



ACADEMIC COUNCIL REPORT

SESSION:

Public
Non-Public

ACTION REQUESTED:

Decision
Discussion/Direction
Information

TO: Academic Council

DATE: March 24, 2020

FROM: Governance & Nominations Committee (GNC)

SUBJECT: Process to Handle Comments Received in Advance of a Meeting

GNC MANDATE:

- In accordance with the GNC Terms of Reference, one of the committee’s responsibilities is to “establish, oversee, and periodically review the governance procedures, guidelines, and directives of Academic Council and revise when appropriate.”
- As requested at the January meeting of Academic Council, GNC considered the process to be used with respect to handling comments received in advance of a meeting from a member who will not be in attendance.

BACKGROUND:

- At the November meeting of Academic Council, a member who was unable to attend sent questions and comments to the Office of the University Secretary & General Counsel (USGC) on two agenda items the evening before the Council meeting.
- The USGC forwarded the member’s feedback to the individuals responsible for the agenda items the morning of the meeting.
- At the January Council meeting, in response to the member’s comment that he did not see his questions/comments reflected in the minutes, it was suggested that questions/comments that are sent in advance when a member will be absent should be read into the minutes during the meeting.
- It was agreed to refer this matter to the GNC for consideration and recommendation.

- The USGC canvassed its network of colleagues to find out how other institutions handle comments received in advance by members who are going to be absent.
- The results of the benchmarking exercise are set out in the attached spreadsheet, for ease of reference.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS:

Universities that Responded	12
Comments Read into Minutes	0
Comments forwarded to responsible individuals to be addressed	11
All questions must be sent in advance of meeting & sent to responsible individuals to prepare response	1

RECOMMENDATION:

- The committee considered the results of the benchmarking exercise and after thorough discussion, the committee encourages members who are unable to attend a meeting to provide their questions/comments to a fellow Council member and ask that they kindly raise them at the meeting so that a full discussion may take place.
- Questions may also be sent in advance to the USGC – they will then be forwarded to the individual responsible for the agenda item to allow adequate time to prepare a response.

1.

SUPPORTING REFERENCE MATERIALS:

- Comments Benchmarking Results

Handling Comments Received Before AC Meeting

UNIVERSITY	Comments Read into Minutes during Meeting	Comments Forwarded to Responsible Individual to Respond
Brock	no	yes
Cape Breton	no	yes
Carleton	no	yes
Concordia	no	yes
Dalhousie	no	yes
Guelph	no	yes
Laurier	no	yes
Northern Ontario School of Medicine	no	yes
Queen's	no	yes (questions MUST be sent 2 weeks in advance for a 20 min question period)
Regina	no	yes
Western	no	yes (members encouraged to send questions in advance of meeting & questions included as part of meeting material)
Windsor	no	yes (member who cannot attend encouraged to ask another member to raise the questions during the meeting)