive it including new programs, re-packaging existing course offerings, and increased opportunities for co-operative education. He underscored that all growth will be aligned with the Integrated Academic-Research Plan (IARP). Further opportunities for growth include professional master's programs, lifelong learners, and reaching underserved and equity-deserving groups such as Black Canadians and Indigenous communities. The Chair closed by advising that the next few years will be challenging and emphasized the importance of Faculties coming forward with proposals to allow the University to continue to control its own destiny.

(a) October 2023 Honorary Degree Recipients

The Chair shared that Laura Dottori-Attanasio and Judy Goldring will be presented with honorary degrees at fall Convocation. He described their contributions to industry and diversity.

Other items addressed at this point included noting that September 29th will be a meeting free day to observe and reflect on Truth and Reconciliation and thanking those who participated in the Chancellor's Challenge. The Chair then opened the floor for questions. A member inquired about food options on the north campus, particularly during short intervals between classes. The Chair confirmed that this is a key component of a sticky campus and explained some of the challenges surrounding food service including cost, diminished demand post-COVID and labour shortages. B. MacIsaac added that vending machines in SIRC have been replenished, a vendor is coming to the UA atrium, and uses for the Diner are being explored. A member commented on affordability as students face food and housing precarity. In response to a question about the recent philanthropic naming of the Faculty of Education, L.

Hayes confirmed that the University benchmarked naming opportunities, taking into account variables such as the age of a university, its size, and the size of a potentially named Faculty. Another member expressed concern about a Faculty being philanthropically named without the approval of Academic Council, comparing it to the transition of Energy Systems from a School to a Faculty. The Chair distinguished between naming a Faculty and creating one, noting that the Dean of the Faculty of Education was closely involved in the philanthropic naming. In response to a further question, L. Hayes shared that the philanthropic funds will support the Centre for Digital Innovation in Education which will be built under the oversight of the Dean. She confirmed that there is no policy that dictates the process by which a Faculty is named.

4. Inclusive Academic Council Meetings

R. Nyaamine delivered a presentation titled, “Nurturing an Inclusive Community at Ontario Tech”. She discussed the importance of recognizing that professional and personal identities are inseparable, distinguished between intellectual and social friction, and introduced a psychological safety framework to reduce social friction. She also covered microaggressions and their detrimental impact on innovation. She closed with some strategies for enhancing inclusive leadership.

5. Inquiries and Communications

(a) COU Academic Colleague Report

A. King presented the COU Academic Colleague Report. She provided a summary of the presentation of Dr. Dion who addressed the Colleagues on the well-being of international students. She noted that the Colleagues discussed challenges in recruiting Deans and senior administrative leaders of universities. She closed by advising that at the COU in general, universities are regarded as being better positioned than colleges financially as the latter rely to a precarious degree on international student enrolment.

(b) Inquiry from Academic Council Member

The Chair read aloud an inquiry from a member regarding international students in light of the recent Senate report highlighting high tuition rates, recruiting agendas, and housing concerns. The Provost thanked the member for their submission, acknowledging that receiving queries in advance ensures that knowledgeable leaders will be present at Academic Council to address them. To that end, she turned to J. Stokes who provided an overview of Ontario Tech’s use of international agents as well as housing supports for international students. With respect to tuition, J. Stokes referred to the COU document on best practices for universities, noting that transparency is the most important consideration. He advised that Ontario Tech has made a commitment that any fee increases for international students would be capped at 5% annually and has kept its word. He went on to note that scholarship programs for international students have expanded and that Ontario Tech continues to sit well below system averages for overall international enrolment. In response to a comment, J. Stokes provided an update on the Holiday Hosts program. In response to a different comment, the Provost advised Academic Council that Ontario Tech has voluntarily set aside 4% of tuition to assist international students and that emergency bursaries are

available. She encouraged any member who encounters struggling students to direct them to student financial aid and the mental health supports available at the University. A discussion then ensued on the use of recruitment agencies and for-profit institutions. As the discussion turned towards a specific company, J. Stokes clarified that Navitas prepares students for university and uses recruitment agents. In response to a concern about degree-related academic content being taken out of the purview of Academic Council, H. Kishawy clarified that a discussion with Yorkville University was in the context of considering collaboration without drawing on one another's resources. The Chair further clarified that the University has relationships with numerous private institutions; he cited non-state funded universities in the United States as examples. He noted that the University will always be looking at different forms of relationships and partnerships.

6. Provost's Remarks

(a) Senior Academic Administrator Search Update

The Provost combined her remarks with an update on senior academic searches. She opened by welcoming everyone and commenting positively on the energy on both campuses. She advised Academic Council that the IARP is posted online having been approved by the Board of Governors in June. She acknowledged the leadership of Alyson King and Catherine Davidson in bringing Indigenous resources to the University and noted that the Ontario Universities Fair has been moved to October 28th and 29th to not conflict with Orange Shirt Day.

She provided updates on the following senior academic searches:

- Dean of the Faculty of Business and Information Technology: A first recruitment round was unsuccessful. The role has been re-posted and the first round of deliberations will begin next week. The search firm and search advisory committee remain the same.
- Dean of the Faculty of Science: A call to be part of the search advisory committee has gone out to the community. Names will be accepted until Friday.
- Dean of the Faculty of Education: A call for members of a search advisory committee will go out once the Science advisory committee is set. Robin Kay's last day as Dean will be June 30, 2024.
- Deputy Provost: A call for committee members is forthcoming.

The service of the outgoing senior leaders was recognized by the Provost. They were thanked for their dedication to their roles and the value they have brought to the University.

(b) Enrolment Update

S. Thrush presented the Enrolment Update, highlighting a 12.5% increase in applications year over year. She noted several other key statistics, including an almost 17% increase in domestic applications, a year over year drop of just under 8% in international applications, and a reduction of 14% in registrations. She noted that Immigration and Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) continues to be an inconsistent variable. Turning to graduate registration, she noted that numbers are

currently positive; there will be further reporting later in the term. In response to a concern about growth versus sustainable growth, S. Thrush advised that there are many meetings and consultations about capacity and resources of programs. The Registrar, Faculties, and the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies discuss intake targets with an eye to both maintenance and innovation; environmental scans are also completed. J. Stokes added that strategic enrolment management (SEM) has a retention committee expected to provide a retention valuation report in the coming months. He highlighted student success as the focal point of SEM and noted that instructors have the greatest impact on it.

Committee Reports:

7. Governance and Nominations Committee (GNC) (Lori Livingston)

(a) Results of Supplementary Nominations and Calls for Expressions of Interest

L. Livingston presented the nominations and expressions of interest that resulted from a supplementary call over the summer directed by GNC.

Upon a motion duly made by L. Livingston and seconded by R. Bailey, pursuant to the recommendation of the Governance and Nominations Committee, Academic Council approved the following appointments:

Teaching Staff Position on Academic Council for the term of October 1, 2023 – June 30, 2026:

- *Faculty-at-Large: Asifa Aamir, Mihai Beligan*

Position on the Academic Council Steering Committee for the term of October 1, 2023 – August 31, 2024: Patricia MacMillan, Denina Simmons.

P. MacMillan and D. Simmons abstained from voting.

(b) AC Vice-Chair Nomination

L. Livingston presented the Academic Council Vice-Chair nomination, advising that Robyn Ruttenberg-Rozen has volunteered for the position for a second term. The Procedures permit two one-year terms of service.

Upon a motion duly made by L. Livingston and seconded by M. Watterworth, Academic Council approved the appointment of Robyn Ruttenberg-Rozen as Vice-Chair of Academic Council for the term of October 1, 2023 until September 30, 2024.

R. Ruttenberg-Rozen abstained from voting.

(c) Faculty Council Membership Lists

L. Livingston presented the Faculty Council Membership Lists, noting that their receipt and approval by Academic Council is an annual exercise and that the lists were endorsed by GNC.

A member requested that the full list of members for the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science be provided. It was agreed that the list would be presented for information at the next meeting.

Upon a motion duly made by L. Livingston and seconded by P. Stoett, Academic Council approved the following 2022-2023 Faculty Council membership lists, as presented:

- *Faculty of Education*
- *Faculty of Engineering & Applied Science*
- *Faculty of Social Science & Humanities*

(d) Faculty Council Vice-Chair Nominations

L. Livingston presented the Faculty Council Vice-Chair Nominations.

Upon a motion duly made by L. Livingston and seconded by H. Kishawy, Academic Council approved the appointment of the following individuals as Vice-Chair of their respective Faculty Council for the term of September 26, 2023 until September 30, 2024:

- *Faculty of Business and Information Technology – Josh Lowe*
- *Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science – Jennifer McKellar*
- *Faculty of Education - Allyson Eamer*

8. Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC)

L. Roy presented the USC report, noting that while there was no Committee meeting in June, USC met jointly with GSC in September to approve Procedures for Missed Course Work and Examinations.

9. Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)

T. Christou shared that GSC did not meet in June, but had its first meeting of the academic year this morning.

10. Research Committee

J. Freeman presented the Research Committee report. She first reported on the re-launch of the Research Excellence Awards before turning to research data management. In response to a question, she confirmed that there will be both communications and a training plan with respect to new requirements. It was recommended that training be delivered to Faculty Councils. J. Freeman then provided an update on research security, delineating the federal and provincial requirements and noting that they are in flux and not always aligned. She shared that the University will have to be compliant with requirements by January 1, 2024 and that recruitment is underway for a dedicated resource to support these efforts. She then turned to some updates, noting that the revised Intellectual Property Policy is in consultation and that research dollars are trending higher than usual in the quarter; the University is on track for hitting \$24-25 million. In response to a question about

research safety, she advised that not only federal and provincial grants are impacted, but requirements are also being applied to international initiatives as well.

11. Minutes of the Meeting of May 23, 2023 and June 27, 2023

A member requested that the University Secretary clarify how the May 23, 2023 minutes were amended as captured in the June 27, 2023 minutes. The University Secretary drew the member's attention to the relevant portion of the minutes and summarized the amendments.

Upon a motion duly made by R. Bailey and seconded by G. Crawford, the minutes of the May 23, 2023 and June 27, 2023 Academic Council meetings were approved.

12. Consent Agenda

- (a) Conferral of Degrees – Summer 2023
- (b) Procedures for Missed In-Term Course Work and Examinations

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

13. Other Business

(a) Land acknowledgement for October Academic Council meeting

T. Ubor volunteered to do the land acknowledgement for October.

14. Termination (M)

Upon a motion made by M. Watterworth, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Lauren Turner, University Secretary