

Academic Council Report

SESSION:

Public
Non-Public

ACTION REQUESTED:

Decision
Discussion/Direction
Information

DATE: November 30, 2023

PRESENTED BY: Lori Livingston, Provost and Vice-President Academic
Sarah Thrush AVP Planning and Strategic Analysis

SUBJECT: Integrated Planning Process
2022-2023 Faculty and Unit IARP Summary Report Back

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT:

The 2023-2028 Integrated Academic-Research Plan (IARP) was approved by the Board in June 2023. As the University transitions from the 2021-2023 IARP to the new 2023-2028 IARP the Provost and the University Planning Office are working to align the planning and reporting cycles and enhance accountability to demonstrate progress towards plan. At the October 2023 Academic Council, a summary of the integrated planning timelines and process was provided that also highlighted modifications to planning tools that Faculties and units would use to demonstrate how they were moving forward the 2023-2028 IARP.

As we transition to the new IARP, work is being done to enhance year-end reporting to Academic Council and the Board beginning in spring 2024. A key addition to the reporting is the inclusion of qualitative information that acts as a high-level summary narrative on priorities that will accompany the institutional and SMA3 metric dashboard reports. The attached document is a high-level summary of accomplishments distilled from the 2022-2023 submissions from Faculties and Units. This summary is a prototype for discussion of the additional qualitative reporting that can be provided to Academic Council and the Board.

The enhancements to the integrated planning templates, the cycle alignments and the qualitative information aim to strengthen and evolve the integrated planning process and provide a more holistic picture of progress towards plan to the University's governing bodies.

CONSULTATION:

Feedback on the summary report will be requested from Academic Council, Board S&P, SLT and ALT.

NEXT STEPS:

Use feedback to inform format for 2023-2024 annual reporting on IARP.

SUPPORTING REFERENCE MATERIALS:

2022-23 Integrated Planning Report AC Summary

Integrated Planning Process and 2022-2023 Faculty and Unit Report Back Report

The 2021-2023 Integrated Academic Research Plan (IARP) was concluded and closed off through a simplified final-year report back process. Units and Faculties were asked to recap 2022-2023's key accomplishments, challenges, and highlight future areas of focus. Milestones and initiatives that had been previously outlined for 2022-2023 through the Unit- and Faculty-specific Integrated Planning Templates could be included, as well as any going-forward priority projects or goals, if still applicable.

Faculty and Unit reports highlight the University's continued forward momentum in advancing our institutional priorities. Key accomplishments from the summaries categorized by priority include:

Tech with a Conscience:

- Project Arrow, industry's first all-Canadian, zero-emission concept electric vehicle was unveiled at the Consumer Electric Show 2023 (the world's largest technology showcase) and was highlighted as being a shining example of what Canadian talent, innovation, and know-how can accomplish by the Minister of Innovation, Science, and Industry Canada. Ontario Tech served as the lead academic institution for Phase 2 of Project Arrow, and for the past two years the top-secret and visionary national engineering project has had its home at Ontario Tech's Automotive Centre of Excellence.
- In July, a formal agreement was signed with the Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC) to roll out MyCreds, a digital solution which will allow institutions to securely issue transcripts and other academic documents.
- Collaborative project implementation between I.T. Services and the Office of the Registrar saw improved efficiency and client service through the re-engineering of business processes, including streamlining registration by providing students with a fair and transparent waitlisting process for high demand courses, drastically reduced processing times by automating admission decisions and offer generation for high school applicants, and enabling faster adjudication of scholarships and awards by automating financial aid processes.
- A.I. Ridgebot, an Artificial Intelligence Chatbot, was launched and is assisting Finance, Student Awards and Financial Aid, and Enrolment Services in responding to frequently asked student questions and inquiries.
- The Faculty of Health Sciences completed the development of an on-line course, specific for undergraduate students focused on self-care and resiliency, which will ultimately be included as a core requirement of all Health Science undergraduate programs.

Learning Reimagined:

- The Library improved support of online access to licensed resources through the addition of a Digital Resources Librarian, and continued to advance support for research data management requirements through the creation of customized Ontario Tech data management template developed in consultation with the Office of Research Services, REB, and researchers.
- An extensive study of our Experiential and Work-Integrated Learning landscape was conducted in support of the development of a short- to long-term vision for co-op education, experiential learning, and career development University-wide.
- Continuous Learning has been revitalized under a new vision, with new initiatives in open enrolment and corporate training programs, new partnerships with almost all Faculties, other on-campus units and external organizations, and extensions into micro-credentialing and international certificates (in partnership with the Office of the Registrar).
- The use of the Learning Management System, Canvas, was extended to a broader audience including employees and external users. To date, over 7800 courses have been delivered to students, and 385 courses have been provided for continuous learning opportunities.

- A new Master of Business Analytics and AI was launched, and has been recognized by the Vector Institute as an AI-Related Master's program in Ontario. Students in the MBAI program will become part of the Vector Institute community and receive access to networking and career events, the Digital Talent Hub, professional development, and other opportunities to grow their AI career.
- In response to the growth of the undergraduate Computer Science program, the Faculty of Science, has made significant investments and improvements to the program, both in faculty and staff hires, and program resources.
- Other new programs included the development of a 4-Year Bachelor of Arts in Educational Studies (FEEd), Bachelor of Engineering in Energy Engineering (FEAS), Bachelor of Engineering in Industrial Engineering (FEAS), undergraduate Minors in Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Global Politics and, Science, Technology & Society (FSSH), and Master of Applied Science and Master of Engineering in Software Engineering (FEAS).

Creating a Sticky Campus:

- 2022-2023 was another record-breaking year for domestic confirmations, with a system leading increase of 11.7% in 101 confirmations.
- Ontario Tech's reputation in high performance sports continued to grow, notably through adaptive sports at the Campus Recreational Centre, as a hosting partner for the 2023 Parasport Games, and most recently in our selection as the host campus for the 2024 USPORT Men's Soccer National Championships. Ontario Tech also received distinctions at the recent OUA Congress for various aspects of its Athletics administration.
- Ontario Tech's Committee for an Age-Friendly University (CAFU) hosted several events on campus for seniors in the community, including an on-campus event highlighting the facilities and programs available for community members, regular athletics programming (e.g., pickleball during the lunch hour), and online webinars.
- We continued to evolve and grow our digital footprint, including upgrading digital screens across campus, developing new program-specific videos for use on key platforms as such YouTube, social media and personalized web pages, and launching over 25 new websites including the Energy microsite which was developed in collaboration with the BEI, the Partnership Office, the Research Office, and Advancement, and showcases the university's overall energy activities from programs, partners, research and more.
- Downtown space was consolidated and redeveloped to support flexible learning & research, modernizing our existing space infrastructure and repurposing unallocated space. The assessment of future space requirements continued to be advanced through the completion of a housing study.
- Following nearly 16 months of planning and design, a multi-phased Flexible Workspace project was formally implemented for administrative and technical staff.
- Campus and student experience were improved via enhancements to digital access of information and services, including through the implemented of Qless, a digital queue management system which allows students to join a virtual line from anywhere rather than a physical line, and LIVEHELPNOW, a live chat which enables Academic Advisors to monitor, track, and advise students in real time.
- Ongoing engagement and efforts to build relationships with Indigenous communities resulted in a significant increase in self-identified student applications and confirmations, and a record intake of new Indigenous students this fall.
- Ontario Tech's Peer Tutoring Program was awarded official CRLA certification at all three levels for its tutor training.
- In support of the recommendations of the Auditor General and best corporate governance practice, internal processes such as the skill matrix and orientation curriculum of the Board of Governors, and the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), were reviewed and updated. Similarly, to

enhance internal evaluation and accountability, Institutional Metrics were developed, and a reporting process on the internal and SMA metrics was established.

Partnerships:

- Over \$4,700,000 was fundraising towards institutional priorities, and new models of partnership were established in support of amplifying relationships that can assist with campaign goals and university priorities.
- A successful collaboration between, Advancement, the Partnership Office, and the Careers Centre resulted in an investment of \$750,000 from RBC in Ontario Tech's Student Enrichment Program (to be initiated Fall 2023).
- Through its Government Relation Office, the University hosted dignitary visits from all levels of government, and participated in multiple Ministerial roundtables, including with the Minister of Red Tape Reduction, advocating for opportunities to reduce the reporting burden on the University to MCU, and with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, to discuss the provincial housing plan as it related to universities broadly and Ontario Tech specifically.
- The Faculty of Education developed a series of partnerships during 2022-2023 including through Priority Schools Project (DDSB), CDSBEO Partnership, CFREF Grant Proposal, and EdTech Tools Mini-Conference. These partnership help serve marginalized populations in schools and build Education's reputation as an EDI focused program with a conscience.
- As the university's primary connection point with municipal, regional, and provincial economic development units, the Partnership Office advanced the University's profile in a number of areas, including through earned articles in the Financial Post and Globe and Mail, leveraging significant Regional funding to promote Ontario Tech's innovation ecosystem (Brilliant Catalyst, Career Centre and Ontario Tech Talent), and in collaboration with Invest Durham on their Electrification Strategy.
- The Office of Research Services (ORS), in partnership with the Office of Diversity, Equity and Belonging launched the Ontario Tech University Women in Research Council (WIRC), funding for which is provided through an NSERC EDI capacity building grant secured by the Office of Research Services.
- The Joint Research Centre in AI for Health and Wellness, housed in the Faculty of Business and IT, established several strategic partnerships with healthcare facilities such as Ontario Shores, McMaster Children's Hospital, in Ontario and Westmead Children's Hospital in NSW, Australia.
- The Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science secured over 1 million dollars in funding from government and industry partners towards the Engineering Outreach program, which support community engagement with engineering for K-12 students, with a focus on underrepresented student groups (Black Youth, Indigenous Youth).
- The Faculty of Health Science official launched the Center for the Advancement of Dementia Care with Ontario Shores, and signed an MOU with Grandview to support continued research partnerships and begin exploring student experiential learning/placement opportunities.

Challenges highlighted in the Faculty and Unit Reports align with the current employment and funding landscape seen across the sector and province.

Next Steps in the Integrated Planning Process

The Integrated Planning process represents the collective efforts of our campus community in identifying strategic areas of growth and improvement. With the adoption of the 2023-2028 IARP, the Integrated Planning cycle has been adjusted to better align with annual planning and reporting periods. Unit- and Faculty-specific Integrated Plans will now be evaluated and renewed annually as rolling, multi-year plans of action. Similarly, additional emphasis has been placed on aligning strategies and initiatives to

measurable outcomes. The University will be reporting on two sets of metrics for the current planning period; the Institutional Metrics (reported internally) and the Strategic Mandate Agreement 3 (SMA) metrics (reported to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU), tied to performance funding and posted publicly). Units and Faculties have been tasked to link, where possible, their internal strategies to the Institutional Metrics and/or the SMA metrics, and to think about how their efforts will impact Unit/Faculty or the University's performance. The Institutional Metrics and SMA3 metrics reports are primarily quantitative in nature. Annual qualitative summaries of key accomplishments by priority (similar to the above) will be added to this reporting at the end of the 2023-2024 performance year. Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM), program innovation and student engagement have been highlighted as key areas within IARP priorities to consider. Information on SMA and Institutional level metrics has been included to assist in connecting Unit/Faculty strategies with currently reported-on measures. The multi-year nature of the Integrated Planning process is intended to assist Units and Faculties with establishing measurable milestones and outcomes that allow for year-over-year reporting and drive their internal plans, and the IARP, forward.