



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

Minutes of the Public Session of the Meeting of January 12, 2023
2:00 p.m. to 3:33 p.m. Videoconference

Attendees: Eric Agius (Interim Chair), Carla Carmichael, Kevin Chan, Laura Elliott, Mitch Frazer, Matthew Mackenzie, Steven Murphy, Joshua Sankarlal, Jim Wilson

Regrets: Lynne Zucker (Chair), Ahmad Barari

Staff: James Barnett, Jamie Bruno, Sarah Cantrell, Les Jacobs, Lori Livingston, Brad Maclsaac, Kimberley McCartney, Yvonne Stefanin, Lauren Turner

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. and read aloud the land acknowledgement.

2. Agenda

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

3. Conflict of Interest Declaration

There was none.

4. Minutes of Public Session of Meeting of October 27, 2022

Upon a motion duly made by M. Mackenzie and seconded by S. Murphy, the Minutes were approved as presented.

5. Chair's Remarks

The Interim Chair thanked everyone for joining this first Committee meeting of the new year. He expressed optimism and enthusiasm about 2023 at Ontario Tech University. The Interim Chair went on to advise the Committee that L. Zucker has had to take a leave of absence and that he is, as a result, serving as Interim Chair. He thanked the University Secretary for her assistance leading up to this meeting.

Kevin Chan joined the meeting.

6. President's Remarks

The President wished everyone a happy new year. He provided the Committee with a number of updates, including that the varsity basketball and hockey teams are currently having their season and that Project Arrow was a great success at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. He noted that the latter has generated tremendous press for the University. The President went on to state that 2023 will be a year of enhanced entrepreneurship at the University. He balanced his comments by observing that tuition and base funding remains frozen and that a recent panel with Universities Canada discussed both subtle and overt attempts by governments to control higher education institutions.

7. Advancement

7.1 Strategic Discussion: Advancement

The Interim Chair introduced the Strategic Discussion, noting that J. Barnett has been with the University for three months and has made great progress on the philosophy of the new campaign and on fundraising. J. Barnett shared that a new Executive Director has been hired to join the Advancement Team and that the team's objective is to think big and be bold. J. Barnett went on to discuss the importance of a strong campaign cabinet as well as Board support.

J. Barnett discussed the benefits and new approach of the forthcoming campaign. He highlighted the importance of warm connections being made with the Advancement office. He cited a recent connection made via E. Agius as an example. J. Barnett also noted the synergies between a new campaign and the ongoing efforts to advertise the University's re-branding. He emphasized the value of volunteers to the campaign also being donors, as well as the benefits of multi-year pledges.

J. Barnett shared with the Committee that the case for support is currently being developed and will form the cornerstone of the campaign. He cited the importance of metrics so that donors can measure success. He explained some of the unique approaches that he and the Advancement team will take to the campaign, including video cards. He also noted that a mentorship program is starting in the Advancement office.

Laura Elliott joined the meeting.

The Interim Chair spoke positively about the support he received from the Advancement team when he brought a potential donor to their attention. L. Elliott volunteered to assist in any way, underscoring the importance of bringing people onto campus. In response to a question, J. Barnett described the individualized approach taken to each connection brought to the Advancement office. He closed by emphasizing the tremendous legacy and naming opportunities available at Ontario Tech.

8. Strategy

8.1 Student Recruitment

The Provost presented Student Recruitment, describing the University's efforts with respect to both domestic and international students. She highlighted that recruitment is a top priority for the University. She reminded the Committee that the University is moving towards a goal of 15% international student enrolment and that the Auditor General's report was complimentary of the University's efforts to recruit from diversified countries around the world.

The Provost noted that this week is the deadline for domestic students to submit their choices for applications to universities and that a report will be out next week. Demographically, 17-21-year-olds are a growing segment once again in the Greater Toronto Area, but the number of high school students applying to university is declining. Competition has increased, especially with colleges offering degree programs. Commenting on recruitment efforts, K. Chan offered to work with University staff to explore ad credits for the University on Facebook or Instagram.

The Committee then engaged in a brief discussion on international student recruitment. L. Elliott offered to share resources and contacts in this regard based on her experience in the London area. In response to a question, the Provost confirmed for the Committee that offshore recruitment offices are operating at the highest ethical standard. She advised that emphasis is on ensuring that any students referred are academically capable, and that incentivization is built not on volume but on students' ability to succeed at the University.

9. Planning

9.1 Student Success

The Provost discussed Student Success, stating that once students are recruited, the University has an ethical and moral obligation to ensure that they can succeed. She discussed some of the programs designed to support this objective, highlighting the Learner Engagement Academic Program (LEAP) which enhances retention of at-risk students. She discussed the overhaul of academic advising to make it both more efficient and more accessible. She noted the financial services available for students in urgent need as well as mental health services. With respect to the latter, she stressed that supporting mental health is a key part of dealing with the complexities of today's student. Noting that student mental health issues have been on the rise for some time, the University uses a step-care model with triage, connections with other programs, counselling, and referrals to external agencies when needed. She advised the Committee that academic advisors are also trained in mental health first aid. The Committee applauded the Provost and her team on their efforts. In response to a question, the Provost confirmed that learning supports available through Student Life include tutoring in the areas of math, chemistry, and writing skills. She further advised that the University is looking at early alert systems and is moving towards an objective of greater coordination of data collection in this area. In response to a question, the Provost confirmed that peer mentorship programs are well established at the University.

9.2 Institutional Metric Target Setting

S. Cantrell presented Institutional Metric Target Setting, advising the Committee that the initiative is intended to assess progress towards the objectives in the Integrated Academic-Research Plan (IARP). She reminded the Committee that the metrics were approved in June 2022. Speaking to recent events, S. Cantrell stated that feedback has been sought from the University community on target setting. She noted that some of the feedback has suggested improvements to understanding of metrics and how they are measured, data sources, and where the University is doing well or needs improvement. She also indicated that the University is clarifying the relationship between the Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMA3) metrics required by the Ministry and the University's institutional metrics.

S. Cantrell then spoke about accountability for results, how results will inform strategies as well as resource and effort allocations. It is a goal of the Provost's office to have an at-a-glance dashboard of progress towards targets. Each assessment of whether or not a target is being met/progressed towards satisfactorily will be supported by a dashboard with a target, progress, and multi-year data. She advised the Committee that the targets and further dashboards will be prepared for year end. In response to a question, S. Cantrell indicated that the University, through its metrics and targets, has a solid foundation for discussions about resourcing. She gave the example of student to faculty ratio as the basis for resource allocation and prioritization as well as the means to monitor the impact on metrics. A discussion then ensued about changing approaches to achieving targets when current strategies aren't yielding satisfactory results. In response to a question, S. Cantrell confirmed that a core group of metrics are important, but that they will evolve over time. Both external (e.g. changes to Ministry reporting) and internal (e.g. new issues surfacing, better data) factors could drive changes to metrics. She further indicated that targets are expected to evolve over time.

Mitch Frazer left the meeting.

9.3 Board Retreat Planning

The President updated the Committee on efforts to plan a Board retreat in 2023. He shared that the date of the retreat will be May 11, 2023 and will take place in the morning, followed by a lunch, and then the S&P meeting in the afternoon. The theme of the retreat will be differentiation and ambassadorship. The President provided some thoughts about the importance of differentiation not only in programming but also pedagogy, noting that the Faculties have been challenged to deliver at least one program and all mandatory courses online. The Committee expressed support for the theme and format and suggested an external facilitator for the session. The President agreed, advising that staff are working on securing a facilitator and speaker.

10. Significant Project & Contract Oversight

10.1 Sion Laboratories

L. Jacobs provided the Committee with an update on the Sion Laboratories, advising that six labs have been built and four are now occupied. Both the budget and the relocation of faculty are on track. He also noted that the data lab at the Brilliant Energy Institute is moving forward, with all equipment ordered and certain built structures being replaced. He closed by commenting briefly on Project Arrow, highlighting the creation of the fastest electric vehicle charger in the country, and that the car is back on the Ontario Tech campus.

11 Adjournment

Upon a motion duly made by M. Mackenzie and seconded by J. Wilson, the public session adjourned at 3:33 p.m.

Lauren Turner, University Secretary