ACADEMIC COUNCIL

MINUTES of MEETING of TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2020
VIDEOCONFERENCE, 2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Present:

Murphy, Steven (Chair)
Barari, Ahmad
Bliemel, Michael
Crawford, Greg
Davidson, Catherine
Gaber, Hossam
Habibi, Sarah
Heydari, Shahram
Hogue, Jessica
Hossein Nejad, Mehdi
Jacobs, Les
Jones, Ferdinand
Kay, Robin
Kishawy, Hossam
LeSage, Ann
Liscano, Ramiro
Livingston, Lori
Lloyd, Meghann
Mahmoud, Qusay
Marques, Olga
McCabe, Janet
Mostaghim, Amir
Murphy, Bernadette
Murphy, Steven (Chair)

Nugent, Kimberly
Partosoedarso, Elita
Petrie, Olivia
Pierce, Tess
Rahnamayan, Shahryar
Rinaldi, Jen
Roy, Langis
Scott, Hannah
Shon, Phillip
Stoett, Peter
Stokes, Joe
Tokuhiro, Akira
Williams, Alyssa
Woolridge, Lyndsay
Wu, Terry

Staff:

Dinwoodie, Becky
Foy, Cheryl
MacIsaac, Brad
McCartney, Kimberley
Molinaro, Nichole
O'Halloran, Niall

Regrets:

Desaulniers, Jean-Paul
Khalid, Osama
Mohany, Atef
Naumkin, Fedor
Taylor, Noreen

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:31 p.m.

2. Agenda

Upon a motion duly made by G. Crawford and seconded by S. Heydari, the Agenda was approved as presented.

3. Chair's Remarks

The Chair thanked everyone for participating in the meeting during an otherwise extremely busy time. He was pleased to see that the university's governance is continuing uninterrupted, albeit virtually. The Chair reported that the updated Steering Committee Terms of Reference were approved by the Executive Committee of the Board. He commented that hopefully they will not have to use the delegation of authority, but it is good to know the tool is available, if needed.

The Chair congratulated the recipients of the 2019 Celebrate Teaching Awards. He then provided a COVID-19 update on initiatives being undertaken by the university community, including:

- PPE work - face shields being worked on by ACE and FEAS;
- the university is working with OPG, GM & other corporations on producing thousands of face shields for Durham, Northumberland, and GTA;
- there is also work being done on ventilator designs;
- a stormwater project to assess the presence of COVID-19 in the community.

The Chair shared that he is incredibly proud of all of the work being done across the university.

There is every indication that when the isolation measures end, we will return to a "new normal". There remains a high degree of uncertainty and we are preparing for a reduction in student numbers. Many students will be hard hit financially with the loss of summer jobs, as well as the potential loss of income of their parents, as well. It is important to let students know that a quality education will be available in September. The university will also be communicating to students about the forms of financial assistance available.

The university will also be looking at budget cuts in an effort to try to balance the budget. We will be ready to be fully online in September. The goal is to have a blended model of education in order to maintain the technological advances made over the past month.

The Chair responded to questions from Council members:

- Is the plan to move online intended to be permanent?
  - The goal is to determine how to best integrate technology into teaching and learning.
  - The intention is not to be an "online university".
  - Goal is to learn the best practices for delivering content online.

- o With the continuing uncertainty, the university must plan to be online.
- Does the federal government student assistance apply to domestic and international students?
  - o Primarily for domestic students, but international students qualify for another initiative that was announced prior to the recent federal announcement.
- Would online apply to fall & winter terms?
  - o Prudent to plan for both semesters to be online during the next school year in order to be prepared for any eventuality.
  - o Preferred not to bounce back and forth from online to on campus in the event of additional COVID-19 flare ups – more fair to plan for the entire year online to allow students to plan for the year.
- Is blended learning the end goal?
  - o How do we best engage our students?
  - o Many professors are using a blended approach already.
  - o Goal is to increase technology use.
  - o Can take advantage of how young and nimble the institution is to make such a shift.
- How are faculty being supported to shift online and deal with the increased work load?
  - o Provost is working on developing supports and putting them in place, as well as dealing with the increased workload.
- Will there be increased class sizes?
- How will budget cuts affect the availability of support?
  - o Will be staying strategically focused when making cuts.
  - o Will look at redistributing money from less strategic areas to more strategic areas.
- International students have been asking questions about the university's plan for the fall and whether they would have to travel to attend the institution – will there be a communication to confirm the plans to our incoming students?
  - o Will be assessing what public health is instructing – it is looking increasingly unlikely that the campus will be open for the fall.
  - o Must make a call in order to provide our students with some degree of certainty.
  - o Will continue to work with public health officials and seek their guidance on planning for fall.
  - o Still a bit early to make that decision.
- Member clarified that what they have been doing the past month was emergency remote teaching – faculty don't have sufficient time or tools to transition most effectively.
  - o Important for the university to be seen as learning from our experience and continuously improving the model.
  - o Won't be perfect by fall or even January.

- Willingness to form a task force on blended learning?
  - Dealing with a fluid/dynamic situation and must continue to be nimble enough to move quickly.
- Are we considering offering domestic tuition to international students?
  - Recognize that affordability will be an issue – looking at implementing instalment payments for our students.
- Any sense of students commencing law suits for tuition refunds?
  - Have not received any complaints from our students that they expect money back.
- How would engineering be offered through blended learning? Should be left to the Faculty as a whole to make such a decision.
  - Primary reason why not moving entirely online is that the magic happens on campus.
  - Blended model is more important as students can learn content online and apply their knowledge while on campus.
  - If we find ourselves fully online, becomes challenging to provide an experiential education for students.
  - Online labs not nearly as effective as in person labs – but may be forced into that situation and need to be ready for it.
- Takes significant time to develop online courses while also providing childcare, homeschooling, caring for elderly relatives, etc.
- Possible accreditation issues.

CHANCELLOR ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chair was happy to inform Academic Council that the Board of Governors appointed Mitch Frazer as the university's next Chancellor. M. Frazer's term as Chancellor will begin on May 1st and they are hoping the installation will happen in the fall. The Chair provided an overview of M. Frazer's background. He thanked the Chancellor Search Committee members for their work in finding the right Chancellor for the university. The Chair shared that he looks forward to working with the new Chancellor and hopes to introduce the Chancellor to Council and the broader community soon.

4.   Minutes of the Meetings of March 24, March 27, March 31, and April 3, 2020

Upon a motion duly made by L. Roy and seconded by O. Davis, the Minutes were approved as presented.

5.   Business Arising from the Minutes

The Chair reported on the cost of implementing the BlueJeans polling feature, which would be approximately $2000/year. Further, implementing a polling feature would not capture the votes of individuals who were participating by phone only. It remains unclear

as to the nature of the problem a polling feature would solve.

6. Inquiries and Communications

There was none.

7. Provost's Remarks

The Provost remarked that it was good to see everyone wearing blue and orange in support of our students. She echoed the Chair's comments and thanked everyone for their efforts. One thing that has been consistent in her conversations with colleagues at other institutions is that they continue to talk about their struggles, largely due to the lack of technological infrastructure on campus.

The Provost thanked everyone for their efforts. While the emergency is still relatively acute, it is anticipated we could be in this position for the next 12-18 months. It is not easy for anyone in these circumstances – we are in this together and will come out stronger if we continue to support each other along the way.

The Provost congratulated everyone who was successful in being granted tenure and promotion last week. It was a successful year for the majority of applicants. March is usually a time of year when we do a lot of celebrating. The university's Athletics Department held a successful event online for several days to recognize our student athletes.

During this year's Celebrate Teaching Awards, the Student Choice Award was given to two individuals, Murat Aydin, a FEAS sessional instructor, and Razgar Rahimi (awarded posthumously). The Provost also congratulated Patricia MacMillan, Senior Academic Advisor for FSSH, who was recently selected as a mentor for the 2020-2022 NACADA Class of Emerging Leaders. The Provost acknowledged one of our fourth-year students, Jordan Crowell, who competed in American Nuclear Society's Student Design Competition and placed second overall.

(a) Senior Academic Administrator Search Updates

The Provost provided updates on the progress of the searches for the Deans of Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science and Faculty of Education.

The Provost responded to questions from Council members:

- Will there be any shift in how tenure files will be assessed given these conditions?
    - There is an option to defer a tenure application included in the Collective Agreement.
- Will online classes be evaluated if not usually how a course is taught?

- o For Winter Term course evaluations, faculty members can opt to have them considered.
  - o Must acknowledge that there has been an interruption.
- Why are there two job postings for the role of Dean of FEAS (new ad posted on April 13)?
  - o The search has been extended and will be shortlisting for the fall.
  - o Second ad was likely posted to reflect the updated dates.
- Is blended learning considered a major program modification that requires approval by Academic Council?
  - o In the short term, it is considered to be an emergency adjustment.
  - o The university continues to communicate with the Quality Council (QC) to ensure proceeding in accordance with the IQAP.
  - o The university underwent QC audit just before the campus closed.
  - o There are ongoing discussions with QC, as they recognize every institution is dealing with the same issues right now.
- Concern about involvement of faculty in the decision to move online or blended online format.
- Discussion about course assignments and how can best prepare for online courses.
  - o Adobe connect available for spring/summer session but not fall.
  - o University will transition to Canvas.
- When faculty design courses for fall/winter, how should they approach course design?
  - o People are taking a lot of time to adapt their courses.
  - o Up to each Faculty to determine what is best.
  - o Encouraged faculty to look at advantages of teaching online.
  - o Time spent developing online courses is time well spent – learning what is most effective.
- Concern expressed about how to prevent cheating when delivering exams online.
- It will be beneficial to students to have both methods of teaching available to them – will allow students to review content later in the semester when doing other evaluations, and assessments.
- For those who teach laboratory-based curriculum, is there any direction on when facilities and resources on campus can be accessed? 4 months is not a lot of time to develop content.
  - o It is uncertain at this time.
- Concern about providing support to students with anxiety and students who require accommodations.
- "Many of us are hearing a lot of concern about how and when we will start returning back to the new normal. I am putting forth a notice of motion so that we, as AC, can discuss parameters of what exiting out of this emergency mode of operations at OntarioTechU would look like: Notice of Motion: *Whereas emergency measures have been declared for the Province on Ontario regarding the COVID-19*

pandemic, and Whereas the Ontario Tech University will begin to re-open only based on the guidance of Public Health Ontario, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, or other provincial officials, It is moved that Academic Council recognizes that Ontario Tech University needs to be prepared to deliver courses in an emergency remote mode as may be necessary in Fall 2020. And furthermore that Ontario Tech University will return to established modes of teaching as soon as possible after Ontario Public Health declares this as safe. More about this motion will be provided to the steering committee for inclusion into the next meeting of AC."

8.   Steering Committee Delegation of Authority Review

As agreed, AC will have the opportunity to review the delegation of authority at every regularly scheduled meeting. This will be a standing item until the resolution of the pandemic. C. Foy asked Academic Council to consider whether the delegation of authority needs to be revoked or changed.

Upon a motion duly made by G. Crawford and seconded by B. Murphy, Academic Council renewed the delegation of authority to the Steering Committee on the same basis as it was approved on April 3.

9.   Policy Consultation:

(a)   Policy Framework – Interim Consultation Pathways

C. Foy provided an overview of the Policy Framework and reviewed the proposed interim amendments. She reviewed the conditions necessary to obtain a temporary policy approval. In response to a question about the ways of consulting with Academic Council, C. Foy clarified that the preferred option would be in person and the next preferred mode would be by e-mail. Further, if Academic Council could not meet quorum, either the Steering Committee would be consulted instead or Academic Council would be consulted by e-mail depending on the policy instrument. If the policy instrument was more operational and not as involved, consultation might just involve the Steering Committee. C. Foy also advised that the Steering Committee could direct consultation to take place with Council by e-mail.

Committee Reports

10.   Research Board

L. Jacobs delivered the Research Board report. He advised that the Tri Council has made an immense effort to stabilize research funding and extend bridge funding. They are also working on a plan to restart research on campus. L. Jacobs gave kudos as the university's research achievements are still ongoing. He also offered his congratulations to the NSERC recipients.

(a)   Strategic Research Plan (SRP)

The consultation period for the SRP was extended and several faculty townhalls were held together with university wide consultation.   These consultations generated constructive discussion and feedback. L. Jacobs also received detailed written feedback by e-mail. He emphasized that the SRP is an outward looking document. The SRP positions us as a small research-intensive university (by TriCouncil standards).   A member commented that the SRP has come a long way from the last version that was presented to Council and it is much improved.

(b)   Cybersecurity Institute Proposal (CSI)

L. Jacobs provided a brief overview of the proposal. He set the context for the initiative. The CSI has been under development for about a year and a half and now seems like an ideal landscape in which to bring our expertise to the forefront due to the recent federal initiatives that have been announced. New forms of cyberattacks have been observed, resulting in harassment and disruptions to business. The university's establishment of a CSI would be timely. The CSI would be looking at it from a multidisciplinary perspective. The proposal includes an ambitious but realistic fundraising plan. There was a discussion regarding whether the university has a concept of institutes. L. Jacobs reminded Council that they recently recommended the establishment of the Digital Life Institute. Historically, there did not seem to be a mobilization to establish institutes. There was a discussion regarding the funding for the CSI. L. Jacobs advised that hiring will wait until funds are obtained.

Upon a motion duly made by L. Jacobs and seconded by M. Bliemel, pursuant to the recommendation of the Research Board, Academic Council unanimously recommended the establishment of the Institute for Cyber Security and Resilient Systems (ICSRS) for approval by the Board of Governors, as presented.

11.   Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC)

(a)   Program Review Final Assessment Report – Bachelor of Education

G. Crawford presented the report for approval. There was a discussion regarding why the recommendation was to hire LTAA instead of TFs.

Upon a motion duly made by G. Crawford and seconded by A. LeSage, pursuant to the recommendation of USC, Academic Council unanimously approved the Final Assessment Report for the Bachelor of Education Cyclical Program Review.

(b)   Undergraduate Calendar to Policy Migration Project: Undergraduate Admissions Policies & Procedures:

G. Crawford presented the policies and procedures for approval.

Upon a motion duly made by G. Crawford and seconded by J. Stokes, pursuant to the recommendation of the Undergraduate Studies Committee, Academic Council unanimously approved the following policies and procedures, as presented.

      i.   Undergraduate Advanced Standing and Transfer Credit Procedures
      ii.   Special Considerations Procedures
      iii.   Undergraduate and Professional Admissions Policy
      iv.   Undergraduate and Professional Admissions Procedures

(c)   Undergraduate Calendar to Policy Migration Project (for information only):

i.   Undergraduate Advanced Standing and Transfer Credit Policy
ii.   Special Considerations Policy
iii.   Revised Academic Calendar Copy

(J. McCabe left at 4:26 p.m.)

12.   Governance & Nominations Committee (GNC)

(a)   2020 Election Results (deferred from March)

L. Livingston presented the nominations for approval.

Upon a motion duly made by L. Livingston and seconded by H. Kishawy, pursuant to the recommendations of the Governance & Nominations Committee, Academic Council unanimously approved the following appointments:

Administrative Staff Position on Academic Council for the term of July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2023:

     • *Jessica Hogue*

Teaching Staff Positions on Academic Council for the term of July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2023:

     • *Science – Brad Easton*
     • *At-large – Mike Eklund*
     • *At-large – Alexander Serenko*

Student Positions on Academic Council for the term of September 1, 2020 – August 31, 2021, renewable for an additional year:

     • *Jacinta Obasohan*
     • *Ramin Sami*
     • *Jahan Sheikh*

(b)   Nomination to Steering Committee

L. Livingston reminded Council that as discussed during the special meetings, there was one vacant position for an elected member of Academic Council on the Steering Committee. A call for expressions of interest was sent out and the Governance and Nominations Committee recommended the appointment of Owen Davis to the Steering Committee until the end of his term in August 2021. A pool of potential replacement members has been started and L. Livingston invited members who are interested in being part of the pool to contact B. Dinwoodie.

Upon a motion duly made by L. Livingston and seconded by A. Mostaghim, pursuant to the recommendation of the Governance & Nominations Committee, Academic Council unanimously appointed Owen Davis to the Steering Committee for a term to end on August 31, 2021.

13.   Registrar's Report

(a)   Conferral of Degrees for Winter Term 2020

J. Stokes presented the report for consideration by Academic Council and responded to questions from members. He advised that they are working on granting digital degrees and the physical degrees will be sent out at the end of June. The date of the conferral of degrees will be the date of Council's approval. They are hoping to hold convocation in the fall. In response to a question as to whether grad students who meet the graduation eligibility requirements in the summer would be able attend convocation in the fall, J. Stokes said it is still under discussion and he would report back at the next meeting.

Upon a motion duly made by J. Stokes and seconded by M. Hossein Nejad, pursuant to the recommendations of each Faculty and the Registrar, Academic Council unanimously confirmed the eligibility for graduation of those students who have fulfilled all degree requirements at the end of the Winter Term 2020 and recommends the conferral of degrees by the Chancellor.

A. Williams abstained as part of graduating class.

14.   For Information:

14.1   Graduate Studies Academic Calendar
14.2   COU Academic Colleague Update

15.   Other Business

16.   Termination

Upon a motion duly made by F. Jones and seconded by O. Davis, the meeting terminated at 4:37 p.m.

Becky Dinwoodie, Secretary