



BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Strategy & Planning Committee

Minutes of the Public Session of the Meeting of November 16, 2023 2:00 p.m. to 3:32 p.m. via videoconference

Members: Lynne Zucker (Chair), Eric Agius (Vice-Chair), Laura Elliott, Mitch Frazer, Matthew Mackenzie, Steven Murphy, Hannah Scott, Michael Watterworth

Regrets: Ahmad Barari, Mike Rencheck

Staff: James Barnett, Krista Hester, Les Jacobs, Lori Livingston, Kimberley McCartney, Sarah Thrush, Lauren Turner

Guests: Lisa McBride, Gaurav Singh, and Dwight Thompson, guest governors

1. Call to Order

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

2. Agenda

Upon a motion duly made by E. Agius and seconded by L. Elliott, the Agenda was approved as presented.

3. Conflict of Interest Declaration

No conflicts were declared.

4. Minutes of the Public Session of the Meeting of May 11, 2023

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

5. Chair's Remarks

The Chair welcomed members to the first Strategy and Planning Committee (S&P) meeting of the academic year and invited new members to introduce themselves. She then shared her reflections on Women for STEM and the fall Convocation, speaking favourably about both and congratulating organizers.

6. President's Remarks

The President advised S&P members that the long-awaited report of the Blue-Ribbon Panel was made public yesterday. He highlighted the Panel's finding that the higher education sector is not financially sustainable and expressed the view that the report addresses the immediate needs of the sector. He drew the Committee's attention to the memo issued by the Minister of Colleges and Universities that accompanied the report which placed emphasis on efficiency as a precursor to financial assistance. The President reminded members of the three recent audits of the University, stating his belief that the University runs efficiently. He noted that the next issue will be whether, and how much, the provincial government will choose to implement from the report. He discussed the University's government relations strategy in this regard and emphasized the importance of a decision regarding tuition in the next month. In response to a comment, the President advised that the University does not operate as a corporation, nor is it the parlance of the Council of Ontario Universities (COU). Emphasis is instead on the public good that universities do.

The President then provided an update on his recent trip to southeast Asia. He highlighted the calls for the University's expertise in nuclear energy which range from western Canada to Eastern Europe to Asia. He discussed opportunities for the University, including partnerships with governments. He also highlighted artificial intelligence (AI), particularly in the context of tech with a conscience, as an opportunity for the University but cautioned that southeast Asia is far ahead of Toronto and North America in AI uptake.

7. Review of Strategy and Planning Committee Terms of Reference

The University Secretary presented the annual review of the S&P Terms of Reference (TOR). She advised the Committee that this serves a dual purpose: reviewing the TOR and updating as needed as well as refreshing the Committee, and in particular new members, on its mandate and purpose. There were no changes requested to the TOR.

8. Strategy

8.1. Strategic Discussion: Integrated Academic Research Plan – Action Plan and Accountability, Planning Timelines, and Milestones

The Provost opened the discussion on the Integrated Academic-Research Plan (IARP), providing a quick historical overview of the previous iterations of the Plan and their respective durations. She emphasized the accountability that the IARP brings to the University. She advised the Committee that the purpose of today's presentation is threefold: (i) to outline integrated planning processes and timelines; (ii) to provide a summary of key accomplishments for 2022/2023 to close off the previous version of the Plan; and (iii) to review a prototype of additional qualitative reporting that will accompany year-end reporting.

S. Thrush then outlined the evolution of integrated planning processes and the drive to align planning and related activities across the University. She noted that priorities and metrics are now aligned down to the Faculty- and unit-levels. She reminded the Committee that the reports presented to S&P and the Board are summarized versions of a large number of activities occurring across the institution. Beneath those reports are integrated plan templates where Faculties and units provide more granular data such as their plans and required collaboration. She advised that Faculties and units are, where possible, provided with Faculty and unit level data on each institutional metric to inform their planning activities, assess the impact of their efforts, and measure progress.

Turning to year-end reporting, S. Thrush noted that the report is a culmination of all of these efforts. The objective of this reporting is to have a conversation about challenges and key successes as well as providing line of sight into which initiatives are rolling into the next year. To that end, qualitative information will be introduced this year for each priority to supplement the quantitative progress represented in the dashboard. The year-end report will also include goals for 2024/2025.

S. Thrush drew Committee members' attention to the prototype report included in the materials package and requested feedback on the elements of the report. A discussion then ensued, with the Committee generally expressing support for the prototype report and congratulating the Provost and the Planning Office on shrinking the template from 44 pages down to three. Support was also expressed for qualitative reporting, particularly illustrative examples of successful initiatives. Governors also wished to have clear reporting on goals that weren't achieved and the reasons therefor. In response to a question, S. Thrush confirmed that alignment between planning and other major processes at the University is a work in progress. She noted four key cycles to which alignment is underway: enrolment, budget, academic approvals, and capital. In addition to logistical challenges, she noted the cultural shift required to make progress in this regard. The Committee expressed support for this initiative, and stressed the importance of communication so that changes in one area are caught and impacted areas or plans can adjust accordingly. In response to a question, a brief discussion ensued on the theme of tech with a conscience. The Provost noted that it is defined in the IARP and suggested that the definition of each pillar could be inserted into the report going forward. S. Thrush provided some examples and noted that decanal engagement is underway to surface stories and initiatives that exemplify the University's mission. The discussion closed with a recommendation from the Committee Chair that, where initiatives are laddered, it be clear in the year-end report.

9. Planning

9.1. Enrolment Update

S. Thrush presented the Enrolment Update. She highlighted several aspects of the data, including a year-over-year (YOY) 12.5% increase in applications in a system that was only up 2%, a miss of the international student enrolment target at 93%, and

overall registration at 113% of the 10-day target. She noted that the University outperformed the system on domestic confirmations, a success she attributed to Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) initiatives and co-operative education offerings. She closed by commenting on how these statistics will be represented in upcoming discussions about budget; she noted that the projections included in the materials will also be in the budget blueprint paper.

In response to a question about challenges with international students, S. Thrush shared the ongoing issues with process delays at Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) for a second consecutive year. She noted that there was also a drop in enrolment from local international feeder schools during COVID due to travel restrictions as well as an overall decline in international applications across the system. In response to a question about funding for international students, S. Thrush confirmed that the University is comprehensively reviewing graduate student supports and working with the Ontario Tech Student Union to ensure that those in need know that emergency funds are available. She noted that in the two years since she joined Ontario Tech, graduate international tuition scholarships have tripled, but are under-subscribed. A member noted the static level of master's level funding in the Faculty of Health Sciences.

9.2 Board Retreat Planning

The University Secretary and the President proposed to the Committee that equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) with an emphasis on inclusion and belonging as the topic of the 2023/2024 strategic retreat. The President noted that R. Nyaamine, the Assistant Vice-President, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging will be an excellent in-house resource for the retreat, possibly paired with an external facilitator or speaker. The Committee was supportive of the theme, finding it topical and timely. As the plans for the strategic retreat take shape, the Committee encouraged leadership to keep in mind the importance of having tangible outputs, keeping such a large subject area focused, and if possible tying in the theme of tech with a conscience.

10. Significant Project & Contract Oversight

10.1. Subcritical Assembly Project

L. Jacobs presented an update on the Subcritical Assembly Project, opening with a brief summary of the project which commenced a year ago. He highlighted some milestones in the project, including formal announcements at the Canadian Nuclear Association and the submission of a letter of intent to the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. He advised the Committee that a formal application will be submitted sometime between March and June. Engagement, including Indigenous consultation, will be a prerequisite of the submission. L. Jacobs closed by sharing that Brookfield Sustainability Institution at George Brown College will be partnering with the University to design the facility which will showcase Ontario Tech's strength in clean energy. In response to a question, L. Jacobs provided additional information about the consultation process and confirmed that, per the requirements of the Canadian

Nuclear Safety Commission, non-support from an Indigenous community would halt the application.

11. Adjournment

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 3:32 p.m.

Lauren Turner, University Secretary