

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of January 23, 2024

2:30 – 3:53 p.m. – 5th Floor Boardroom, 55 Bond St.

Present:

Murphy, Steven (Chair)	Hosseini, Sayyed Ali	Ruttenberg-Rozen,
Aquanno, Scott	Jacobs, Les	Robyn
Arcand, JoAnne	Kay, Robin	Simmons, Denina
Barber, Wendy	King, Alyson	Stoett, Peter
Beligan, Mihai	Kishawy, Hossam	Stokes, Joe
Bluechardt, Mary	Liscano, Ramiro	Thompson, Dwight
Brown, Samantha	Livingston, Lori	Ubor, Tega
Christou, Ted	MacMillan, Patricia	Vettor, Shannon
Crawford, Greg	Nokleby, Scott	Watterworth, Michael
Davidson, Catherine	Partosoedarso, Elita	
Eklund, Mike	Rodgers, Carol	

Regrets:

Aamir, Asifa	Georgees, Ifrodet	McAlpin, Breanne
Azad, Nader	Hossein Nejad, Mehdi	McGregor, Carolyn
Bailey, Robert	Jones, Ferdinand	Naumkin, Fedor
Barari, Ahmad	Felder, Ruth	Rastpour, Amir
Bryant, Toba	Fernando, Shanti	Serote, MaryCae
Duff, Ana	Frazer, Mitch	

Staff & Guests:

Ayotte, Kirstie	Hester, Krista	Thrush, Sarah
Bauer, Chelsea	Maclsaac, Brad	Townsend, Lisa
Callahan, Stephanie	McCartney, Kimberley	Turner, Lauren
Gottlieb, Sara	Nyaamine, Ruth	Wingate, Adam
Hamilton, Barbara	Papke, Darryl	

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. M. Eklund read the land acknowledgement and shared some reflections on the land and the Williams Treaties.

2. Agenda

A member requested that item 12(c) be removed from the consent agenda and placed on the regular meeting agenda.

Upon a motion duly made by S. Aquanno and seconded by P. Stoett, the Agenda was approved as amended.

3. Chair's Remarks

The Chair provided some updates including encouraging members to attend the upcoming employee appreciation night, highlighting the upcoming Let's Talk Day, and sharing that once again Ontario Tech saw a significant increase in high school applications. He then turned to government matters, noting that there is still no response to the Blue-Ribbon Panel report but the recently announced federal cap on international student permits will have dramatic effects on post-secondary institutions across Canada. In response to a concern about increasing enrolment putting pressure on physical spaces at the University, the Chair advised that a paradigm shift is needed to maximize space usage; off-peak times such as evenings, summers and weekends need to be approached differently. There was an expression of support from Academic Council for using space in the summer to make the campus vibrant year-round. In response to a question about the percentage of international students enrolled at the University, B. Maclsaac confirmed that the University is well below provincial averages at 11% international. The Chair cautioned however, that as details about the caps are not yet known, it's similarly unknown how much the University will be impacted by the federal announcement.

4. Inquiries and Communications COU Academic Colleague Report

A. King presented the COU Academic Colleague Report, highlighting a presentation from J. Turk of the Centre for Free Expression at Toronto Metropolitan University on re-evaluating universities' role in society drawing lessons from the Israel-Hamas war. The distinction between academic freedom and free stage as well as the role of academics versus the role of the university was discussed. In response to a question, A. King advised that the questioning of some university Presidents before the United States Congress was discussed.

5. Provost's Remarks

The Provost wished members a happy new year. She advised Academic Council that nominations for the Celebrate! Teaching Awards are now open. She also reminded members that space-planning information sessions are upcoming and represent an opportunity for community members to provide feedback on future plans for physical space at the University. In response to a question, B. Maclsaac advised that there is no discussion document for the physical space information sessions.

(a) Senior Academic Administrator Search Update

The Provost advised that the search for the next Dean of Science is underway with the Search Advisory Committee having its first meeting several weeks ago. A call for feedback has been sent to all faculty, staff and students; responses will be aggregated into themes by the search firm. A job prospectus and materials for potential candidates will then be created with job posting targeted for February or March.

The Search Advisory Committee for the next Dean of Education has been set and work will commence in early March.

6. 2024-2025 Tuition Framework

The Provost opened the discussion on the 2024-2025 Tuition Framework by observing that the University is going through a unique time with unprecedented levels of financial uncertainty. Despite this, critical decisions, including tuition-setting, must be made to move forward.

S. Thrush then presented the Framework, advising Academic Council that whatever flexibility the provincial government's tuition fee framework ultimately adopts will be taken up by the University. She noted that while the Blue-Ribbon Panel recommended a 5% increase, it is not expected that it will be implemented by the province. To account for uncertainty, the proposed Framework recommends a 0-5% increase for domestic programs; if the freeze continues then tuition will be similarly frozen at 0% and if additional amounts are permitted by the province, then the University will similarly adjust tuition up to a maximum of 5%. She reminded Academic Council of the tuition anomalies the universities were permitted to raise to the Ministry last year and noted where they are reflected in the proposed Framework. With respect to international tuition, a 5% increase at the undergraduate level is proposed while both Master's and PhD programs are proposed to be frozen both domestically and internationally with the exception of course-based professional programming.

S. Thrush noted that there has been a 43% cumulative increase in scholarships and bursaries for undergraduate students in the last four years and graduate student support has increased 59% in the last year alone. She closed by highlighting the University's advocacy work to the Ministry directly and via COU to encourage a review of OSAP. The majority of the University's programs remain below the median average tuition for the sector. In response to a question, S. Thrush advised that undergraduate financial supports have increased from \$8.9 million to \$12.7 million; graduate from \$700,000 to \$2.4 million. A brief discussion then ensued on where teaching assistantships and research assistantships figure into those values and where budget flows through Faculties.

Committee Reports:

7. Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC)

M. Bluechardt presented the USC report, advising that the Committee's January meeting was very busy. There will be more items tracking forward from the Committee to Academic Council in February.

(a) Major Program Modification – Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Specializations

M. Bluechardt presented the Major Program Modification. In response to a question, G. Crawford clarified that a number of changes comprise the proposal: (i) the addition of some third- and fourth-year electives; (ii) different entry points depending on

incoming high school students' level of skill; and (iii) some changes to prerequisites. In response to a concern that the proposal was difficult to follow, K. McCartney offered to connect with the member to provide additional information and to review memo content for the future.

Upon a motion duly made by M. Bluechardt and seconded by D. Simmons, pursuant to the recommendation of the Undergraduate Studies Committee, Academic Council hereby approves the Major Program Modification to the Bachelor of Science in Computer Science program and the Data Science and Digital Media specializations, to amend the program map and alter the elective credit hour requirements.

(b) Major Program Modification – Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies Science, Technology & Society

M. Bluechardt presented the Major Program Modification, noting that the new specialization draws upon the interdisciplinary strength of the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities. In response to a concern about pressures on space and scheduling, P. Stoett noted that both the student space and second-floor spaces in Charles Hall are frequently underused. Another member noted similar concerns on the north campus, including switching between online classes and in-person classes with concomitant space requirements. B. Maclsaac advised that several members of the University community have submitted similar questions and concerns to the upcoming space consultations and discussions are underway to consider options.

Upon a motion duly made by P. Stoett and seconded by S. Aquanno, pursuant to the recommendation of the Undergraduate Studies Committee, Academic Council hereby approves the Major Program Modification to the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies program adding a new specialization in Science, Technology and Society.

(c) Major Program Modification – Sociology Minor

M. Bluechardt presented the proposed Major Program Modification.

Upon a motion duly made by P. Stoett and seconded by S. Aquanno, pursuant to the recommendation of the Undergraduate Studies Committee, Academic Council hereby approves the Major Program Modification to create a minor in Sociology.

8. Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)

T. Christou presented the GSC update, noting that while there was no meeting in December, the Committee did meet this morning and decision items will be flowing to Academic Council in February. He then advised Academic Council that the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Base Camp launched yesterday, which will provide resources and supports for students and supervisors.

9. Governance and Nominations Committee (GNC)

L. Livingston advised Academic Council that GNC met on January 16th to discuss three key matters, two of which are covered in this section of the agenda and one of which will be discussed with the Policy Consultation items.

(a) Elections Key Dates and Open Positions

L. Livingston presented the Elections Key Dates for 2024 for Academic Council's information, advising that they were approved by GNC at its January meeting. She highlighted the extended timelines in 2024 and the hope that, particularly for the nominations period, it will draw a larger pool of interested candidates to Academic Council and its Committees. She drew Academic Council's attention to the list of open seats included in the materials package. A member noted that vacancies on the Research Committee were not included in the materials; the University Secretary thanked the member and confirmed that open positions will be reviewed prior to nominations opening.

(b) Research Committee Nomination

L. Jacobs presented the Research Committee Nomination, advising Academic Council that a replacement for Carolyn McGregor is being sought as she has been appointed Dean of the Faculty of Business and Information Technology.

Upon a motion duly made by L. Jacobs and seconded by M. Watterworth, pursuant to the endorsement of the Governance and Nominations Committee, Academic Council hereby approves the appointment of the following faculty member to the Research Committee for the term of January 23, 2024 until the earlier of June 30, 2026 or such time as an Associate Dean Responsible for Research is appointed in FBIT:

- *Peter Lewis, Faculty of Business and IT*

10. Research Committee

L. Jacobs presented the Research Committee report. He highlighted a number of current and upcoming research events including the recent meeting of the Women in Research Council, FSSH's upcoming Black History month events, and a clean energy conference in Dubai in February. He noted the University's recent achievement of being designated research university of the year for small universities by Research Infosource.

He then reported on recent developments in research security, including the Federal Court decision on a student's admissibility to Canada for study. The Research Office is considering the implications of the decision as well as direction from the federal government. L. Jacobs advised Academic Council that the Research Office is available to support individuals working on grant applications.

L. Jacobs closed by discussing Canada Research Chairs as well as a forthcoming call for research excellence chair applications. In response to a question, L. Jacobs advised that he had not heard of Research Ethics Board being engaged on research security issues.

11. Policy Consultation

(a) Undergraduate Academic Appeals Policy and Committee Terms of Reference

L. Turner presented the Undergraduate Academic Appeals Policy and Committee Terms of Reference, advising that the Policy is before Academic Council for approval, the Terms of Reference for recommendation to the Board of Governors, and the Procedure for information as it was approved by USC in December. She highlighted that consultation on planned revisions to the suite of policy documents began almost a year ago. In response to a question, L. Turner clarified that the documents do not apply to Faculty-level academic integrity deliberations, only to the appeals that follow once those are complete. The same applies to appeals to the Registrar's Office. A member noted that there have been significant changes to the documents since Academic Council last saw them in April. In response to a question about the Judicial Officer position, L. Turner confirmed that it is part of her job description. She noted, however, that in the policy documents before Academic Council for information and approval, decision-making authority has been removed from the Judicial Officer and placed instead solely with the Committee Chair or Committee. S. Gottlieb advised that this change is in line with best practice as courts are more likely to be deferential to academic decision-makers as subject matter experts.

Upon a motion duly made by J. Stokes and seconded by T. Christou, pursuant to the recommendation of the Undergraduate Studies Committee, Academic Council hereby approves the amended Undergraduate Academic Appeals Policy. Further, that Academic Council hereby recommends the revised Undergraduate Academic Appeals Committee Terms of Reference for approval by the Board of Governors.

(b) Honorary Degrees Committee Terms of Reference

L. Turner presented the Honorary Degrees Committee Terms of Reference for Academic Council's endorsement to the Board of Governors. She advised Academic Council that the associated Procedure was approved by GNC at its January meeting. In response to a question, she confirmed that the student member on the Committee may be an undergraduate or graduate student.

Upon a motion duly made by S. Nokleby and seconded by R. Ruttenberg-Rozen, Academic Council recommend to the Board of Governors the approval of the revised Terms of Reference for the Honorary Degrees Committee.

12. Consent Agenda

(a) Minutes of the Meeting of November 28, 2023* (M)

(b) Minor Program Adjustments from USC* (I)

a. Bachelor of Commerce in Finance and Finance Minor

Upon a motion duly made by S. Aquanno and seconded by P. Stoett, the above noted items on the consent agenda were approved and received for information.

(c) Cyclical Program Reviews from USC* (I)

- a. **Bachelor of Health Science (BHSc) Executive Summary and Program Learning Outcomes**
- b. **Bachelor of Health Science in Medical Laboratory Science Executive Summary and Program Learning Outcomes**
- c. **Bachelor of Allied Health Sciences 18-Month Follow-up Report**
- d. **Bachelor of Arts in Legal Studies Executive Summary and Program Learning Outcomes**

At the request of Academic Council, the items above were discussed as part of the main meeting.

In response to a question about staffing for item a., C. Rodgers confirmed that there are now two director positions. In response to a similar question about item d., P. Stoett advised that while resourcing is desired, it has not yet been approved.

13. Other Business

(a) Land acknowledgement for November Academic Council meeting

A. King volunteered to do the land acknowledgement for January.

P. Stoett encouraged members of Academic Council to attend the Black History Month events on February 8, 2024.

14. Termination (M)

Upon a motion made by S. Nokleby, the meeting was adjourned at 3:53 p.m.

Lauren Turner, University Secretary