

## ACADEMIC COUNCIL

### MINUTES of MEETING of TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2020 DTB 524, 2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

**Present:**

Livingston, Lori (Acting Chair)  
Bliemel, Michael  
Crawford, Greg  
Davis, Owen  
Desaulniers, Jean-Paul  
Gaber, Hossam  
Heydari, Shahram  
Hossein Nejad, Mehdi  
Jacobs, Les  
Jones, Ferdinand  
Kay, Robin  
Kishawy, Hossam  
Lloyd, Meghann  
Mahmoud, Qusay  
Marques, Olga  
Mostaghim, Amir  
Murphy, Bernadette  
Naumkin, Fedor  
(*videoconference*)

Petrie, Olivia  
Pierce, Tess  
Rahnamayan, Shahryar  
Rinaldi, Jen  
Roy, Langis  
Scott, Hannah  
Shon, Phillip  
Stoett, Peter  
(*videoconference*)  
Stokes, Joe  
(*videoconference*)  
Tokuhiko, Akira  
Williams, Alyssa  
Woolridge, Lyndsay  
(*videoconference*)  
Wu, Terry

**Staff:**

Dinwoodie,  
Becky  
Foy, Cheryl

**Guests:**

Eklund, Mike  
Hester, Krista  
MacIsaac, Brad  
McCartney,  
Kimberley  
Molinaro,  
Nichole  
O'Halloran, Niall  
Pedersen, Isabel  
Pitcher, Cathy  
Slane, Andrea  
Tufts, Emily

**Regrets:**

Barari, Ahmad  
Davidson, Catherine  
Habibi, Sarah  
Hogue, Jessica  
Jones, Ferdinand  
Khalid, Osama  
Lesage, Ann  
Liscano, Ramiro  
McCabe, Janet  
Mohany, Atef  
Murphy, Steven (Chair)  
Nugent, Kimberly  
Partosoedarso, Elita  
Sidhu, Tarlochan  
Taylor, Noreen

## 1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:33 p.m.

## 2. Agenda

*Upon a motion duly made by A. Mostaghim and seconded by H. Kishawy, the Agenda was approved as presented.*

## 3. Chair's Remarks

The President sent his regrets and L. Livingston chaired in his absence. The Chair thanked everyone who attended the vigils for the victims of Flight 752 and for the tremendous support being shown by the community. The effects of the tragedy will likely be felt for some time. The Provost encouraged people to continue to reach out to each other. The province announced the establishment of a scholarship fund in honour of the 57 Canadians who lost their lives on Flight 752. Ontario Tech has been advised that we will receive one of the scholarships in the amount of \$10,000. Additional details regarding the scholarship will follow.

The Chair congratulated those involved in the recent successful OPSEU negotiations. A collective agreement has been ratified and is the result of both sides working very hard. The reports are that the discussions were collegial and respectful. She thanked everyone involved in the negotiations.

The Chair discussed recent events held on campus, including the faculty and staff social night at the basketball games on January 8. She focused on the upcoming Bell Let's Talk Week and encouraged everyone to participate.

## 4. Minutes of the Meeting of November 26, 2019

P. Shon noted that he sent in questions regarding program closures in advance of the November meeting as he was unable to attend and that the questions were not reflected in the minutes. The Chair confirmed that he could ask his questions during "Business Arising from the Minutes".

*Upon a motion duly made by G. Crawford and seconded by B. Murphy, the Minutes were approved as presented.*

## 5. Business Arising from the Minutes

P. Shon shared his questions and comments regarding the program closures. He remarked that having additional information regarding why a program is closed would

be helpful to other Faculties in order to help them avoid similar issues. M. Bliemel shared that after 2008, the interest in MBA programs declined globally. Due to increasing competition among schools to attract students, FBIT was at a disadvantage as it did not have a budget for marketing. M. Bliemel shared that the program closure came down to bad timing and global economics and was not a reflection of the institution. L. Livingston confirmed that P. Shon's questions and comments were shared with her and L. Roy in advance of the November meeting and were taken into consideration. She invited P. Shon to further discuss his concerns with her offline.

A comment was made about having a procedure to read a member's comments or questions into the minutes when they are unable to attend a meeting. The suggestion will be forwarded to the Governance and Nominations Committee for discussion.

## **6. Inquiries and Communications**

### **(a) Board of Governors Update**

F. Jones delivered an update on the Board of Governors November meeting. He reported that there is only one new Board member this year – the student governor, Owen Davis. He was also pleased to report that the Board approved the following items that were recommended by Academic Council:

- Steering Committee Terms of Reference (formerly Curriculum & Program Review Committee) (came into effect on January 1); and
- Graduate Studies Committee Terms of Reference (to be implemented in September 2020).

Based on feedback given during the Board annual practices assessment last year, additional time at meetings is being allocated to strategic discussions. The Board had a very engaged strategic discussion focused on the region of Durham and the future of energy. The Board also reviewed the university's Second Quarter Financial Reports, as well as received a presentation on the budget (the same one given at the last Council meeting)

The university is currently installing a moving ground plane in ACE, which will continue to differentiate ACE as a one of a kind facility. At the November meeting, the Board approved an increase in the sum of the multiple moving ground plane integration contracts by \$575,000. The increased project costs were a result of inflation, tariffs, and obsolete controls on the moving ground plane.

The Board also approved the university's Accessibility and PCI Compliance Policies, which were presented to Council for consultation. F. Jones reminded Council members that community members are welcome to attend the public sessions of Board meetings and the agenda and material are available online several days in advance of a Board meeting.

## 7. Provost's Remarks

### (a) Senior Academic Administrator Search Updates

The Provost was pleased to advise that offers have been accepted for the new role of Director of EDI and the next Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences. Formal announcements will be made at the end of February. The Provost also advised that the Dean of Education profile has been posted and consultations for the role of Dean of FEAS are underway. A representative from the search firm was on campus a few weeks ago consulting with students regarding the Dean of FEAS position. It was clarified that the relevant survey was open to undergraduate and graduate students. The Provost reminded Council that Dean Sidhu's term ends on February 29, 2020 and there will be a gap between the end of Dean Sidhu's term and the start date of the next Dean of FEAS. The Provost advised that in the interim, H. Kishawy has agreed to be acting Dean of FEAS until the appointment of the next Dean.

### (b) Student Success

The Provost delivered a presentation providing an update on student success initiatives. She defined student success as supporting students in obtaining an academic credential. She discussed the challenges faced during the transition from high school to university. The Provost emphasized that everyone at the institution has a role to play in student success. She discussed the funding context of universities and the anticipated consequences of performance-based funding. All of us need to support the university's fiscal future by supporting our students.

The Provost reviewed the admission averages for each Faculty for 2014-2018, as well as each Faculty's retention rates for the same time period. She noted that the university's year 1-2 retention rates are much lower than the system average. After discussing the statistics, the Provost said the call to action is for the university to think about different ways of doing business. A lot of what we are doing is also being done at other institutions (e.g. transition programs from high school to university, advising in many forms, orientation week programming, and Faculty-based Academic Advisors).

The Provost advised Council that the Student Success Committee will be focusing on student success of first year students in 2020-2021. The initiatives will include:

- transition pedagogy: better curriculum delivered by good teachers to prevent early and disappointed departure (Kitt, 2014);
- orientation week programming: differentiated for extroverts and introverts, acknowledge cultural differences (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2019); and
- enhancing advisor skillsets: consider identifying dedicated academic advisors for first year students.

The Provost also explained the current GAS-S program for poor performing students after first year, which is held at Durham College (DC) during the spring/summer term.

The GAS-S program has a 50% success rate. She identified one of the issues with the program as being the removal of the student from the support of their classmates. Accordingly, the university will be developing the Ontario Tech Student Success Program, which will involve:

- students at the end of first year who are not in good academic standing;
- reduced course load plus one course on critical skill building (e.g., time management);
- weekly one-on-one discussions with a dedicated advisor (“appreciative advising”); and
- program evaluation (consider student performance pre-post involvement in program).

There was a discussion regarding the culture shift experienced by DC students after transferring to Ontario Tech through a bridging program. A suggestion was also made that it would be helpful to create a system for students to book empty classrooms to provide for more group study opportunities at the downtown campus. A member also commented that it is important to examine the social, cultural and economic factors in student success. The Provost confirmed that data is starting to be collected, which will be helpful. Further, the goal of “appreciative advising” is to provide opportunities for advisors to have those types of exploratory conversations with students to help determine why they are experiencing academic performance difficulties. A suggestion was made to increase TA contact hours with students from 130 to 170. The Provost confirmed that there are currently no students serving on the Student Success Committee and that they will be reaching out to students to add to the committee membership.

## 8. Integrated Academic Plan

L. Livingston provided an update on the status of the integrated academic plan. She commented that the integrated academic plan and research strategic plan are closely linked and it is difficult to separate the two. She reviewed the new approach to integrated planning and consultations that have been implemented this year. She reviewed the consultation pathway and thanked all those who have participated, particularly those who attended the town halls.

L. Jacobs then updated Council on the status of the strategic research plan. It is a 5-year plan and an outward-looking document. He thanked the Research Board for all of their work, as they have been integral to the development of the plan. He also discussed the consultations that have been undertaken. He advised that a faculty survey was distributed and 104 responses were received. L. Livingston advised that the goal is to present the Integrated Academic and Research Strategic Plans at the February Council meeting.

A member commented that it would have been helpful to have the presentation in advance of the meeting. L. Livingston responded that the teams have made a tremendous effort this year to conduct increased consultation and it has not always been possible to have presentations available in advance of a meeting. Further, the executive summaries are not publicly available because they are evolving documents. It is a new process that will evolve over time.

## **9. Tuition Framework 2020-2021**

B. Maclsaac provided an overview of the report provided in the meeting material. In response to a question about the ability of international students to get visas to complete graduate diplomas, he advised that students do not require a visa to enter Canada if they will be here less than 120 days. There was also a discussion about whether it is problematic to have a fee structure in place for programs with no enrolment (graduate diploma in engineering). L. Roy advised that the university is not planning to admit international students into the graduate diploma for engineering at this time. There was also a discussion regarding the effects of increasing graduate student tuition by 10%. B. Maclsaac advised that there is always a great deal of discussion regarding tuition increases and the potential consequences for students.

## **10. Policy Consultation:**

### **a. Review of Directives on the Use of Digital Learning Resources for Assessment Purposes**

B. Maclsaac provided an overview of the directives, which were approved by Council last year with a commitment to review the implementation of the directives during this academic year. He advised that in December, the Deans confirmed that there were no requests for an exception under the directives submitted since the directives were implemented. He reminded Council that there was a very robust discussion last year at the time the directives were presented and the key takeaway is that the introduction of the directives did not develop into the issue that Council was concerned about.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **11. Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC):**

- a. Program Review Final Assessment Report Executive Summaries:**
  - i. Bachelor of Science in Chemistry**
  - ii. Bachelor of Arts in Political Science**

There were no questions or comments.

*Upon a motion duly made by G. Crawford and seconded by H. Gaber, pursuant to the recommendation of USC, Academic Council unanimously approved the Final Assessment Report Executive Summaries for the Bachelor of Science in Chemistry and the Bachelor of Arts in Political Science Cyclical Program Reviews.*

## **b. Program Review 18-Month Follow-Up Final Assessment Report - Bachelor of Arts in Communication and Digital Media Studies**

There were no questions or comments.

*Upon a motion duly made by G. Crawford and seconded by R. Kay, pursuant to the recommendation of USC, Academic Council unanimously approved the 18-Month Final Assessment Report for the Bachelor of Arts in Communication and Digital Media Studies Cyclical Program Review.*

## **c. Minor Program Adjustments**

These items were included for information.

- i. Faculty of Business and Information Technology – Bachelor of Commerce**
- ii. Faculty of Business and Information Technology – Organizational Behaviour and Human Resources Management**
- iii. Faculty of Energy Systems and Nuclear Science – Health Physics and Radiation Science**
- iv. Faculty of Health Sciences – Medical Laboratory Science**

## **d. Admissions Policy and Procedures**

These items were included for information.

- i. Addition to Admissions Procedure - English Language Proficiency – Cambridge Assessment English**
- ii. English for Academic Purposes - Partnership with Language Studies International**

## **12. Graduate Studies Committee**

### **a. Master of Engineering Management and Graduate Diploma in Engineering Management Program Review Final Assessment Report**

There were no questions or comments.

*Upon a motion duly made by L. Roy and seconded by B. Murphy, pursuant to the recommendation of the Graduate Studies Committee, Academic Council unanimously approved the Final Assessment Report Executive Summary for the Master of Engineering Management and Graduate Diploma in Engineering Management Program Review, as presented.*

### **b. Master of Arts and Master of Education Minor Program Adjustment**

This item was included for information.

### **13. Research Board**

#### **a. Digital Life Institute (DLI)**

L. Jacobs provided an update from the Research Board. He introduced the proposal for the establishment of a DLI for Academic Council's consideration. He emphasized that it is an interdisciplinary proposal and that digital technology is a wide umbrella at the university.

(A. Mostaghim left at 3:54 p.m.)

There was a discussion regarding the consultations that took place in order to get other Faculties and faculty members involved. I. Pedersen advised that the plan is to hold meetings once the DLI is established to expand participation in the DLI. In response to a question about the reference to a Masters Degree in AI in the proposal, L. Roy confirmed that there is currently no such program and that it would be developed and approved through the normal curriculum process. It was agreed that the proposal would be reworded before being presented to the Board to make it clear that it is an envisioned program and not yet in place.

Council also discussed the proposed budget for the DLI. It was noted that the budget anticipates an operating deficit. A. Slane commented that in order to establish the DLI, there must be a critical mass of individuals interested ("if you build it, they will come"). She confirmed that even if no funding is obtained, the DLI would still operate but would not be as efficient. A. Slane used the Centre on Hate, Bias and Extremism as an example, as it didn't have funding initially either. P. Stoett added that they would be pursuing corporate funding for the DLI.

*Upon a motion duly made by L. Jacobs and seconded by P. Stoett, Academic Council unanimously recommended the establishment of the Digital Life Institute for approval by the Board of Governors, as presented.*

Council applauded. L. Jacobs expressed thanks to all those involved in the proposal.

### **14. Governance & Nominations Committee**

#### **a. GNC Terms of Reference Review**

H. Gaber provided an overview of the proposed amendments and reviewed the consultation pathway

*Upon a motion duly made by H. Scott and seconded by T. Wu, Academic Council approved adding "at least one of which should be from the downtown campus" to the last statement of section 4.*

There was also a discussion regarding the definition of Teaching Staff in section 3, which is defined in the university's legislation. Despite a broad definition, C. Foy



clarified that it would not be extended to students or staff in this context as they are already represented in the membership of the committee.

*Upon a motion duly made by H. Gaber and seconded by G. Crawford, pursuant to the recommendation of the Governance and Nominations Committee (GNC), Academic Council unanimously recommended the updated GNC Terms of Reference, as amended, to the Board of Governors for approval.*

#### **b. 2019-2020 Orientation Evaluation Results**

Included for information.

#### **c. 2020-2021 Academic Council Election Process**

Included for information.

### **15. Other Business**

A request was made to distribute the updated edition of the Democratic Rules of Order to all members of Council. C. Foy responded that it was not in the budget for this year but could request an increased budget for next year. Another suggestion was to put a copy of the updated version on reserve in the libraries.

There was also a brief discussion about the coronavirus. The university sector is developing a coordinated response. The biggest concern is about miscommunication at this point and to avoid racial prejudice. There is an abundance of information available on the public health website, as well as a link in the weekly report.

### **16. Termination**

*Upon a motion duly made by B. Murphy, the meeting terminated at 4:20 p.m.*

Becky Dinwoodie, Secretary