



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

Minutes of the Public Session of the Meeting of Thursday, October 7, 2021
2:00 p.m. to 3:45 p.m., Videoconference Only

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

Regrets: Ahmad Barari

Staff: Sarah Cantrell, Becky Dinwoodie, Cheryl Foy, Barb Hamilton, Krista Hester, Les Jacobs, Lori Livingston, Brad Maclsaac, Sue McGovern

Guests: Mike Eklund, Faculty Association

1. Call to Order

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

2. Agenda

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

3. Conflict of Interest Declaration

There was none.

4. Minutes of Public Session of Meeting of May 13, 2021

Upon a motion duly made by J. Wilson and seconded by D. Reiner, the Minutes were approved as presented.

5. Chair's Remarks

The Chair welcomed the members to the first committee meeting of the Board year. She welcomed the newest committee members and invited them to introduce themselves. The Chair commented that the university is on a new strategic path and that the name change symbolized an organization committed to transformation and COVID has required even greater transformation. The Chair reflected that this is a critical committee composed of

great members. She noted that members should support the senior leadership team and the Board in critical decisions that will need to be made. She encouraged all members to share their views and actively engage by asking questions.

6. President's Remarks

The President thanked the Chair for her kind words. He added that you cannot transform an organization without an excellent senior leadership team. He echoed the Chair's comments about the committee being composed of great people.

The President provided an update on the start of the school year. It has gone smoothly, so far. While there are fewer people on campus, there is activity on campus, which is great to see. He shared that he has observed students complying with the masking and distancing requirements. He commended the Provost for building on what we have learned about online learning over the past 18 months. There was a deliberate decision made in the spring that a gradual return would be the best way to return to campus. Many institutions gambled on the idea that the Delta variant would be under control by September. Other leaders did not acknowledge the mental health aspects of returning to campus and the anxiety people would experience in the face of returning. Instead, the university's focus has been on a gradual return to normalcy over this year and to be ready for a full return in September 2022. The university will continue to build on what a hybrid model will look like. Students have made it clear that they want flexibility in their education. On campus experiential learning is important and it is also important to make it student-centric. The President noted that many faculty are already delivering this type of education.

The President emphasized the importance of showing leadership during this time, particularly with respect to the mandatory vaccination policy. The feedback from the community has been positive and people have shared that they feel safe when on campus. The President stressed the importance of learning from what we are going through. There is no expectation to be perfect by next September. The goal is to be a learning organization and to continue getting better every semester by putting students first. It is also important to work to avoid the human tendency to want to return to the comfortable state of normal. He shared his excitement for the future and about working with the committee.

The President responded to comments and questions from the committee, which included:

- Great job on getting the campus opened safely;
- Support the approach of prioritizing the health and safety of the campus community;

- Does the President have a sense of what things are like off-campus? Are students using the same level of caution?
 - In general, we are seeing a lot more responsibility off-campus compared to other institutions. It is likely because the signal is coming from on campus that it is being taken very seriously. The President noted that there is a good group in shared services that are promoting COVID precautions. Further, we are not seeing the level of partying being experienced at other institutions. The tone set at the university has led to a more serious move-in. They have the sense that students are acting appropriately.
- Is the behaviour being observed at other institutions normal or is it indicative of students being away from campus for a year and a half?
 - The student culture at each university is different. There have always been people who have looked out for the well-being of students. Activism is being seen at institutions that have a history of issues. The President confirmed that he has regular meetings with J. Sankarlal, the President of the Student Union.
- The pandemic has forced us to change a lot of things – there is a best of both worlds opportunity going forward. Has thought been given to how this impacts strategy and executing the strategy?
 - The President discussed the university’s success in the eCampusOntario grant competition – highest number of faculty members receiving grants in the province (\$2.5m). The strategy of getting people to see the advantages of incorporating technology is working and faculty are being given the power and agility to make the changes rather than being told to do so by the President.
 - Students are also demanding this flexibility and type of teaching, which helps change the culture.

7. S&P Terms of Reference Review

B. Dinwoodie provided a high-level overview of the committee’s Terms of Reference and highlighted the recent changes to the committee’s responsibilities.

8. Strategy

8.1 Strategic Discussion: Strategic Priorities for 2021-2022

The President reviewed the university’s four key strategic priorities: tech with a conscience, learning re-imagined, partnerships, and sticky campus. He discussed the key priorities for the upcoming year, as outlined in the report included in the meeting material:

- (a) Sticky Campus: Commitment to Mental Health and Equity, Inclusion and Diversity
- (b) Sticky Campus/Learning Re-imagined: Student-centric university: Strategic Enrolment Management Framework
- (c) Learning Re-imagined/Tech with a Conscience: Innovative programming
- (d) Learning Re-imagined/Tech with a Conscience: Differentiated Technology and Physical Space
- (e) Learning Re-imagined/Partnerships: Incentivize Scholarship of Teaching and Enhancing Teaching Practices

The Provost discussed the university's EDI work plan, which was developed by the EDI Director. Work has begun on training on unconscious bias and EDI for all hiring committees. The Provost advised that there will be a strategic enrolment management retreat with all of the Deans in early November. The university is becoming heavily invested in better understanding our data, an area where S. Cantrell will be particularly helpful.

The Provost emphasized that good pedagogy transcends the medium and the platform. Someone that is good at their pedagogy will excel in every situation. It is important to incentivize good teaching. The Provost discussed the Teacher in Residence program, which started this year. Both teaching and research can be valued.

The committee had a robust discussion of the key strategic priorities for the year. The committee's comments and questions included:

- What was left on the cutting room floor?
 - The Provost responded that if all five of these priorities do not get done this year, then the senior leadership team is not doing their jobs effectively. These items are more important than the other items in the integrated plan. She noted that there is still much in the plan that is relevant and as the university matures, other items will come to the forefront.
- Good to see mental health as a priority.
 - The Provost commented that the university is always striving to improve these services. The university is 4th out of 19 primarily undergraduate universities in Canada when it comes to the provision of mental health services to our students according to Maclean's rankings.
- The key priorities identified fit well with the university's overall strategic priorities and supports the student-centric approach.
- The committee discussed developing appropriate metrics to track progress against these priorities.
- Do these priorities help advance the 2023 goals and are there any risks associated with them?

- The President stated that this is the beginning of a journey and that these priorities do help advance the university's goals and they help build the foundation for advancing the strategic priorities. The biggest risk is the human desire to slide back to the comfortable state.

The Chair suggested coordinating a virtual tour of Shawenjigewining Hall at the December Board meeting.

9. Planning

9.1 Strategic Plan Oversight

The Provost introduced S. Cantrell, the new Associate Vice-President, Planning and Strategic Analysis, to the committee. The Provost and S. Cantrell delivered a presentation on the strategic planning process, which was also included in the meeting material. They responded to questions and comments from the committee members:

- Rolling enrolment average – What is the risk level when we reach the end of the SMA and the government examines the rolling enrolment average over the duration of the SMA?
 - S. Cantrell advised that we do want to bend the blue line up (slide 8) and that we need to be at least at the midpoint or above.
- In the planning methodology, is there any point where gaps are explored that might be required to help achieve goals?
 - The Provost advised that we must be realistic about the goals and priorities being set. A gap identified was that our technological assets need to be improved and investments in technology have been made to address that gap.
 - Every unit is asked to review their priorities annually and identify resources needed to achieve those priorities.
 - C. Foy added that the university has a strategic risk register and the risk management team will be coordinating with the planning team to help identify gaps.
- With respect to enrolments, looks like we are back in a good place – what is driving our projections down?
 - Enrolment corridor graph only includes eligible students – what is driving the downward piece is that there were a number of incoming years where the enrolment target was missed and if we don't course correct, we will have a bit of a U curve to deal with; changing course on the enrolment trajectory for the entire institution is challenging – we need to continue to look at student retention and student support. These strategies can help flatten that curve.

9.2 Integrated Plan: Process & Enrolment Update

Discussed in item 9.1.

9.3 Board Retreat Planning

S. Murphy proposed continuing to hold the Board Retreat in May, which follows the timing of the past few years. He suggested holding the retreat on the morning of May 12, before the S&P meeting in the afternoon. S. Murphy invited the committee's feedback on focusing the retreat on a review and refresh of the university's strategic plan, which would be timely in light of the following:

- we will have recently completed community consultations on the strategic focus of the university and the challenges/opportunities facing the university over the next 3-5 years as part of the Presidential renewal process;
- work being done by the Provost's Office on developing appropriate metrics for the strategic plan; and
- importance of reassessing where we are and where we are going in the context of emerging from the pandemic.

S. Murphy noted that it is important to continue the discussion of how we differentiate ourselves from other institutions and how we communicate that to our stakeholders. Further, it will be helpful to assess how we come through this year and start to set the direction as we emerge from COVID. C. Foy added that it will also be a good time to pause and look at where we are strategically with pillars and metrics. This can evolve throughout the year, but with everything going on, seems that this would be helpful to the Board and the university.

The committee expressed support for the timing of the retreat and the proposed topic.

10. Significant Project & Contract Oversight

10.1 New building

B. Maclsaac noted that the project is ending on time and on budget. The original plan was to have occupancy three weeks before the term started but it was open three days before the term. This was a good outcome given the delays at the start of the project. B. Maclsaac noted there are a number of deficiencies outstanding and confirmed there is sufficient contingency to cover it. D. Reiner congratulated the team on this outcome. B. Maclsaac advised that the remaining deficiencies are minor. B. Maclsaac discussed the uses of the new building:

- Focus on creating engaging spaces to support a “sticky campus” - spaces for student clubs/societies;
- Main floor – “living room” feel with a Tim Horton’s and can spend time in a “collision space”;
- Student Life;
- Smaller engagement classroom spaces – movable tables & chairs, no podiums;
- 4th floor – Faculty of Health Sciences; and
- 5th floor shelled for future use by Faculty of Health Sciences.

10.2 ACE Enhancement

B. Maclsaac reported on the ACE Enhancement Project. He provided an overview of the stops and starts of the project. While the hope was for the project to be complete by September, over the summer, there was a major fan breakdown and it had to be repaired in the United States. They are now looking at completion in January. B. Maclsaac advised that they do not anticipate the delay will require any additional budget than what was approved by the Board.

The Chair stressed the importance of reviewing the meeting material in advance of every meeting.

Questions from the committee included:

- What is the longevity of the project? How long will we be able to use the equipment?
 - B. Maclsaac advised that the equipment was already aged when it was acquired – with the technical work that has been done, it is running in an almost brand new state. We will be able to conduct this type of repair every 5-years to keep the equipment running well.
 - Further, with the uniqueness of the moving ground plane and combining it with the climatic wind tunnel, this will be a relevant facility for a significant period of time as no other facility has this in their plans in the near future.
- Any concerns about partners who have contributed to the ACE project being concerned about the delayed timeline?
 - B. Maclsaac advised there are no concerns at all.

10.3 AVIN (Autonomous Vehicle Innovation Network)

L. Jacobs provided an overview of the project. He noted it is a five year commitment and they are in the fourth year. The project is on budget and the funding has been robust. He advised that in the last budget, the province committed to extending the funding for the

project and it will be renamed OVIN (shift from autonomous vehicles to electrification of vehicles). L. Jacobs highlighted the importance of our role in the project. He reminded the committee that in the Strategic Research Plan, the key idea is research intensity and the need for a series of anchor research initiatives (initiatives that generate secondary research initiatives). He noted that that AVIN has been an excellent anchor initiative.

11. Other Business

12. Adjournment

Upon a motion duly made by J. Wilson, the public session adjourned at 4:02 p.m.

Becky Dinwoodie, Secretary