



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

Minutes of the Public Session of the Meeting of Thursday, January 14, 2021
2:00 p.m. to 3:25 p.m., Videoconference Only

Attendees: Thorsten Koseck (Chair), Azzam Abu-Rayash, Liqun Cao, Kevin Chan, Mitch Frazer, Steven Murphy, Dietmar Reiner, Jim Wilson, Lynne Zucker

Staff: Jamie Bruno, Becky Dinwoodie, Cheryl Foy, Les Jacobs, Lori Livingston, Brad MacIsaac, Sue McGovern

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

2. Agenda

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

3. Conflict of Interest Declaration

There was none.

4. Minutes of Public Session of Meeting of October 8, 2020

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

5. Chair's Remarks

The Chair started the meeting with a safety message. He shared the story of using a log splitter without following all of the safety precautions. He emphasized the importance of reviewing safety processes and continuing to improve upon them.

The Chair wished everyone a Happy New Year and that he hopes 2021 is a better year. He thanked everyone for participating in the meeting. He also thanked the Senior Leadership Team for all of their work in keeping the operations of the university going in the context of changing provincial restrictions. The Chair referenced the recent imposition of Stay at Home orders and encouraged people to follow the guidelines.

6. President's Remarks

The President welcomed everyone back and also wished everyone a Happy New Year. He hopes everyone had an opportunity to rest and relax over the holidays. He noted that the first week of classes was about to end and observed that things seem to be going well. The university continues to closely monitor the COVID numbers in the community.

The President reported that they continue to focus on the post-COVID world and how the university can differentiate itself in that world. He reviewed some of the COVID initiatives the university has been involved in, including: graduating nursing students early, ventilator design, wastewater analysis, and use of light to eliminate COVID in high traffic areas.

The university is looking at how we can reinvent education and incorporate the lessons learned over the past year. The university transitioned online the quickest in the province. We are seeing more and more innovation in each of our Faculties, which will help us become a better institution. Every university is trying to employ more technology and we are thinking about how we can truly be differentiated from the pack.

6.1. Strategic initiatives

The President advised that they are scanning websites around the globe to find out what other institutions are doing. There are many institutions claiming to offer hybrid learning. Focus groups are being held with students to find out what they want to see in a post-COVID environment. The President shared that he is hearing from students that it is useful to have lectures available online to review on demand. This allows students the opportunity to view them several times, study the lessons, and retain the information. We must explore how we can create an online model in addition to an in-person model. Learning online will also accommodate students who might have only one or two courses left to complete their degree, as well as those students who might not be geographically close. This would be a real differentiator for the university.

The ability to work from home would also present a huge opportunity in the labour market. J. Bruno will be leading those efforts. Students will need online and face-to-face services. The university will engage with unions to figure out how to provide staff with the choice of working from home. This also demonstrates to staff that they work somewhere that cares about them. This would open up the labour field to employ the very best as geography will be less of a determinant. There are strategic initiatives on both academic and administrative side.

7. Strategy

7.1. Strategic Discussion: Student Success Initiatives

L. Livingston delivered a presentation on student success initiatives. She responded to questions and comments from the committee, which included:

- Is it too early to determine the effect of the LEAP program on student retention?
- Is student retention one of the SMA metrics?
 - L. Livingston confirmed that graduation rates are factored into the SMA metrics.
 - L. Livingston confirmed that the LEAP program coaches were staff and graduate students (one staff member and two graduate students); going forward the role of coach will be expanded to individuals who have held leadership roles with students (e.g. graduate students, student government, or university athletics).
- Will additional resources be required to scale up the LEAP program?
- How does the university's retention rate compare to that of other institutions?
 - L. Livingston advised that the university is in the bottom quarter in the province (80.6% compared to 82.3%).
 - The university's student cohort is considerably different from other institutions (generally lower averages upon entrance).
- We need to challenge ourselves to support student success once students are admitted.
- What is the program/Faculty break down of retention?
 - L. Livingston advised that the Faculty of Engineering and Faculty of Health Sciences have the highest retention rates for year 1-2 students; because of the pass/withdraw option in the Winter 2020 term, the retention rates are somewhat inflated.
- A member expressed support for the focus and spirit of the direction of supporting student success upon admission.
- How is the university doing with domestic and international applications this year?
 - L. Livingston advised that they are in the process of analyzing the data, as the deadline for high school applications was January 15.

7.2. Review of University's Mission, Vision & Values (VMV)

L. Livingston thanked the committee for participating in the targeted consultation session in December. The governors' feedback was appreciated. She noted that the Board members' key comments were included in the accompanying report, together with the

revised VMV document. It became clear from the governors' comments that we must differentiate ourselves in our mission and vision. She noted that "tech with a conscience" resonates with people and was reiterated several times during the consultation session. A suggestion was made to add language to the partnerships reference to clarify the purpose. L. Livingston clarified that based on the motion language, the VMV document can be tweaked. The Chair thanked L. Livingston for her work on the VMV. L. Livingston noted it was a team effort from day 1 and acknowledged the work of the teams of B. Maclsaac and S. McGovern.

Upon a motion duly made by A. Abu-Rayash and seconded by K. Chan, subject to minor amendments, the Strategy and Planning Committee unanimously recommended the updated Vision, Mission, and Values for approval by the Board of Governors.

8. Planning

8.1. Board Retreat Planning

S. Murphy noted the retreat will be a virtual one. It would be helpful to the senior leadership team for the Board to explore what the "new normal" will look like post-COVID. It will help to know what level of technology would be a differentiator for the university. Another question to be considered is how can we think about servicing our students more holistically? S. Murphy referenced the Ontario Tech app that was developed by the university and the features it offers. It will also be important to consider how we can put students' education in their hands. The retreat could include an overview of how our competitors are transitioning to online learning (as background material) and how our competitors are using microcredentials. Many universities are offering microcredentials in the place of graduate diplomas. The university has a different view of microcredentials, which involves working hand in glove with industry (example of Ontario Tech Talent). It might be helpful to the Board to include a student panel to share their perspectives on expectations post-COVID, including what they would like to see when back in a face-to-face-environment and how technology could make their lives easier. There are many students juggling multiple jobs and providing them with flexibility would be helpful. Depending on timing, the retreat could also include a panel of faculty members. The committee felt that it might be better to bring back a panel of faculty at another time in order to allow more time for discussion during the retreat. The committee had a discussion of the purpose of microcredentials.

A committee member commented that they like the proposed format of the retreat and asked the senior leadership team to think about how this makes its way into the broader strategic plan of the university. The member suggested looking at what will be the essential pillars and how progress will be reported back to the Board in the context of the new normal. It is important to bring it down to a tangible number of items that can be tracked over time and maintain a laser focus on those items.

9. Other Business

The Chair extended an invitation to the committee to attend a tour of the PPE manufacturing facility at GM.

10. Adjournment

Upon a motion duly made by K. Chan, the public session adjourned at 3:17 p.m.

Becky Dinwoodie, Secretary