



**ACADEMIC COUNCIL – Special Meeting**  
Tuesday, March 31, 2020  
2:30 - 3:15 p.m., [Video Conference](#) Only

<b>AGENDA</b>	<b>Suggested Start Time</b>
<b>1. Call to Order</b>	2:30 p.m.
<b>2. Agenda (M)</b>	
<b>3. Chair’s Remarks</b>	
<b>4. Provost’s Remarks</b>	2:40 p.m.
<b>5. Amendments to Academic Council Steering Committee* (M)</b>	2:45 p.m.
<b>6. Termination (M)</b>	3:15 p.m.

Becky Dinwoodie, Secretary



## ACADEMIC COUNCIL REPORT

---

**SESSION:**

Public

**ACTION REQUESTED:**

Decision   
 Discussion/Direction

**TO:** Academic Council (AC)

**DATE:** March 31, 2020

**PREPARED BY:** Cheryl Foy, University Secretary & General Counsel and  
 Becky Dinwoodie, Assistant University Secretary

**SUBJECT:** Delegation of Authority to Steering Committee

---

**AC MANDATE:**

- In accordance with By-law No. 2, AC has the authority to make recommendations to the Board on the terms of reference of committees to exercise the Academic Council’s delegated authority under Article 1.1 of By-law No. 2.
- We are seeking AC’s recommendation to amend the terms of reference of the AC Steering Committee to include a provision allowing AC to temporarily delegate authority to the Steering Committee (SC) during an emergency or extraordinary circumstance.

**BACKGROUND/CONTEXT & RATIONALE:**

- States of emergency declarations have been made at various levels of government and internationally. In compliance with the directives coming from government, the university is enacting measures and implementing contingency plans to manage the implications of the pandemic affecting the university community.
- The university has a pandemic plan. Measures to date have not arisen from the pandemic plan. They have been in response to measures the government is taking to try to minimize the impact of the pandemic. The pandemic plan deals with the actual impact of a pandemic – i.e. that employees become ill in significant numbers.
- Like the rest of the university, university governance has been able to continue on line because we had already created the capacity to meet electronically via Blue Jeans.

- As long as it is possible, Academic Council will meet as a whole on Blue Jeans and through conference calls.
- However, Academic Council needs a contingency plan to address a scenario under which it cannot achieve quorum because too many members are ill.
- Other institutions are planning for this eventuality by temporarily delegating authority to a standing committees of their senates/academic councils. Others have gone as far as temporarily delegating decision-making authority to the Provost.
- The Ontario Tech Board of Governors has delegated its authority to its Executive Committee.
- At the AC meeting on March 24, AC engaged in a preliminary discussion regarding governance contingency planning and whether Council should consider delegating authority to the Steering Committee in order to prepare for the possibility that AC might begin to encounter challenges reaching quorum due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- This recognizes that everyone is dealing with the urgent demands of their roles, as well as additional personal responsibilities given the circumstances.
- AC expressed support for holding a special meeting to continue the discussion, as well as to provide time to prepare a draft set of terms of reference for review and consideration by AC.
- Following the meeting, T. Pierce, a member of the Steering Committee, offered to assist with the drafting of the amendment to the terms of reference. T. Pierce worked with the Office of the University Secretary & General Counsel to draft the delegation of authority language.
- A blacklined version of the updated terms of reference is attached for review.

### **Considerations:**

- it is a temporary delegation of authority to be exercised at discretion of AC or triggered by inability of AC to reach quorum;
- the authority can be limited in scope;
- AC retains the authority to revoke or amend the delegation of authority;
- all decisions made by the committee would be reported to AC for information;
- upon the delegation of authority to the Steering Committee, the Steering Committee would have the authority to appoint replacement Steering Committee members from among the members of Academic Council if members of the committee fall ill. This will ensure that the Steering Committee can continue to achieve quorum;
- the plan is to continue to hold AC meetings, including the regularly scheduled monthly meetings, by video conference as long as possible;
- members of AC would continue to be consulted in writing to provide feedback for consideration by the Steering Committee; and
- amendment to the Steering Committee's terms of reference would put AC in a better position in terms of governance contingency planning when faced with future emergencies/extraordinary circumstances.

**MOTION FOR CONSIDERATION:**

*That Academic Council hereby recommends the proposed amendments to the Steering Committee Terms of Reference, as presented, for approval by the Board of Governors.*

*That Academic Council hereby declares an emergency situation in order to enact the temporary delegation of authority to the Steering Committee when the amended Terms of Reference come into effect (upon Board of Governors Approval).*

**SUPPORTING REFERENCE MATERIALS:**

- blacklined Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee

## ACADEMIC COUNCIL Steering Committee

---

### 1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Steering Committee (“Committee”) is the body responsible for facilitating the work of Academic Council (“AC”). The Committee’s responsibilities include:

- (a) coordinating the business of AC by reviewing and approving the agendas of AC meetings;
- (b) assigning all matters deemed routine and uncontroversial to the consent agenda;
- (c) reviewing the reports and proposals being presented to AC to ensure that relevant background material is available to AC members prior to meetings;
- (d) receiving and reviewing suggested agenda topics from the community and determining whether they are appropriate topics for discussion by AC;
- (e) considering, preparing and scheduling discussions of broad academic interest between 2 – 4 times per academic year; and
- (f) coordinating annual reports from the subsidiary bodies of AC.

AC may approve a temporary delegation of its authority to the Committee because of an emergency or extraordinary circumstance as declared by AC. The AC must grant the temporary delegation of authority by resolution. The AC may also limit the scope of this delegation. The delegation of authority will take effect as of a date to be determined by AC or will be triggered by the inability of AC to reach quorum. The delegation of authority will remain in effect until the emergency or other extraordinary circumstance has ended, or until amended or revoked by AC by resolution, whichever is earlier. AC may review the delegation of authority, as necessary. The Committee will report all actions taken on behalf of AC to AC for information as soon as is reasonably possible.

### 2. MEETINGS

The Committee will meet at least 2 weeks before each meeting of AC, or otherwise at the Committee Chair’s discretion. In accordance with the *UOIT Act* and By-laws, the Committee shall conduct two types of meetings as part of its regular administration: Public and Non-Public.

### 3. MEMBERSHIP

The Committee shall be composed of:

#### *Ex-officio*

- President & Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
- Provost & Vice-President, Academic
- Chair of the Academic Council committee responsible for undergraduate curriculum
- Chair of the Academic Council committee responsible for graduate curriculum
- Chair of the Academic Council committee responsible for research
- Secretary of Academic Council (non-voting)

#### **Elected Representatives from Academic Council**

- Between three (3) and six (6) elected representatives of Academic Council (Teaching Staff, Administrative Staff and Students) to ensure the Committee benefits from a balance of skills, expertise, and knowledge among its membership, while reflecting the demographic and cultural diversity of the communities served by the university.
- One of the elected representatives will also serve as Vice-Chair of Academic Council and the Agenda Committee. The Vice-Chair will be selected in accordance with the relevant procedure established by the Governance and Nominations Committee.

### 4. QUORUM

Quorum requires that a majority of the Committee members entitled to vote be present.