

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

MINUTES of MEETING of TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2020 VIDEOCONFERENCE, 2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Present:

Murphy, Steven (Chair)
Bliemel, Michael
Crawford, Greg
Davidson, Catherine
Desaulniers, Jean-Paul
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
Mohany, Atef
Mostaghim, Amir
Murphy, Bernadette
Murphy, Steven (Chair)
Naumkin, Fedor

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

Staff:

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

Regrets:

Barari, Ahmad
Davis, Owen
Khalid, Osama
McCabe, Janet
Taylor, Noreen

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

2. Agenda

The Chair noted that a blacklined agenda was circulated the previous day with proposed amendments to the agenda to make time for a pandemic planning discussion. He shared that the amended agenda focuses on obtaining approvals where necessary and advancing priority items. Non-urgent items would be deferred until a later date. It was clarified that the goal would be to bring the deferred items forward at the next meeting, but that would depend on the circumstances. C. Foy added that the Office of the University Secretary will track the deferred items and ensure they will be brought forward.

Upon a motion duly made by H. Kishawy and seconded by F. Jones, the Agenda was approved as amended.

3. Chair's Remarks

The Chair thanked everyone and expressed his appreciation for everyone taking the time during an exceptionally busy period to ensure governance of the university continues. He thanked everyone for their efforts during this unprecedented time – everyone is coming together as a community during a public crisis. The university is doing a great job of servicing our students and the community in a responsible way. The Chair noted that there have been some exceptional contributions that will be recognized when things calm down.

The Chair shared that the university is getting out ahead of other institutions in moving learning online. He remarked that it is nice to see faculty and students sharing tips and best practices for the transition. The university seems to have transitioned more smoothly and seamlessly than other institutions. He advised that he is receiving more compliments overall than complaints. The Chair thanked everyone for working very hard in all areas to accomplish this, particularly when juggling the demands of the pandemic. He also noted that the university is playing an active role in responding to the COVID-19 crisis (e.g. engineering working on 3D printing and other aspects to ensure government has necessary PPE equipment on hand). Members of the university community are stepping up and making a difference in people's lives.

The Chair also expressed his appreciation for members participating in the special information session the previous week. Council members' comments and questions were reflected in the decisions made and the communications sent out to the community. Academic Council will continue to be looked to to guide the university to help make the best decisions possible. The university is working to keep everyone safe and to comply with the government's requests to support the nation's and province's responses to the COVID-19 crisis. New issues continue to emerge and the university's senior administration is working 24/7 to ensure the university community is looked after. While Academic Council will continue to have an important role, it is recognized that everyone is dealing with added demands and responsibilities during this time. Changes have been made at the Board level to reduce the length of Board and Board committee meetings by

focusing on priority items. In order to make the most of Council members' time, we are proposing to reduce the length of Academic Council and committee meetings by focusing agendas on those items requiring approval and advancing priority business until the state of emergency has passed. The Steering Committee will identify priorities with input from Academic Council.

As the situation evolves, Academic Council should also be prepared in case there comes a time when reaching quorum becomes a challenge. The worst is likely still in front of us and we must be prepared in case members of our community fall ill. Contingency planning is taking place across the institution and Academic Council must do so, as well. Other institutions are preparing for this eventuality by temporarily delegating decision-making authority to a standing committee of their senates/councils. The current plan is to continue holding full Council meetings by video conference. The Chair asked whether Academic Council members had an appetite to bring a motion delegating authority to the Steering Committee, which would be accomplished through an amendment to the Steering Committee Terms of Reference. He invited comments and questions from Council.

Comments from members of Council included:

- the proposed delegation of authority would constitute a significant change to the responsibilities of the Steering Committee and might require further consideration;
- if and when this becomes necessary, an online vote on the delegation could be taken;
- there is an urgency to make this change, but it would be helpful to have documentation to review prior to making a decision; and
- support expressed for delegating authority to the Steering Committee as the COVID-19 situation can change quickly.

The Chair clarified that the change did not have to be made that day, but emphasized the need for Academic Council to be prepared. C. Foy confirmed that a resolution in writing could be used to obtain Council's approval, but would require unanimous approval. She added that a special meeting of Council might need to be called on short notice to consider other urgent matters and if Council was supportive of a special meeting on short notice, then the delegation of authority could be included as an agenda item. It was noted that considering the delegation of authority during a special meeting would also give the members absent from that meeting an opportunity to vote, as well. Council members expressed general support for convening a special meeting on short notice.

(a) 2020 Honorary Degree Recipients

The Chair was pleased to announce the 2020 Honorary Degree recipients and provided a brief overview of their backgrounds.

Andreas Apostolopoulos:

Andreas Apostolopoulos is a Greek-Canadian billionaire businessman, primarily concentrated on real estate investment and redevelopment. He is Founder and Chairman of Triple Group of Companies, based in Toronto. Mr. Apostolopoulos, along with his sons, have created one of the most successful privately held companies in Canada. The family is known for buying properties in run-down areas and breathing new life into them. The Apostolopoulos family has become strong supporters of Durham Region through their investment in Durham Live. This investment will help Durham Region continue its trajectory of growth and development.

The Right Honourable David Johnston and Sharon Johnston:

The Right Honourable David Johnston and his wife, Sharon Johnston, are being honoured for their commitment to public service, philanthropy and volunteerism. Mr. Johnston also has an exemplary history of commitment to education as a researcher and writer, publisher, and holding senior level leadership positions in post-secondary institutions. He was the 28th Governor General of Canada, from October 1, 2010, to October 2, 2017. During his time as Governor General, Johnston became known for his motto, CONTEMPLARE MELIORA, meaning “To envisage a better world,” refers to his belief in the abilities of all Canadians to imagine and create a smarter, more caring nation and contribute to a fairer, more just world.

Paul Ralph:

Paul Ralph is Oshawa’s new city manager. He has worked for the city since 1986 and began his career as a planner. Mr. Ralph is among those leading a partnership among Ontario Tech University, the City of Oshawa, Durham College, the University of Toronto and the Canadian Urban Institute to establish Oshawa as a centre for urban innovation. He goes out of his way to make a positive difference and lifelong impact in his community. He is an excellent role model for the current generation and proof positive that collaboration, hard work and a commitment to your community, and its people, is of the utmost importance.

Tanya Talaga:

As an award-winning journalist and author focused on Indigenous issues, Tanya Talaga strongly aligns with our support of Indigenous education and culture. Ms. Talaga is an Anishinaabe Canadian journalist and author who has made outstanding contributions to Indigenous Issues as a columnist, author and speaker. For more than twenty years she was a journalist at the Toronto Star, where her reporting focus was on investigations, Indigenous issues, for which she has won numerous awards. She is also the bestselling author of two books All Our Relations: Finding The Path Forward and Seven Fallen Feathers, which was the winner of the RBC Taylor Prize, among many others.

4. Minutes of the Meeting of February 25, 2020

The Chair shared a correction received in advance of the meeting – S. Heydari was in attendance. It was confirmed that the correction was made.

Upon a motion duly made by G. Crawford and seconded by H. Gaber, the Minutes were approved as amended.

5. Business Arising from the Minutes

As stated in the e-mail confirming the details of today's meeting, a link to the Democratic Rules of Order website is available on the Academic Council Resources webpage. The library has purchased access to the ebook for unlimited Ontario Tech users and the link will be posted on the Academic Council Resources page.

6. Inquiries and Communications

There was none.

7. Provost's Remarks

(a) Senior Academic Administrator Search Updates

The Provost expressed her excitement about the appointment of the new Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Dr. Carol Rodgers, joining us on July 1 from the University of Saskatchewan. She advised Council that the first meeting of the search committee for the next Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science would be taking place that week. The search for the Dean of the Faculty of Education will be kicking off the week of April 12.

Committee Reports

8. Research Board

L. Jacobs thanked everyone in the research community for adapting to the COVID-19 situation. The Office of Research has fully transitioned to online support services. He also advised Council that last week, the Research Ethics Board approved several COVID-19 related research projects.

(a) Strategic Research Plan

L. Jacobs provided an overview of the draft Strategic Research Plan (SRP). The SRP was six months in the making and driven by the Research Board. He also discussed the consultation process. He noted that the university is committed to research intensification. He also highlighted that the SRP sets out objectives and metrics. The SRP was also drafted to align with the EDI priorities of the Tri-Council. L. Jacobs invited Academic Council's feedback on the SRP. Comments from Council members included:

- feeling that Faculty of Science is underrepresented in the SRP;
- seems to be a disconnect between institutional priorities, research strengths and research body priorities;

- the SRP seems to emphasize traditionally male dominated fields, which is a disconnect with EDI priorities;
- SRP has come a long way since the initial draft;
- the SRP does not really read as a strategic research plan – it should provide a vision for priorities that the university should focus on;
- the human dimension is missing – there is a disproportionate workload on professors supervising multiple graduate students; and
- would be helpful to add grant writers to help faculty obtain funding - without funding, difficult to attract grad students.

L. Jacobs clarified that it is not the final SRP document and welcomed the comments. He responded that it is impossible for the SRP to capture every area of the university's expertise. Further, the SRP is not an inward looking document and is not intended to guide the university as to allocation of resources.

The Chair noted the time constraints of the meeting. He remarked that the SRP would benefit from additional consultation and would be brought back to another meeting of Academic Council for further discussion.

9. Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)

(a) MEng in Nuclear Engineering, GDip in Nuclear Design Engineering, and GDip in Nuclear Technology Program Review Final Assessment Report

L. Roy presented the report for approval.

Upon a motion duly made by L. Roy and seconded by G. Crawford, pursuant to the recommendation of GSC, Academic Council unanimously approved the Final Assessment Report for the Master of Engineering in Nuclear Engineering, Graduate Diploma in Nuclear Design Engineering, and Graduate Diploma in Nuclear Technology Program Review, as presented.

(b) Master of Arts, Master of Education, and Graduate Diploma in Digital Technologies Program Review 18-Month Follow-Up Final Assessment Report

L. Roy presented the report for approval. There was a discussion regarding the action item "A mechanism (e.g., course credit or course release) be created to recognize faculty supervising students in the graduate programs in order that the burden of supervision is equitably shared and students have greater selection."

Upon a motion duly made by L. Roy and seconded by A. Mostaghim, pursuant to the recommendation of GSC, Academic Council unanimously approved the 18-Month Final

Assessment Report for the Master of Arts, Master of Education, and Graduate Diploma in Digital Technologies Program Review, as presented.

10. Governance & Nominations Committee (GNC)

(a) 2020 Election Results - deferred

(b) Committee Nominations

Upon a motion duly made by L. Livingston and seconded by H. Kishawy, pursuant to the recommendation of the Governance and Nominations Committee, Academic Council unanimously approved the appointment of the following faculty member to the Graduate Studies for the term of March 24, 2020 until June 30, 2020:

- Min Dong, Faculty of Engineering & Applied Science

Upon a motion duly made by L. Livingston and seconded by H. Kishawy, pursuant to the recommendation of the Governance and Nominations Committee, Academic Council unanimously approved the appointment of the following faculty members to the Research Board for the term of March 24, 2020 until June 30, 2022:

- Shahryar Rahnamayan, Faculty of Engineering & Applied Science

S. Rahnamayan abstained.

(c) Comments Received in Advance of a Meeting - deferred

(d) Honorary Degrees Committee Terms of Reference Review - deferred

(e) Review of Academic Council Procedures for the Election Of Teaching, Non-Academic Staff and Student Representatives - deferred

11. Registrar's Report

(a) Posthumous Degree

J. Stokes presented the report for approval.

Upon a motion duly made by J. Stokes and seconded by A. Mostaghim, pursuant to the recommendation of the Registrar, Academic Council unanimously authorized the conferral of a posthumous degree to Fawwaz Khayyat.

(b) 2020-2021 Academic Calendar

There were discussions regarding changes to several of the key academic dates for 2020-2021. The recommendation will be for the start of the academic year to continue to be the Tuesday after Labour Day. Concern was expressed that conducting orientation on the long weekend might deter attendance. L. Livingston noted that students move into residence on the Saturday of the long weekend. Many students are from out of town and to engage in minimal programming for two days following their arrival is not how we want to welcome our students. The change in dates can be revisited if it is found not to be working. Another major change to the calendar will be the release of grades following the December break.

(c) Course Nomenclature Directives – Moribund Course

The Directives were included for information.

12. Pandemic Planning

L. Livingston recognized everyone's cooperation in not coming onto campus unless absolutely necessary. She also shared a letter from a parent who has two children in university, one of them at Ontario Tech. The parent commended the university on the way we have responded to the COVID-19 crisis. L. Livingston remarked that this is a true testament to all of the faculty, staff and students at the university. She gave a special thank you to the Faculty of Education and the Teaching and Learning Centre for their support in transitioning to online learning.

The pandemic planning has been in full tilt since March 12. L. Livingston reviewed the timeline of COVID-19 developments. Ontario Tech was among the first universities to make the decision to cancel in-person classes and transition to online learning. The university tried to signal to international students as soon as possible that they could travel home. As of midnight that night, access to facilities would be restricted to essential personnel in compliance with government orders.

L. Livingston acknowledged the work of the Deans in helping with the transition to an online format. The Deans continue to deal with issues on a daily basis. She also acknowledged IT Services, the Library, and Student Life. The Deans are meeting twice a week to discuss issues. The following matters are currently being discussed:

- exam schedule;
- options of moving to pass/fail, late withdrawal;
- adding a week to the term to allow for final grading and alternative assessment;
- student accessibility requirements & reliable online access;
- grade submission & release timelines;
- virtual open house; and
- Respondus Monitor.

The decision was made to move the convocation ceremonies to the fall. Further, the university's Spring/Summer courses will also be conducted online.

L. Livingston advised Council that they have until 11:59 p.m. that evening to retrieve their essential items from campus. She also reviewed the new sign-in process for when visiting campus.

There was a discussion regarding international students on campus. B. MacIsaac clarified that international students leaving by Sunday would be refunded and that residence and food services remain open. If international students have any questions, they should be advised to contact the international office.

All information regarding building closures is on the university's COVID-19 update webpage. Faculty were reminded not to direct students who do not live on campus to come to campus if they are having internet issues, as this would be contrary to government orders. Students, faculty and staff should e-mail the Covid19 e-mail address to inform the university of internet issues.

The restricted access to the university's buildings will be for an indefinite period of time, in accordance with the government's orders. The restricted access to buildings has been communicated through the campus wide messages and by directing people to the COVID-19 update webpage. Daily updates are being sent out as the situation continues to evolve.

There was a discussion about who would be considered an essential worker and when would it be communicated to the campus community. Faculty were advised to contact their Dean if they believe they should be included on the list of essential workers. There was also a discussion regarding the pandemic planning process and how essential/sensitive equipment are being identified for ongoing maintenance. Faculty were encouraged to contact their Dean to ensure equipment that requires maintenance is identified as part of the Faculty's pandemic plan. Further, the Health & Safety Committee and the Office of the VP Research have been involved in developing the list of labs that need to be maintained.

There was also a discussion regarding summer employment opportunities for students on campus. It was confirmed that those students in the current term continue to be paid and have been working from home. As we are expecting to be off campus into the spring, the number of employment opportunities will be reduced. However, the student research awards are expected to go forward.

The Chair shared that it has been very encouraging how our students, faculty and staff have come together to face the crisis. The university will continue to keep people informed.

13. Other Business

Q. Mahmoud followed up on a question he asked during a previous meeting regarding whether an instructor can require students to pass their final exam to pass a course or, alternatively, require them to complete all their course work in order to pass. J. Stokes advised that this question would be covered by the university's examination and grading policy, which is currently under review and will come to Council for discussion.

14. Termination

Upon a motion duly made by A. Mostaghim, the meeting terminated at 4:44 p.m.

Becky Dinwoodie, Secretary