



**BOARD OF GOVERNORS**  
**Strategy & Planning Committee (S&P)**

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**Minutes of the Public Session of the Meeting of Thursday, January 13, 2022**  
**2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., Videoconference Only**

**Attendees:** Lynne Zucker (Chair), Eric Agius, Ahmad Barari, Carla Carmichael, Kevin Chan, Christopher Collins, Mitch Frazer, Matthew Mackenzie, Steven Murphy, Dietmar Reiner, Joshua Sankarlal, Jim Wilson

**Staff:** Jamie Bruno, Sarah Cantrell, Becky Dinwoodie, Krista Hester, Les Jacobs, Lori Livingston, Brad MacIsaac, Sue McGovern

**Guests:** Mike Eklund (FA), Christine McLaughlin

**1. Call to Order**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

**2. Agenda**

*Upon a motion duly made by M. Mackenzie and seconded by D. Reiner, the Agenda was approved as presented.*

**3. Conflict of Interest Declaration**

There was none.

**4. Minutes of Public Session of Meeting of October 7, 2021**

*Upon a motion duly made by D. Reiner and seconded by M. Mackenzie, the Minutes were approved as presented.*

**5. Chair's Remarks**

The Chair wished the committee a Happy New Year. She hopes everyone had a restful holiday break. The Chair began by congratulating the President on his reappointment for a second term. She noted she had the privilege of serving on the Presidential Renewal Advisory Committee (PRAC) and appreciated all of the feedback she heard during the consultation process. She congratulated D. Reiner and the other members of the PRAC on completing this important process. They are very excited for what lies ahead.

The Chair noted shared that the start to 2022 is not what we had anticipated, but thanked the senior leadership team for their continued efforts to keep the university community safe.

## **6. President's Remarks**

The President thanked the Chair for her comments and also thanked D. Reiner for all of his work throughout the renewal process. The President discussed the university's approach to the most recent COVID wave, which included extending the holiday break until January 10 and starting classes on January 17. The discussions are continuing regarding a safe return to campus. As we look to return, there will be a gradual, stepped approach focusing on student need.

The President discussed the Brilliant Energy Institute and a pan university initiative focused on health care. He acknowledged the great work of the university's CRC Chairs. He emphasized that there are so many things to be excited about as we look to the future. He responded to questions from the committee. D. Reiner commented that it is timely to focus on hospitals and healthcare, as the pandemic has exposed the vulnerabilities of our health and long-term care systems.

## **7. Strategy**

### **7.1. Strategic Discussion: Blended Learning – Where do we go from here?**

L. Livingston discussed the use of technology to support remote learning and the core operations of our programs. Education futurists have long predicted that higher education would be operating in a technologically supported learning environment. While the shift has created challenges for faculty, staff and students, it has also presented opportunities. The key question is: How do we continue to enhance and evolve our efforts in this domain? L. Livingston advised that they are looking for the committee's feedback as employers, parents, and supporters of our students and learners. She asked the committee members to bring their external world perspectives to the discussion. The President added that the key to coming back will be how nimble universities can be and how different modalities can be presented as best we can so that we reinforce each piece. What should be top of mind as we put the model together?

The committee's comments included:

- C. Carmichael shared that her daughter is finishing her law degree at Queen's and participated in an exchange program during the pandemic in Amsterdam. Upon her return, there was some uncertainty about whether students would be returning to campus. This uncertainty can cause financial hardships as it is difficult for students to plan for only a 6 week return to campus. She emphasized the

importance of providing flexibility to students as each student has different needs based on their preferences and how they best learn.

- D. Reiner commented that COVID has forced us into a certain world but it is important to keep the vision alive on the university penetrating the student community more broadly. Students have expectations for accommodations and certain learning environments. This applies to students and faculty. He suggested staying the course on the bigger vision of blended learning, which was developed even before COVID. He asked to what degree are fiscal constraints hindering the vision of blended learning?
  - L. Livingston advised that fiscal constraints are on the radar and are being monitored. The reality is we have the technology now to support online learning, which is on par with other education institutes. The cost is not of concern right at this moment. The cost is more of human creativity right now and faculty resources in trying to formulate creative environments. We are in a period of experimentation right now and the intellectual challenge is a bigger obstacle right now.
- E. Agius commented on the context of work. His organization is hearing from employees that they do not want to stay in this environment, but do not want to return to the old normal. It is important to think about the complete employment experience – it is more than just doing a job. We must look at how to keep people connected and the social aspects of being an organization. How do they curate in-person activities and make them purposeful, meaningful, and fun? How do we make people feel part of something larger? Is the university taking a broad approach and thinking about the entire experience?
  - L. Livingston advised that as we started to transition back to campus, she routinely walked around campus and it was clear that students were happy to be back and were engaged. It is also an important element for staff and faculty. She confirmed that they are thinking about it for the entire community.
- J. Sankarlal shared that it is difficult to gauge where students are at. Some students thrive in an online learning environment and others do not. Moving forward, we should be thinking about what the entire package looks like and engagement with the student community will be important, as it seems to be a polarizing topic. He suggested that continuing to consult the student community on the future of education would be useful.
  - S. Murphy noted that many people are looking at the future through the lens of the suboptimal experience throughout the pandemic. It presents a communication challenge that is entirely new and could be exciting for everyone.

- K. Chan shared that he feels that the university is moving in the right direction as other institutions are beginning to shift. He anticipates that the direction will be focused on increasingly immersive experiences. He referenced universities in South Korea that are run in an entirely virtual immersive environment.
- A. Barari commented that faculty have been using a hybrid of tools for a long time and it is important to use the tools to improve the quality of education. Technology is not good enough to be considered a substitute for some of the in-person elements. He expressed concern about the need for support for faculty as often developing an online course is more time consuming than in person teaching.
  - The Chair added that as things require more effort, it will be important to find a balance. It will be helpful to have more empirical data on the efforts required to develop and deliver online learning.
- J. Wilson discussed the experience of his children who are university students. His son is a student in the Ontario Tech Faculty of Education and his experience has been very positive. Technology can be used to enhance education (e.g. flipped classroom, international classroom). We should also keep in mind the other strategic priorities and how this fits. It will be important to ensure we have a robust platform and use it to provide an excellent experience.

L. Livingston commented that the discussion has been very helpful. The best thing they can do is to continue to challenge SLT as they move forward. Technology is not where we need it to be today. As it evolves and becomes more user friendly and adaptive, there will be continuing opportunities. We must challenge ourselves to be imaginative and creative. The President commented that the approach is student-centric. The importance of face-to-face learning will remain and we must think about how we enhance it. There will be student expectations that we will have to manage when we return (e.g. lectures recorded and available online). The President emphasized that we must not be afraid to fail.

## **7.2. Student Recruitment**

L. Livingston discussed the increasing challenges of recruiting students. There were few discretionary dollars last year to invest in student recruitment initiatives. Money was invested into international initiatives. L. Livingston highlighted the domestic recruitment efforts over the past few months. She congratulated J. Stokes and the Office of the Registrar Team for their efforts and engagement with potential students and applicants.

Questions and comments from the committee included:

- Any indication as to how the efforts are working?
  - L. Livingston advised that midnight is the deadline for applications and the university will be receiving reports on that next week.

- Microcredentials and shorter terms might also serve as a good recruitment tool, as it provides flexibility and lower cost. These would also assist employers in providing financial support for employees upskilling.
  - L. Livingston advised that discussions have started about how to integrate microcredentials into our programs. She explained that there are two categories of domestic applicants: 101 = right out of high school, and 105 = not coming out of high school. It will be interesting to see how 105 students respond to microcredentials. Further, the availability of OSAP for microcredentials will also be helpful.
- Timing of success of international recruitment efforts?
  - L. Livingston confirmed that the timing is the same as for domestic recruitment.
- Is there a reason why Europe is not included on the international recruitment list?
  - L. Livingston will have to discuss with the Registrar as to why it is not a priority area.
  - Key piece for international markets is diversification.
- Cost for international recruitment agencies?
  - L. Livingston advised that in some cases, the university has partnered with other universities for a recruitment office and the fees are shared with the other institutions. Further, we ensure we are working with reputable recruitment leads in other countries.

## 8. Planning

### 8.1. Student Success

L. Livingston noted that this topic aligns well with the topic of recruitment. It is just as important to work at retaining our students in addition to recruiting them. It is also an ethical component. She referred to the accompanying Board report, which provides an outline of the four broad areas of focus:

- Programming For at Risk Students
- Student-Centric Academic Advising Activities
- Student Success and Strategic Enrolment Management Committees
- Leveraging Data

L. Livingston emphasized the importance of evaluating our efforts in this area. It has been less than a year with the newly restructured advising model. Initial reports are that Deans are happy with the restructured advising program. She advised the committee that they will continue to collect and leverage data to better understand and support student success.

Questions from the committee included:

- With high school students joining after two years of high school in a less than optimal learning environment, are there any indicators about the effects on those students?
  - COVID has created “dirty data” (inflated grades coming out of high school) – incoming GPAs are higher.
  - Grades were just released a couple of days ago and standing is being calculated right now – asked S. Cantrell about possible timeline? S. Cantrell believes she will have more information at the end of the week
- For the 19% of those who did not return to programs after LEAP, any insight?
  - Majority of students who do not succeed in LEAP do not meet the requirements of attending classes, completing assignments, meeting with coaches, etc.
- Comment that PASS and support initiatives not available to smaller programs – can it be rolled out to all students?
  - L. Livingston noted that the initiatives often target first year students and not upper year students; she is encouraging the team to expand their reach to upper year students.

## **8.2. Board Retreat Planning**

S. Murphy confirmed that the retreat is planned for the morning of May 12 and the S&P meeting will follow in the afternoon. The focus of the retreat will be on a review and refresh of the strategic plan. He discussed the rolling plan model that has been implemented. The rolling plan model has been beneficial over the past few years. It is important to reassess and refocus as we emerge from the pandemic. A good look and examination of the refreshed strategic plan will be helpful. Aspects of the SMA that relate to where we want to go may be incorporated, as well. The timing is ideal to look at how to refresh the strategic plan.

Comments from the committee:

- D. Reiner expressed support for the approach and agrees the timing is appropriate.
- M. Mackenzie asked whether external speakers are ever brought in. He suggested it might be helpful to invite someone external to provide a different perspective.
  - S. Murphy confirmed that in the past, we have brought in futurists and other individuals in the sector (e.g. CIO of Australian University); he invited suggestions from the committee if they come across someone they feel would be a good speaker while being cautious to avoid someone who will bring a sales pitch to the Board.
- The Chair commented that when the Australian CIO was invited to speak, he presented the night before the retreat and it was an effective approach.

- Inviting a speaker is a great idea; suggestion was made to invite an employer in to discuss what they see, which would be an opportunity for the Board to see the link to what employers are looking for from graduates.

## **9. Significant Project & Contract Oversight**

### **9.1. ACE enhancement**

B. MacIsaac advised that the next key deliverable is the ACE shut down between January and February. He confirmed that March would be the unofficial launch. Everything is looking to come in on budget as to what the Board has approved.

### **9.2. AVIN**

L. Jacobs provided an update. The main focus has been transitioning everything built through AVIN into other initiatives:

- (a) OVIN – coming into effect in the next couple of months; shifting focus from autonomous vehicles to electric vehicles.
- (b) Project Arrow – has significant funding in place from Fed Dev and matching funding from Ontario government.

L. Jacobs clarified that Project Arrow is a separate project from OVIN - OVIN is broader and focused on building capacity for electric vehicles in Ontario.

## **10. Other Business**

None.

## **11. Adjournment**

*Upon a motion duly made by M. Mackenzie, the public session adjourned at 3:21 p.m.*

Becky Dinwoodie, Secretary