



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

January 13, 2022
2:00 p.m. to 4:25 p.m.
Videoconference
+1 705-417-8489 PIN: 671791721

Members: 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: Sarah Cantrell, Becky Dinwoodie, Les Jacobs, Lori Livingston, Brad Maclsaac, Sue McGovern

AGENDA

No.	Topic	Lead	Allocated Time	Suggested Start Time
	PUBLIC SESSION			
1	Call to Order	Chair		
2	Agenda (M)	Chair		
3	Conflict of Interest Declaration	Chair		
4	Minutes of Public Session of Meeting of October 7, 2021 (M)	Chair		
5	Chair's Remarks	Chair		2:05 p.m.
6	President's Remarks	Steven Murphy	5	2:10 p.m.
7	Strategy			
7.1	Strategic Discussion: Blended Learning – Where do we go from here? (D)	Steven Murphy & Lori Livingston	25	2:15 p.m.
7.2	Student Recruitment* (D)	Lori Livingston	15	2:40 p.m.
8	Planning			
8.1	Student Success* (D)	Lori Livingston	10	2:55 p.m.
8.2	Board Retreat Planning (D)	Steven Murphy	10	3:05 p.m.

D – Discussion

M – Motion

P – Presentation

U – Update

* Documents attached

9	Significant Project & Contract Oversight		10	3:15 p.m.
9.1	ACE enhancement* (U)	Brad Maclsaac		
9.2	AVIN* (U)	Les Jacobs		
10	Other Business	Chair		3:25 p.m.
11	Adjournment (M)	Chair		3:30 p.m.
	BREAK		10	
	NON-PUBLIC SESSION (material not publicly available)			3:40 p.m.
12	Call to Order	Chair		
13	Conflict of Interest Declaration	Chair		
14	Minutes of Non-Public Session of Meeting of October 7, 2021* (M)	Chair		
15	President's Remarks	Steven Murphy	5	3:40 p.m.
16	Advancement	Sue McGovern	10	3:45 p.m.
16.1	Advancement Update* (U)(P)			
17	Strategic Space Planning: Property Acquisition* (M)	Brad Maclsaac	20	3:55 p.m.
18	Other Business	Chair		
19	<i>In Camera</i> Session	Chair	10	4:15 p.m.
20	Termination (M)	Chair		4:25 p.m.

Becky Dinwoodie, Secretary



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

DRAFT

COMMITTEE REPORT

SESSION:

Public
Non-Public

ACTION REQUESTED:

Decision
Discussion/Direction
Information

TO: Strategy & Planning Committee

DATE: January 13, 2022

PRESENTED BY: Dr. Lori Livingston, Provost and Vice-President, Academic

SUBJECT: Strategic Discussion: Blended Learning – Where Do We Go From Here?

COMMITTEE/BOARD MANDATE:

The Committee is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the university's strategic planning efforts, including the implementation and assessment of plans in the context of the university's vision, mission and values.

We are updating the Committee on our strategic approach to blended learning, including a brief retrospective on our efforts to date. The purpose of this paper is to prompt further discussion on what strategy or strategies we need to consider and/or pursue going forward into the future.

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT & RATIONALE:

In establishing Ontario Tech, the founding Act¹ envisioned a new type of university, one that would focus on offering programs that were innovative and responsive to the individual needs of students and the market-driven needs of employers. Since its inception, the university has embraced this vision with its strategic allegiance to be a change-maker and leader in technology-driven research, teaching and scholarship.² Technology is part of our institutional genetic makeup and it has always been central to and a critical component of our learners' academic and instructional experiences.

Our long held practice of embedding technology within our academic programs allowed us to adapt much more quickly than our comparator institutions to the disruption caused by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March, 2020. Importantly, before COVID-19 was a reality, we were already pressing ourselves towards a new technological mindset when the pandemic changed our reality.³ Transformation, through investment in new and emerging technologies, digitization, and

¹ See <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/02u08>

² See <https://shared.uoit.ca/shared/departement/opp/Governance/Office-of-the-President/2017-2022-strat-plan1.pdf>

³ See https://shared.ontariotechu.ca/shared/departement/provost/integrated-plan-full/5442_pro_integratedacademicresearchplan_v5-web.pdf

increased offerings using virtual platforms to meet the demand for more flexible and accessible options, was already part of our mindset.

Since the onset of the pandemic, we have come to another important realization: that is, while we were technologically-ready we were not as “pedagogically-ready” as we needed to be to deliver effective instruction on strictly virtual platforms. We also recognized that some foundational learning experiences (e.g., hands-on learning in laboratory or clinical settings) are less amenable, adaptable, or even doable on virtual platforms. Our students, faculty and instructional staff invested a tremendous amount of time and effort and did their best – and even excelled – under the circumstances.

With no end in sight for COVID-19, and knowing that it has accelerated lasting change within the education sector, we must compel ourselves to address the pedagogy-technology gap while continuing to find innovative new ways to support our learners. We are also seeking to understand how to combine online or virtual learning with in person (or face-to-face) instructional experiences. It is clear that some disciplines require a hands-on component to ensure that our learners develop skill competencies. However, we also understand that some instructors and learners want to be on campus to experience in person learning *and* the social and extracurricular opportunities traditionally associated with university life. Some learners, in contrast, want the flexibility to access their education from a distance, at their own pace, or during non-traditional workday hours. And finally, there are some who want a combination of in person and online offerings – often termed blended learning - to facilitate their learning and complete their programs of study.

WHAT IS BLENDED LEARNING?

Today, the term “blended learning” (or hybrid approach) is almost exclusively used to describe a style or approach to education in which students gain information delivered using a combination of virtual and face-to-face instructional platforms. At Ontario Tech, the hybrid approach has been in use for a number of years.

From a historical perspective, however, blended learning has also been used to describe combining different pedagogical approaches (e.g., lectures, labs, tutorials, clinical hours, field trips, and co-op or experiential learning) to appropriately deliver the material associated with a single course.

The term has also been used to describe the deliberate mixing of sensory modalities (e.g., auditory, visual, kinesthetic or touch) within a given instructional session to accommodate different learning styles and shortened attention spans. It has long been considered a best practice, for example, for an instructor to change the modality of information delivery within the span of a given lecture, combining delivery of information via the spoken word with visual demonstrations (e.g., PPT slides or video clips) with hands on mini-breakout sessions involving the handling of models.

Arguably, going forward into the future, how we “structure” our educational offerings adds to this “blended” concept. There is growing interest in the concept of structuring the learning experience using microcredentials in place of the traditional 12-week, 36 hours per term course structures seen in Canadian universities today. Microcredentials are also considered advantageous in that they allow for more personalized or individualized learning to take place, both prior to and after the completion a traditional university degree program. They truly support the concept of “lifelong learning” in a more accessible way than ever before.

PRIOR TO THE PANDEMIC

From a structural perspective, Ontario Tech's academic programming resembled what might be termed a largely "traditional" in person university experience. In-person lectures, labs, and tutorials were scheduled from Monday through Friday between 8:00 am and 10:00 pm.

However, there were and continue to be notable exceptions to this aforementioned approach. For example, in the Faculty of Education and Faculty of Health Sciences, some degree programs (i.e., Bachelor of Arts Honours in Educational Studies and Bachelor of Allied Health Sciences, respectively) are offered in an entirely online format. Pre-pandemic, about 15-20% of all courses offered across the university were delivered using a hybrid approach.

Importantly, our ability to deliver select programs and courses in an entirely online or blended format is underpinned by the use of a Learning Management System (LMS). These virtual platforms allow learners and faculty members to easily store and access individual course materials (e.g., syllabi, lecture materials, readings, assignments, individual and cumulative grade results, group discussions, etc.) while also serving as an important communication portal for learner-instructor interaction (e.g., individualized communications, assignment submission, examination sessions). Prior to the pandemic, more than 90% of all of the courses offered at Ontario Tech were supported by our LMS platform.

IN RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC

The onset of the pandemic in March, 2020 required all of our instructors and learners to transition their learning experiences to virtual platforms. We were able to do this with relative ease compared to other comparator institutions provincially and nationally. However, there were considerable challenges associated with the transition.

For some, and especially those who were already delivering or enrolled in programs or courses using an online or hybrid approach, the adjustment was made with relative ease compared to those who had never previously taught or studied online. For some instructors, the challenges were extremely significant since it has long been known that "we learn to teach as we were taught." The first challenge was that of the considerable effort required to learn what technology was available to support their efforts as well as to literally figure out how to use it. The second, in contrast, was how to create an engaging learning experience and especially so in trying to deliver course content not readily amenable to delivery on a virtual platform.

We knew that we had to do more than simply provide the technology to continue to operate and deliver our programs in a virtual world. We had to find ways to support student and instructor success in this environment as well as to stimulate exploration to find new solutions or to innovate in new ways. We began with listening to our constituents while at the same time engaging in extensive conversations about blended learning. In brief, our efforts have included:

a. Consultations

- Dedicated online focus group discussions with students, staff, and faculty to understand what was working and what needed attention versus what they saw as short-term and long-term goals to reach for in this new blended learning environment.
- Open discussions with the President and Provost at Faculty Council meetings.
- Special meetings of Academic Council, with an emphasis on the topic of Blended

Learning.

- Special meetings of Academic Council, with an emphasis on having those who have excelled and/or innovated within the Blended Learning milieu describe their efforts and share their insights.

b. Investments in Technology and Technology Supports

- The Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) has worked with IT Services to provide technical support throughout the course of the pandemic. Moreover, they have worked collaboratively to provide real-time staffing support for all online examinations during final exam sessions.
- In anticipation of a moderate return to campus for the 2021 Fall term, IT services upgraded a number of classrooms with new technologies to support simultaneous in-person and online learning sessions and instruction in disciplinary areas (e.g., mathematics) not readily supported by our existing LMS or virtual platforms.

c. Investments in People and Pedagogy

- The TLC staffing complement was expanded to provide more specialized on demand support to all full time and part time instructors. Each Faculty now has a dedicated Faculty Development Officer and there is an expanded team of Multimedia Developers available to work with faculty members on developing discipline-specific content.
- The TLC offers LMS training for all full-time and part-time instructors, graduate teaching assistants, and students new to the university.
- The TLC is home to an Open Educational Resource (OER) lab. Faculty members are able to work with a dedicated group of students to create OER resources for use in their courses.
- The Teaching Scholar in Residence (TSIR) program was established. Two Teaching Scholars who excel in online course delivery have been seconded from our faculty ranks to serve as peer mentors to their colleagues.

d. Investments in Innovation

- With support provided through the Office of the Provost, faculty and staff have been strongly encouraged to participate in provincial competitions aimed at supporting innovation in virtual learning environments. To date, this has yielded about \$3M in provincial funding from the first round calls for proposals from the Virtual Learning Strategy and Microcredential Challenge Fund.
- In both of the aforementioned instances, seed funding has been provided by the Office of the Provost to a limited number of projects not funded but deemed meritorious.

IN SUMMARY

It's important to acknowledge that our instructors are actively invested in their teaching and passionate about the pedagogical requirements of their disciplines. They are also student-focused and strongly committed to their students as both instructors and mentors. The past 22 months have been difficult yet, they have embraced, experimented with, or innovated with the technology in the classroom.

It has also become clear that there is “no one size fits all” solution to the future of instruction within our institution. When we think of blended learning, perhaps its best to think of and encourage each and every instructor and student to help us define the most appropriate “blend” for each discipline or unique course.

The concept of blended learning is here to stay. What remains to be seen is the extent to which we can encourage and harness the creativity of our students, staff, and faculty to ensure that Ontario Tech is seen as a leader in this yet to be fully defined space.

NEXT STEPS:

We need to be strategic in continuing to exist with the COVID-19 virus, but also in thinking about what the future looks like for higher education with COVID and beyond it. As you read this paper, we welcome your thoughts and input on the following questions:

1. In addition to the supports already provided to our students, staff, and faculty, are there alternate strategies or approaches that we should be exploring in an effort to continue to differentiate ourselves as provincial and national leaders in blended learning?
2. How might we better align our current and future learners’ identified needs and desires with those of our staff and faculty?
3. Knowing that we are operating in a fiscally constrained environment, are our priorities as they relate to blended learning in line with Ontario Tech’s strategic priorities?

COMMITTEE REPORT

SESSION:

Public
 Non-Public

ACTION REQUESTED:

Decision
 Discussion/Direction
 Information

TO: Strategy & Planning Committee

DATE: January 13, 2022

PRESENTED BY: Dr. Lori Livingston, Provost and Vice-President, Academic

SUBJECT: Update on Student Recruitment Initiatives

COMMITTEE/BOARD MANDATE:

The Committee is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the university’s strategic planning efforts, including the implementation and assessment of these plans in the context of the university’s vision, mission and values.

We are updating the Committee on our strategic approach to supporting undergraduate student recruitment in both domestic and international markets, including a brief summary on our efforts over the past year. The purpose is to prompt further discussion on what additional strategies we need to consider and/or pursue going forward.

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT & RATIONALE:

At its January, 2021 meeting, this Committee engaged in a strategic discussion focused on the University’s international recruitment strategy. International recruitment remains a key priority for Ontario Tech and especially so given the anticipated continuation of domestic tuition freezes for some time to come. Growing international enrolments during the course of a pandemic is challenging, yet necessary, and we remain resolute in our commitment to grow international enrolments to represent about 15% of the total student body. Growing domestic enrolments, however, is no less important and also a key part of our go forward strategy.

INTERNATIONAL RECRUITMENT

Our approach to international recruitment remains focused on diversifying the markets from which we are drawing students, as well constantly identifying new ways to reach out and connect with potential applicants. We continue to prioritize recruitment from the following markets:

Region	Primary	Secondary
East Asia	China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan	Macau

Southeast Asia	Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia	Singapore, The Philippines
South Asia	India, Bangladesh	Pakistan, Sri Lanka
Middle East	United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Jordan, Turkey	Lebanon, Egypt, Iran
Africa	Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Mauritius	South Africa, Cameroon
Latin, Central, and South America	Panama, Ecuador, Peru, Mexico	Colombia, Brazil
Caribbean	Jamaica, Bahamas, Bermuda, Barbados, Trinidad & Tobago, Cayman Islands	Antigua & Barbuda, St. Lucia, St. Kitts & Nevis
United States	New York, New Jersey, Michigan, Illinois, Massachusetts, Maryland, District of Columbia, Texas	California, Maine, Colorado

Connecting with students in these various markets involves a diverse set of approaches and events. These include:

- Hosting virtual Open Houses dedicated to international student applicants
- Supporting offshore recruitment offices (i.e., Guangzhou, China; Delhi, India; Nairobi, Kenya; Hanoi, Vietnam; Mexico City, Mexico)
- Expanding international partnerships including:
 - Admission pathway programs with international boarding schools located in North America (e.g., Columbia International College, Hamilton)
 - International analytics and recruitment partnerships (e.g., Concourse Global)
 - International recruitment outsourcing agreements (e.g., EduCo Global)
 - Establishing MOUs, including student exchange agreements with universities from around the world
- Leading current and pursuing new initiatives and opportunities relating to marketing of the Ontario higher education sector (i.e., universities, colleges, and Indigenous institutes) and its programs. This includes the development of a new Ontario study brand and website that will position the province as a premiere global study destination.
- Responding to the demand for shorter-term programs that act as a fast track to immigration opportunities. Creating one- or two-year course-based Masters or certificate programs is a current focus of the Strategic Enrolment Management Committee.

DOMESTIC RECRUITMENT

Pandemic-imposed public health restrictions disrupted our traditional approach to domestic recruitment between March, 2020 and September, 2021. For example, the typically in-person Ontario Universities Fair was cancelled for the second year in a row this past fall, but replaced

with online virtual recruitment events. The Registrar's Office has taken the lead on these events and have received tremendous support from faculty and staff members from across the institution.

The pandemic restrictions have forced a major retooling of domestic recruitment activities to an online format, and the recruitment team has implemented the following initiatives to reposition Ontario Tech as a leader in digital recruitment.

- 1) Digital Lead nurturing: By expanding our prospective student lead generation tactics, the recruitment team is currently managing over 40K unique student leads that are nurtured through various channels including but not limited to, virtual chats, SMS text messages, and discipline specific online webinars. To this end, we have currently conducted:
 - i) 7,800 live chat conversations with students
 - ii) 1,850 one-on-one private online meetings with students
 - iii) 120,000 personalized emails (not robot sent) to students to discuss program and admissions options
 - iv) 1,000 chats via SMS text messages
- 2) Online Events: In collaboration with Communications and Marketing, the Recruitment team has hosted multiple digital Open House events that have seen thousands of students and parents participate in program-specific chats, web demonstrations, and activities through our virtual event platform.
- 3) Digital Innovation: Two years into the pandemic, Ontario Tech is one of the only universities in the province to offer one-on-one in person chats with a recruiter. We talk to between 60-100 unique prospective students daily. We use a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System to track every prospective student touch point in order to optimize our recruitment efforts for the most effective interactions leading to both applications and subsequent enrolment.

In the Fall of 2021, we aggressively moved to more in-person events as public health measures allowed. This return to in-person recruitment was managed in order to compliment the existing digital recruitment strategy as part of a holistic approach to student recruitment. In particular, the recruitment team focused on the following areas:

- 1) Campus Tours: On campus tours were brought back online over the summer. Before the more recent public health measures were put into effect, we were conducting tours multiple times a day, seven days a week.
- 2) On Campus Experience days: As one of the only universities in the province to offer in person on campus experiences this fall, we were able to meet face-to-face with thousands of students and parents over the course of five distributed events. Working with the Faculties, the Registrar's Office planned discipline-specific events that allowed students to interact with faculty and staff, get a taste of lecture and lab offerings, and tour the campus in a small open house format. By using the whole campus footprint to showcase a single discipline, we were able to offer an in-depth on campus experience where students and parents could feel safe in small groups, while also adhering to physical distancing measures and our mandatory vaccine directive.
- 3) Off Campus Recruitment: Although most secondary schools were not allowing for in –

person recruitment, Ontario Tech set up recruitment pop-up events at locations such as the Oshawa Centre in order to foster in-person interactions where we could.

NEXT STEPS:

Student recruitment initiatives are the first step in our efforts to ensure sustainable year-over-year enrolment levels for the University, yet gaining market share is becoming increasingly competitive within Canada and beyond. Moreover, the pandemic challenges our ability to predict the outcome of our efforts. Nonetheless, we will need to continue investing effort into a broad array of recruitment initiatives and opportunities to ensure that we can attract and retain students into the future.

COMMITTEE REPORT

SESSION:

Public
Non-Public

ACTION REQUESTED:

Decision
Discussion/Direction
Information

TO: Strategy & Planning Committee

DATE: January 13, 2022

PRESENTED BY: Dr. Lori Livingston, Provost and Vice-President, Academic

SUBJECT: Update on Student Success Initiatives

COMMITTEE/BOARD MANDATE:

The Committee is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the university's strategic planning efforts, including the implementation and assessment of these plans in the context of the university's vision, mission and values.

We are updating the Committee on our strategic approach to supporting undergraduate student success, including a brief summary on our efforts over the past year. The purpose of this briefing note is to prompt further discussion on what additional strategies we need to consider and/or pursue going forward.

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT & RATIONALE:

At its January, 2021 meeting, this Committee engaged in a strategic discussion regarding the University's multi-pronged approach to supporting student success. These efforts included: (a) specialized programming for students experiencing academic difficulty (i.e., LEAP); (b) coordination of student-centric academic advising activities; (c) establishment of strategic committees to support our efforts (e.g., Student Success Committee, Strategic Enrolment Management Committee), and; (d) leveraging data to identify students at risk (e.g., early alert systems). The purpose of this briefing note is to provide the Committee with an update on these activities and to seek your input and direction on how we may continue to improve upon and grow, as well as identify new strategies, in support of student success.

PROGRAMMING FOR AT RISK STUDENTS

Enrolment into the Learner Enhanced Academic Program (LEAP) is offered to first year students who, at the end of an academic term, are either placed on probation or suspended from their degree program. Students sign a learning contract which stipulates that they may proceed with a reduced workload in their current academic program while concurrently attending all of the LEAP program's weekly information and coaching sessions and required assignments. Failure to adhere to these conditions results in removal from the LEAP program and the re-imposition of their probation or suspension status.

The program is a cooperative effort supported by the Registrar's Office and the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC). Short 10-15 minute weekly sessions focus on topics such as effective learning habits, goal setting, short-term planning strategies, time management, and other core skills to support individual success. Students are required to attend the weekly session and thereafter meet in one-on-one or group coaching sessions with assigned academic coaches.

Since the program began in the Fall 2020 term, a total of 250 undergraduate students from all Faculties (excluding the Faculty of Education) have enrolled in the program. About 81% (n=202) students have successfully completed the program and transitioned back into their academic programs of study. While we have some anecdotal evidence of students successfully re-engaging in their academic studies following completion of the LEAP program, we are currently in the process of completing a fulsome quantitative analysis of the extent to which students experience continued academic success following completion of the program.

STUDENT-CENTRIC ACADEMIC ADVISING ACTIVITIES

In March, 2021 the university adopted a new model of oversight pertaining to Faculty-based advising activities. Simply put, the new model includes a centralized (or umbrella) approach aimed at developing consistency across Faculties with respect to advising processes and practices, while at the same time allowing the Academic Advisors to remain situated within their units to provide discipline-specific advising supports.

Reporting to the Deputy Provost, Dr. Dan Crouse as Director of Advising is now working with a group of dedicated Managers of Advising (i.e., Amy Anderson, Theeben Jegatheesan, Kerry Morrison) to envision a student-centric approach to academic advising as well as programmatic and educational supports for all Academic Advisors.

STUDENT SUCCESS AND STRATEGIC ENROLMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

In the Spring of 2021, the Office of the Provost reconstituted the Student Success Committee and established a new Strategic Enrolment Management Committee. The former is focused on a number of "sticky campus" initiatives (e.g., dedicated Orientation programming for new incoming students, monitoring student performance throughout the student life cycle) while the latter is embracing the Deans and other senior leaders and managers from across the institution in all matters pertaining to student recruitment (including the development of new programs and recruitment pathways), retention, and success.

LEVERAGING DATA

To understand student success, we need to monitor student performance throughout the completion of academic programs. The Student Success Committee is currently in the process of identifying an effective "early alert system" with input and support from the TLC, IT Services, the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis, and others. The notion here is to move beyond the use of relatively primitive and localized efforts within given Faculties, to a more fulsome university wide approach in support of all students. The earlier we can identify students at risk of not completing their academic programs, the sooner we can provide supports in an effort to ensure their success.

IN SUMMARY

Once we admit a student into an academic program, we have an ethical obligation to support them along the course of their academic journey. We must constantly remind ourselves of this

obligation and routinely challenge ourselves to adapt as needed to find new ways to help them to succeed.

In order to understand the effectiveness of our efforts, a commitment to program evaluation with respect to all of our efforts is a must. We must also commit to continuous improvement in all that we do including challenging ourselves to think about what other existing resources might we leverage or adapt to support our students. Although not mentioned in the previous examples, support services for students (e.g., financial aid, student mental health and wellness, etc.) provide overarching support to all that we do.

NEXT STEPS:

We often measure student success via dedicated metrics (e.g., year-over-year retention rates in relation to incoming high school grade averages), yet the pandemic has at least for the time being brought into question the validity of such data. High school grade inflation, socioeconomic challenges, personal burdens, etc. have complicated the use of such data in the current term. There is no doubt that we will resume to using metrics in the not too distant future.

However, in the meantime:

1. Are there other strategies that we need to pursue or consider pursuing in support of student success and especially so as we continue to live with or emerge from the pandemic?



COMMITTEE REPORT

SESSION:

Public
 Non-Public

ACTION REQUESTED:

Decision
 Discussion/Direction
 Information

TO: Strategy & Planning

DATE: January 13, 2022

PRESENTED BY: Brad Maclsaac, VP Administration

SUBJECT: ACE Enhancement Project – Update

COMMITTEE/BOARD MANDATE:

The Strategy and Planning Committee is responsible for overseeing the strategic planning for all aspects of the university and assessment of the plans in the context of the university’s vision, mission and values. More specifically, the committee oversees any major renovation or construction projects.

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT & RATIONALE:

At the October meeting a detailed project summary and timeline was provided. It noted that Phase II: Controls/integration & Debug would occur over Nov/ Dec and Phase III: Commissioning and Acceptance is planned for Jan/ Feb.

The ACE team is on track and planning early March for official opening.

IMPLICATIONS:

As we enter the final integration phase we are able to close out costs and delay contracts in order to work within the Board approved \$16.525M.

NEXT STEPS:

Project close out by March 31, 2022.

SUPPORTING REFERENCE MATERIALS:

ACE MGP update – December 2021

ACE Enhancement Project



December Project Update
6 January 2022

Progress Update (31 December 2021)

This period accomplishment:

- Control integration and commissioning fine tuning and minor adjustments



BoG – Schedule Approval Tracking

Milestones	Nov-18	Nov-19	Apr-21	Actual	Variance Explanation
Building Modification	Jul-19	Aug-19	Aug-19	Aug-19	
Integration Phase I	Dec-19	Mar-20	Mar-21	Mar-21	delayed contract signing & increased turntable upgrades
Integration Phase II	Mar-20	Sep-20	Sep-21		increased engineering requirements

Upcoming Activities

	Description	Begin Date	End Date	Act Begin	Act End	Comments
Phase I	Assembly & functional operation	3-Feb-21	14-Mar-21	15-Feb-21	18-Mar-21	Moved to virtual installation. Late start has no delay on end date
Phase II A	Systems check & validation	3-May-21	21-May-21	10-May-21	14-Aug-21	Assembly completed and base/support system functioning
Phase II B	Controls integration & debug	21-Jun-21	31-Jul-21	14-Jun-21		Fine tuning still on going, target completion Jan/ Feb shutdown
Phase III	Commissioning/Acceptance	1-Aug-21	7-Aug-21			March

Health & Safety:

- Nothing to report this period

Change Control:

- Nothing to report this period

Procurement Summary:

- Nothing to report this period

Financial Summary:

- Total Actual Cash Flow to date \$16.095M
- Project estimated cost at completion \$16.525M
- Cash flow Breakdown of Sources and Uses of funds next slide.

A&F Roll up Financial Report as of 31 December 2021

Sources of Funds - Cash Flow						
Description	2019 Nov Funding	Actual Total Todate	Dec 2021	Funding at Completion	Balance Funding To date	Comments
FEDDEV	\$ 9,465,000	\$ 9,228,383	\$ -	\$ 9,465,000	\$ 236,617	2.5% yet to received on project completion
PROVINCIAL	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 1,350,000	\$ -	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 150,000	10% to be released upon project completion
MAGNA	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ -	\$ 1,000,000	\$ -	commitment fulfilled
ONTARIO TECH (Announce Contribution)	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000	\$ -	\$ 500,000	\$ -	commitment fulfilled
ONTARIO TECH (Loan to ACE)	\$ 2,510,000	\$ 2,510,000	\$ -	\$ 2,510,000	\$ -	commitment fulfilled
THE GREENBRIAR FOUNDATION	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ -	\$ 100,000	\$ -	commitment fulfilled
GA HAYBALL FOUNDATION		\$ 225,000	\$ -	\$ 225,000	\$ -	commitment fulfilled
ACE INTERNAL (ERF/Research Fund)		\$ 165,000	\$ -	\$ 165,000	\$ -	commitment fulfilled
ONTARIO TECH (Additional Loan to ACE)		\$ 1,016,644	\$ 161,007	\$ 1,060,595	\$ 43,951	
Totals	\$ 15,075,000	\$ 16,095,027	\$ 161,007	\$ 16,525,595	\$ 430,568	
Uses of Funds - Cash Flow						
Description	Original Budget	Actual Total Todate	Dec 2021	Estimate at Completion**	Variance / Cost Increase	Variance Explanation
Moving Ground Plane Integration into CWT	\$ 3,350,000	\$ 6,012,444	\$ 159,675	\$ 6,413,396	\$ 3,063,396	Obsolete controls, more complex turntable integration design and build. Repair to MGP & Turntable modifications.
Aerodynamic Enhancements Required for MGP	\$ 2,540,000	\$ 2,347,729	\$ 211	\$ 2,347,729	\$ (192,271)	Value engineered design - ride height simplification
Acoustics	\$ 845,000	\$ 714,289	\$ 473	\$ 714,289	\$ (130,711)	Competitive market & covid impact from Germany
Precision Measurement Capability	\$ 1,850,000	\$ 1,091,207	\$ -	\$ 1,091,207	\$ (758,793)	In-house design and build
Chamber Modifications	\$ 630,000	\$ 707,552	\$ -	\$ 713,848	\$ 83,848	System requires more process air and vacuum
Base Building Modifications	\$ 3,645,000	\$ 3,423,370	\$ -	\$ 3,423,337	\$ (221,663)	Competitive market and deletion of Storage Building
Engineering and Project Management	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 1,798,436	\$ 649	\$ 1,821,790	\$ (178,210)	Re-engineering, contingency amount move to MGP Integration, 12 mos extension of Project team
				\$ -		
Totals	\$ 14,860,000	\$ 16,095,027	\$ 161,007	\$ 16,525,595	\$ 1,665,595	



COMMITTEE REPORT

SESSION:

Public
 Non-Public

ACTION REQUESTED:

Decision
 Discussion/Direction
 Information

Financial Impact Yes No

Included in Budget Yes No

TO: Strategy & Planning Committee (S&P)

DATE: January 13, 2022

PRESENTED BY: Les Jacobs, VP, Research and Innovation

SUBJECT: Autonomous Vehicle Innovation Network (AVIN) Update

COMMITTEE/BOARD MANDATE:

In accordance with its Terms of Reference, S&P is responsible for overseeing the strategic planning for all aspects of the university and assessment of the implementation of the university’s plans in the context of the university’s vision, mission and values. This includes oversight of significant projects.

We are providing the committee with an update on the status of the AVIN Program at Ontario Tech University

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT & RATIONALE:

Announced in the 2017 Ontario Budget, AVIN is an \$80-million, five-year investment, delivered by OCE to support Ontario’s continued leadership in Autonomous Vehicle Innovation.

The AVIN program is proceeding as planned. All of the planned infrastructure investments were completed in calendar year 2019.

Investments in new Autonomous Vehicle R&D Capabilities through \$5M in AVIN Funding for Technology Development Site:
Infrastructure

- EV Charging/Microgrid Test Bed
- Simulated Automotive Wireless Environment
- Software Validation and Certification
- Data Storage, Real Time Analysis and Visualization
- Fabrication Space
- ACE Innovation Garage

Services

- Business and Technical Advisory Services
- Programming for Entrepreneurs and SMEs
- Full time technical staff

The project remains on track to meet the forecast budget (“Services”) for the remaining year of the AVIN project which concludes March 31, 2022.

The Province announced the launch of a new program called the Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network (OVIN) to replace AVIN in their most recent budget announcements. The university is currently in conversations with the Ontario Centre of Innovation about our role in OVIN, which launches in April 2022.

RESOURCES REQUIRED:

No additional resources required. We will closely monitor any changes to each project due to COVID restrictions.

CONSULTATION:

Ongoing consultations take place with ACE Management, VP Research and Innovation, partners in AVIN’s Durham activities (SPARK Centre and Durham College) along with the Ontario Centre of Innovation, which administers the AVIN funding program.

NEXT STEPS:

An update will be provided at the next meeting of S&P.

SUPPORTING REFERENCE MATERIALS:

- None attached for this update