

## **ACADEMIC COUNCIL (AC)**

Minutes of the Special Meeting of Friday, April 3, 2020

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Video Conference Only

### **Present:**

Murphy, Steven (Chair)  
Bliemel, Michael  
Davidson, Catherine  
Desaulniers, Jean-Paul  
Gaber, Hossam  
Habibi, Sarah  
Heydari, Shahram  
Hogue, Jessica  
Hossein Nejad, Mehdi  
Jacobs, Les  
Jones, Ferdinand  
Khalid, Osama  
Kishawy, Hossam  
Livingston, Lori  
Lesage, Ann  
Liscano, Ramiro  
Lloyd, Meghann  
Mahmoud, Qusay  
Marques, Olga  
McCabe, Janet  
Mostaghim, Amir  
Murphy, Bernadette

Nugent, Kimberly  
Partosoedarso, Elita  
Petrie, Olivia  
Pierce, Tess  
Roy, Langis  
Scott, Hannah  
Shon, Phillip  
Stoett, Peter  
Stokes, Joe  
Tokuhiko, Akira  
Woolridge, Lyndsay  
Wu, Terry

### **Staff:**

Dinwoodie,  
Becky  
Foy, Cheryl  
Maclsaac, Brad  
McCartney,  
Kimberley  
Molinaro, Nichole  
Pitcher, Cathy

### **Regrets:**

Barari, Ahmad  
Crawford, Greg  
Kay, Robin  
Mohany, Atef  
Naumkin, Fedor  
Rahnamayan, Shahryar  
Rinaldi, Jen  
Taylor, Noreen  
Williams, Alyssa

### **1. Call to Order**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

### **2. Agenda**

*Upon a motion duly made, the Agenda was approved as presented.*

### **3. Chair's Remarks**

The Chair thanked everyone for participating in the special meeting. He knows that the faculty are working very hard transitioning to online learning and preparing exams. These are only some of the responsibilities that everyone is dealing with. He thanked everyone again for their efforts over the past few weeks.

Administration has been working around the clock to ensure they are engaged in every aspect of planning to ensure we can get through this. We are preparing for an unknowable future and it is integral to keep focused on the university's vision during this time.

This is another important step in the contingency planning for Academic Council. The Chair heard from some members that they are struggling to keep up with these meetings and the short turnaround time. The Chair noted that these are the times when we need to be nimble and quick. He also noted that this is one of the reasons a delegated authority to the Steering Committee (SC) would be helpful, as it would ease the burden on the broader Council.

We have also heard concerns about the way we are voting in these meetings. As mentioned during the last meeting, we are happy to look into a polling feature, but before doing so, would like to better understand the problem that polling purports to solve. In our ordinary AC meetings, members vote by hand and that is difficult to do virtually. Our rules allow us to modify our practice to suit electronic meetings. The practice we have adopted for meetings by video conference (asking for opposed and then abstentions first) is more efficient using this format. It has been suggested that people would like to remain anonymous if opposing a motion; however, that is not how AC does business when we meet in person. All members are free to vote as they choose. In fact, it is your responsibility to vote in accordance with what you think is best for the institution.

The Chair asked everyone to take a moment to reflect that as Council members, they belong to one of the two governance bodies at the university. We all belong to the same institution and members should keep the best interests of the university at the forefront of their minds when making decisions. We each bring perspectives and knowledge and the goal is that while each of us votes from our personal perspective, our vote is to be made in the interests of the university as a whole. The best decisions are made when we listen thoughtfully to the information being presented and then make our own decisions based

on that information. The Chair remarked that they have seen this exemplified over the past few weeks.

The Chair also shared that he couldn't be more proud of the university community in terms of how everyone has come together over the past few weeks (e.g. supporting the community, moving online, etc.). We are a better institution when we come together. The Chair thanked B. Dinwoodie and C. Foy for their work on this material and providing Council members with as much time as possible to review the materials. They are taxed during this time and their work is greatly appreciated.

The Chair invited questions from Council. A comment was made about the Democratic Rules of Order requiring votes in favour to be taken first. B. Dinwoodie referred to the Virtual Meetings section in the Democratic Rules of Order, which allows the rules to be modified for virtual meetings.

#### **4. Provost's Remarks**

The Provost reported on a recent meeting with the COU Council of VPs. She remarked that the university is miles ahead of other institutions in terms of our response to the pandemic situation. As classes near the end, she offered a big thank you to faculty, staff and students for adapting to this new reality. She encouraged everyone to find some levity this weekend and to get out and enjoy the weather, while remaining vigilant and staying safe.

She responded to questions from Council. When asked for an example of how we are ahead of other institutions, she used Respondus Monitoring as an example. We had already conducted a privacy analysis and responded to the concerns of students and faculty. It was suggested that guidelines for using Respondus would be helpful.

#### **5. Pandemic Planning – Delegation of Authority to Academic Council Steering Committee**

The Chair reviewed the motions for consideration.

##### **MOTION 1:**

It was suggested that this motion would not have any impact on the outcome of motion 5 and was unnecessary. C. Foy referred to Section 1(b) of the proposed SC Terms of Reference (ToR), which sets out that AC may delegate authority in an emergency situation as determined by AC. Accordingly, this motion is the first step in the delegation of authority as set out in SC ToR.

*Upon a motion duly made by B. Murphy and seconded by P. Shon, Academic Council formally recognized that the COVID-19 Pandemic is an emergency requiring appropriate pandemic planning.*

There were 2 abstentions.

**MOTION 2:**

C. Foy advised that since this is not consistent with the AC schedule, a motion is required. The proposal is being made in response to comments made during the last special meeting. Further, the summer meetings could be cancelled if not required. It was clarified that the new members of AC would be invited to participate in summer meetings, as their terms are set to begin on July 1.

*Upon a motion duly made by H. Gaber and seconded by F. Jones, Academic Council unanimously approved scheduling meetings for Tuesday, July 28 and Tuesday, August 25, 2020 to begin at 2:30 p.m. and end by 4:30 p.m.*

**MOTION 3:**

C. Foy provided an overview of the recommendations with respect to the delegation of authority, which were set out in the accompanying report. She clarified that if AC cannot reach quorum, that agenda would then be considered by the SC and the process would continue until AC could next achieve quorum.

AC had a robust discussion regarding the length and scope of the delegation of authority. A summary of the comments/questions and responses follows:

- Is it possible for members to give notice in advance if unable to attend a meeting to ensure AC can get quorum?
  - Generally, members are not good with confirming attendance in advance.
  - If people are very sick, they may not be able to confirm attendance.
- Suggestion that the delegation of authority should be reviewed at every meeting, regular or special.
  - Concern that this is not an efficient way to operate.
- Board of Governors must approve the recommended changes to the SC ToR before delegation of authority can be enacted.
- The delegated authority to the SC could not be further delegated to another body.
- Who would be able to fill a vacant position on the SC?
- Is it ethical to ask a student to serve on the SC? Are there any health concerns?
  - Meetings will continue to be held virtually, so there are no health concerns about a student serving on the SC.
- It would be beneficial to have the student perspective represented on the committee – student representation balances the power dynamic.
- A student representative has already expressed interest in the vacant position on SC.
- With the SC reporting requirements, we are trying to be as transparent as possible.

*Upon a motion duly made by A. Mostaghim and seconded by M. Lloyd, Academic Council delegated its authority to the Steering Committee on the following terms:*

- the delegation of authority comes into effect upon Academic Council failing to achieve quorum at either a special meeting or a regular meeting of Council. Failure to achieve quorum will not be declared until at least fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled start time of the meeting in question;*
- delegation of authority will continue for one month or until the next scheduled Academic Council meeting, whichever is earlier. However, should Academic Council be unable to reach quorum, the delegation of authority will continue. The Steering Committee, with the support of the Secretariat, will arrange for the next Academic Council meeting as quickly thereafter as possible;*
- the scope of the Steering Committee's delegated authority includes the Steering Committee will have the authority to exercise AC's responsibilities as set out in Article 1.1 of By-law No. 2, including the appointment of replacement members to the Steering Committee, if necessary; and*
- the reporting requirements relating to the delegation of authority are the Steering Committee agenda and material to be circulated to AC to provide AC members with an opportunity to provide feedback for consideration by the Steering Committee; the Steering Committee meetings will be public and available AC members may join virtually to listen; notice of decisions made by the Steering Committee on behalf of AC will be distributed immediately following the meeting, with the relevant minutes to be provided to AC after approval.*

There was one abstention.

AC members supported sharing alternate e-mail addresses and phone numbers in order to be contacted. It was also suggested that members share emergency contact details, if they are willing to do so. A form will be prepared for completion. C Foy will provide her cell phone number to Council.

There were a number of comments from Council thanking S. Murphy, C. Foy and B. Dinwoodie for their work.

## **6. Termination**

*Upon a motion duly made by F. Jones, the meeting terminated at 12:27 p.m.*

Becky Dinwoodie, Secretary