

Attendance: J. Kalra (Chair). See appendix A for listing of members in attendance.

The chair called the meeting to order at 2:33 p.m., observing that quorum had been attained.

1. Adoption of the agenda

MICHELMANN /ZELLO: To adopt the agenda as circulated.

CARRIED

2. Opening remarks

Dr. Kalra welcomed members and visitors, including Chancellor Vera Pezer, a number of former Council committee chairs and student leaders, as well as incoming University Secretary Elizabeth Williamson. He informed Council that 35 nominations have been received for the 17 vacant positions on Council, and urged members to vote before the election closes on March 6. He indicated his pleasure at the level of interest expressed by members of the academy in standing for election to Council.

3. Minutes of the meeting of January 24, 2013

DOBSON/DesBRISAY : That the Council minutes of January 24, 2013 be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

4. Business from the minutes

No business was identified as arising from the minutes.

5. Report of the President

Dr. Busch-Vishniac updated Council on a number of items:

- She noted that those who are members of the USFA will know that a tentative agreement has been presented to the members, and thanked those on both sides of the table who were engaged in negotiating this agreement.
- She provided an update on the TransformUS project, indicating that four members of university Council's leadership (chosen by the Coordinating Committee), Jay Kalra, Hans Michelmann, Roy Dobson and Stephen Urquhart, have assisted her and the provost to select members of the two task forces. She expects to be able to post the membership of both task forces soon, once those being asked have confirmed their participation. She indicated that over 200 members of the GAA applied. A few units are not represented; this

is because there were no nominees from those units. She reminded Council that no decisions have yet been made and will not be made until the task forces do their work.

- As the government moves forward on its plan for growth in Saskatchewan it has chosen to be the first major government in North America that chooses to operate by “Lean” processes. This has led to much discussion about what that means in the Ministry of Advanced Education, and the university has been asked to participate with the presidents and provosts of the University of Regina and SIAST to discuss what the post-secondary institutions might do that aligns with “Lean” initiatives. One such meeting has taken place; the intention is to make sure that government and the universities understand each other’s goals and find ways to find efficiencies in services that do not detract from the educational missions of the institutions and the student experience.
- One trend in higher education in Canada has been a push for ever greater efficiency; this has played out in Alberta and other provinces. Universities get more of their funding through targeted initiatives. This thinking in terms of efficiency carries some threats for us, including four the president mentioned: 1) that the relationship between the U of S and the government, which has been the best relationship of any university in Canada with its government, is threatened; 2) the focus of the conversation moves to job preparation rather than the broader mandate of universities including its discovery mission; 3) when government chooses to suggest we should be more efficient and targets funds, it suggests that government is the expert on post-secondary education, rather than our faculty; 4) efficiency is not necessarily consistent with the mission of universities, which encourage students to pursue their passions and take time to discern the direction of their studies. The efficiency of universities plays out in a much longer time frame—decades rather than weeks or months. The president added that the underlying threat is to the autonomy of the university; more controls on the university simply keep the institution from doing what it does best. She explained that this is her own opinion but that she would continue to press government on these issues.

The chair then opened the floor to comments and questions.

A member asked about proposed changes to the University of Saskatchewan Act; the secretary responded and explained the nature of the changes that had been proposed to government in a recent request.

A member commended the president on her comments about the expertise of the academy in making decisions about its own programming and resourcing, citing a government-mandated increase in the number of medical seats as an example.

6. Report of the Provost

The chair conveyed regrets from the provost and commended his report to members of Council, indicating that the president or vice-provost would be willing to respond to any questions. There being no questions, the chair moved to the next item.

7. Student societies

7.1 Report from the University of Saskatchewan Students’ Union

USSU President, Jared Brown and Academic Vice-president Ruvimbo Kanyemba presented a verbal report on recent activities of the USSU.

Ms. Kanyemba announced the recipient of the Doug Favell Spirit of Excellence Award, which is being awarded this year to the outgoing University Secretary, Lea Pennock. She also reported on work being done by the USSU on the possibility of an ombudsperson for the university as well as work on the teaching excellence awards. She also announced that she would be resigning effective March 14 to take up a new position.

Mr. Brown then reported on the work of the Vice-president Operations and Finance on the budget, and Vice-president Alex Varenka's work on a film festival, transition binder and USSU child care centre. His own priorities include the planning of Aboriginal Achievement Week March 11-14, in conjunction with the Aboriginal Student Centre. He highlighted some of the speakers and presentations that will be happening in connection with this event, including a re-signing of an agreement with the Treaty Commissioner. He expressed thanks to Annie Batiste, event planner for the event.

The chair invited Council to express thanks to the students for their report.

7.2 Report from the Graduate Students' Association

GSA president Ehimai Ohiozebou commended members to his written report. He also reported on the work being done on graduate student funding led by the dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Research and the Vice-president Finance and Resources. He also provided an update on the UPASS referendum; this vote passed by a 2/3 majority, so for the first time graduate students will now be opting into the UPASS program. He also asked members to take note of the invitation to the GSA awards gala being held on March 8, 2013, and he thanked faculty for the interest expressed in this event. He also congratulated the University Secretary on her retirement and her ability to pronounce his name.

The Chair invited members of Council to join him in thanking Mr. Ohiozebou for his report.

8. Academic Programs Committee

8.1 Reports for Information

Committee chair, Professor Roy Dobson, presented the following reports for information:

- Implementation of revised approval processes and portal submission process
- Increase in credit units for Veterinary Medicine program
- Admissions report for 2013-14.

There was a question about the legality for determining the basis on upon which students could be asked to declare their eligibility for Saskatchewan residency for admission to Law; the dean responded that this would not be unusual for law schools and that it would only be unlawful to ask such a question if it were on prohibited grounds.

9. Planning and Priorities Committee

9.1 Centre for Applied Epidemiology as a Type A Centre in the Western College of Veterinary Medicine

Professor Bob Tyler, chair of the Planning and Priorities Committee, presented this decision item to Council and explained the purpose and rationale for this centre. He described the consultation that had taken place and explained that only modest funding would be required; this will be provided by the College.

TYLER/KHANDELWAL: That Council approve the establishment of the Centre for Applied Epidemiology as a Type A Centre in the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, effective February 28, 2013.

CARRIED

10. Joint Board/Council Committee on Chairs and Professorships

10.1 Cisco Systems Research Chair in Mining Solutions

This item was presented by Vice-provost Faculty Affairs Jim Germida.

BARBER/PHOENIX: That Council authorizes the Board to establish a Cisco Systems Research Chair in Mining Solutions.

CARRIED

11. Other business

No other business was identified as arising from the minutes.

12. Question period

A member asked about how research was being addressed in the College of Medicine Restructuring plan. Acting Dean Lou Qualtiere described the work of a committee looking at this in a parallel process with the restructuring; this committee will report on its work in May or June.

13. Adjournment

The chair then made closing remarks and a presentation for outgoing University Secretary Lea Pennock, inviting Council members to join him for a celebratory reception.

PARKINSON/ZELLO: That the meeting be adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

CARRIED

Next meeting – 2:30 pm, March 21, 2013

If you are unable to attend this meeting please send regrets to: Lesley.Leonhardt@usask.ca