

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

The chair called the meeting to order at 2:34 p.m., observing that quorum had been attained.

1. Adoption of the agenda

MICHELMANN/CHANG: To adopt the agenda as circulated.

CARRIED

2. Opening remarks

Dr. Kalra welcomed members and visitors, extending special thanks to Ms. Susan Milburn, chair of the Board of Governors for attending the meeting. He reported that after a survey of Council members regarding their preference to receive paper or electronic agenda packages, a wide majority of Council members have elected to receive their Council agenda package in electronic form. He concluded his remarks by noting the items coming before Council and the procedures for debate and discussion. In particular, he noted to members the intention that the discussion of item 10.2 TransformUS task force reports focus on the process used to create the reports, rather than on the substance of the reports, referring to the opportunity to discuss the task force report rankings and recommendations at the January and February Council meetings.

3. Minutes of the meeting of November 21, 2013

A Council member noted a correction on the bottom of page 2 of the minutes that “eluded” should read as “alluded”.

CHANG/MICHELMANN: That the Council minutes of November 21, 2013 be approved with the correction noted.

CARRIED

4. Business from the minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

5. Report of the President

President Ilene Busch-Vishniac provided updates in addition to her written report. She reflected that the past year had been busy one and extended best wishes for the holidays to all present and her gratitude and appreciation for the service of Council. She recalled the discussion at Council over the fall term, including discussion of the College of Medicine implementation plan *The Way Forward* and the concerns raised at Council regarding the recommendations in the plan related to the basic science departments. These departments are now working on a plan of their own to be submitted in the near future, which will fit within the parameters of the college’s implementation plan. An exciting announcement relates to the appointment of a new Dean of Medicine to lead the college.

In October, the draft *Vision 2025* document was presented to Council and at other various meetings and events, with over 700 people asked directly for their comments on the draft statement. The president indicated all comments received will be reviewed in January and the process of revision of the document will begin, although comments will continue to be received during this period. Discussion of the *Vision 2025* document was directed initially internally to the university and will now begin to be focused externally, with comments sought from alumni, government and corporations that interact with the university. Overall, the reaction to the draft document has been positive, and many good suggestions for change have been received. The vision statement will be submitted for consideration of endorsement to Council, Senate and the Board of Governors in the spring of 2014.

The TransformUS task force reports were made public on December 9 and a process set up to receive comments on the reports. The release of the reports concludes the first phase of the TransformUS process. Much work needs to be completed in next phase related to the development of an implementation plan, which will accept some of the recommendations of the reports and not accept other recommendations.

The president drew Council's attention to the report of the graduate education review committee appended to her report as another potentially transformative change. The report is the result of the efforts of a small committee to review the structure and function of the College of Graduate Studies and Research (CGSR). The review was undertaken in consultation with the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) and the acting dean of the college. The recommendations in the report correspond to the task force recommendations regarding the college although the reviews were undertaken separately. The report suggests that the college change from an academic unit with a focus on monitoring the compliance of programs to an administrative unit with a focus on facilitating graduate programs. If there is support for this change with minimal controversy, the next step will be to form a larger transition team with broad representation. This team will begin to flesh out the details of a proposal for a new mandate and structure related to the college. Any structural changes will undergo the university's normal governance processes.

The chair invited comments and questions of the president related to her report. A Council member asked whether the suggested change to the CGSR would mean that the college would no longer be able to house academic graduate programs, specifically interdisciplinary Ph.D. programs. The president indicated this question would be referred to the committee tasked with developing a transition plan. Presumably these programs would continue to be offered, although any of the task force recommendations related to these programs would also require consideration. Another member requested that the responsibility of the college relative to establishing policies and standards on a university-wide basis continue as this is an important role, although this responsibility might be assigned elsewhere. She also expressed her appreciation of the international work done by the college in bringing international partners and students to the university.

Other comments included the suggestion that a fundamental principle adopted be to articulate the roles of faculty vis-à-vis students, and to ensure that non-faculty individuals are not making decisions regarding graduate programs and student academic matters. The President agreed with this principle. A Council member inquired of how graduate scholarships will be administered in the future. In reply, the president indicated that initial consideration suggests that student financial aid may be best centrally administered, and that therefore there may be minimal change to the administration of graduate funding.

6. Report of the Provost

Brett Fairbairn, provost and vice-president academic, referred members to his written report in the meeting materials, highlighting recent activities related to the operating budget adjustments (OBA) and searches and reviews, with five search and review committees of senior administrators near decisive stages.

With respect to the operating budget adjustments, he noted a question that has arisen is about the target for 2016 and whether the university still needs to make financial adjustments. Specifically, the question has arisen of whether the goal of achieving \$20.0 to 25.0 million in savings from TransformUS remains. Council was apprised in 2012-13 that if no action were taken, a budgetary gap of \$44.5 million would exist by 2016. The purpose of the OBA projects is to avoid the deficits that would otherwise occur, based on projections against the university's key revenues, such as the provincial government grant, tuition and investment income, and key expenditures, such as compensation and utilities.

Workforce planning has had a positive effect on university finances resulting in a permanent reduction in the operating budget of \$15.6 million by 2016. TransformUS is expected to realize a further \$20.0 million reduction, with \$5.0 million earmarked for program reinvestment. There remains a further \$10.0 million reduction to be achieved; the means for this have not been determined. As a result of the permanent measures achieved through workforce planning, the university is not in a deficit position at year-end. However, the projected deficit remains as the basis for the continued operating budget adjustments. The provost indicated these were reasonable projections and were based on a 2% increase in the provincial grant being allocated to the university. The goal is to have a university that is sustainable on an ongoing basis. The TransformUS process is also about the vitality of the university and strengthening areas of priority.

A Council member questioned the sentence in the OBA section of the provost's report, which refers to the result being a stronger university, and asked whether there is any evidence within the U15 group that following this approach has resulted or will result in the university being stronger. Dr. Fairbairn indicated the statement is a commitment and reflects the premise behind the university's institutional planning, which allocates resources to priorities and supports the university's strengths. Another member referred to the criteria by which program prioritization decisions will be made, and noted he found it odd that the usual criteria would apply, as the situation is not usual and the task forces followed a complex system of scoring. Further, he noted difficulties with the input data and inconsistencies in how units apportioned out information, which do not fit with evidence-based decision-making. He asked that the provost articulate the specific criteria by which the university will determine what actions will be taken and also to comment on the data issues. The provost indicated that PCIP will look to its own principles in developing the implementation plan. The implementation plan will map out which proposal goes to which governing body, and proposals will be considered against the regular criteria which apply to such decisions. New decision criteria are not being proposed. He noted there is a tendency to regard the reports as outcomes, but that the reports are inputs into the process. He deferred commenting on the data issues, as Council will consider the process used to create the reports under item 10.2.

7. Student Societies

7.1 Report from the USSU

Jordan Sherbino, vice-president of the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union, presented a brief overview of the work of the USSU over the year with highlights as outlined below:

- The establishment of a constructive and progressive relationship between the new USSU Executive and the university's administrative units and governing bodies;
- The opening of Louis' Loft as a new business venture;
- The setting of student mental health, engagement with student college societies, and transparent communication regarding the operating budget adjustments as USSU priorities;
- The naming of student representatives to the TransformUS task forces;
- The establishment of a process whereby the USSU will gather and submit student feedback in response to the task force reports;
- A petition to government with over 1300 signatures to organize a program with the university on the open licensing of textbooks;
- A university-wide student survey to gauge student interest in having a reading week during the fall term;
- Student Mental Health Awareness week;
- Study Smart campaign;
- Sexual Assault Awareness week;
- Submission of a student evaluation on the SEEQ course evaluation tool;
- The Undergraduate Research Symposium to be held on January 28, 2014 in the upper concourse of Place Riel;
- Aboriginal Achievement Week;
- A continued close working relationship with the Aboriginal Students' Centre.

In closing, Mr. Sherbino indicated that it was a dynamic time to be working in student governance and assured Council of the continued commitment of the USSU to advancing student movements and accessibility to post-secondary education.

7.2 Report from the GSA

Izabela Vlahu, vice-president academic of the GSA presented the Graduate Students' Association report to Council. Ms. Vlahu reported the most pressing matters under consideration by the GSA are the TransformUS task force reports and the review of the CGSR and graduate education. In December members of the GSA met with Minister Norris to discuss the graduate retention program to improve graduate student uptake. On March 6 – 8, 2014, the GSA will host its annual conference culminating in a gala on March 8. The theme of the conference is *Curiosity in Research*. She extended thanks to President Busch-Vishniac for her financial contribution in support of the conference and encouraged faculty members to take the lead in their departments to coach and assist graduate students, as this is where students gain their passion for research.

8. Nominations Committee

8.1 Request for Decision: Replacement on the University Review Committee

Dr. Terry Wotherspoon, vice-chair of the nominations committee presented the report to Council.

WOTHERSPOON/BRENNNA: That Council approve the nomination of Oon-Doo Balik, Chemical and Biological Engineering, to the university review committee for a term ending June 30, 2014.

CARRIED

9. Academic Programs Committee

Dr. Roy Dobson, chair of the academic programs committee, presented the reports to Council.

9.1 Request for Decision: Dentistry – changes to admission requirements

Dr. Dobson presented the motions and spoke to the proposed changes to the admissions requirements of the College of Dentistry DMD program, which if approved will require an undergraduate degree as an admission requirement and a criminal record check. These changes will bring the college in line with the admission requirements of other colleges of dentistry across Canada. In addition, curricular changes in the College of Medicine have resulted in the need for a consequential change to the DMD program related to the human physiology prerequisite requirement.

Discussion focused on the motion to introduce a criminal record check. A Council member expressed concern that in a province with segments of society having a disproportionate negative relationship with the justice system, that such a check might deny some individuals with a criminal record the ability to pursue a career in dentistry. In response, Dr. Dobson indicated that a criminal record check is a practical reality of obtaining a license to practice in the professional health sciences and is required by licensing bodies. The significance of having a criminal record as it relates to admission to the DMD program is a question to be determined by the College of Dentistry in consultation with its regulatory bodies. Several members commented on their own experience in their colleges with respect to criminal record checks. Note was made of the fact that a criminal record check is required of students completing a clinical practicum in a facility which requires a criminal record check of all employees. Often two criminal record checks are required, the first at the program start and the second at the point of application for licensure.

DOBSON/GREER: That Council approve the addition of a human physiology (such as PHSI 208 Human Body Systems or its equivalent) as a required prerequisite course for admission into the DMD program, effective for admissions in August 2015.

CARRIED

DOBSON/GREER: That Council approve the College of Dentistry admission requirement for completion of three full-time (30-credit-unit) years of university course work completed between the September to April academic year leading to an undergraduate level degree as a condition of admission to the DMD program, effective for admissions in August 2015.

CARRIED

DOBSON/GREER: That Council approve the implementation of a criminal record check as an admission requirement, effective for admissions in August 2015.

CARRIED

9.2 Item for Information: Academic Calendar 2014-15

Dr. Dobson indicated the item before Council was for information. After much discussion regarding the timing and feasibility of including a fall study break week in the 2014/15 academic calendar, he reported the committee concluded that it was not possible for this to occur in the coming year, and encouraged that this item be attended to in the spring so that it could be included in the subsequent calendar year. A member requested that the religious references to Easter Saturday and Easter Sunday be removed as they have no academic relevance. Dr. Dobson duly noted the request and indicated he would submit the suggested change to the committee.

10. Planning and Priorities Committee

Dr. Fran Walley presented the reports as committee chair.

10.1 Request for Decision: Disestablishment of the Environmental Engineering Division and related Council bylaw amendment

Dr. Walley reported that after a review of the Division of Environmental Engineering in 2011, the College of Graduate Studies and Research and College of Engineering, which has operational responsibility for the environmental engineering programs, elected to transfer the responsibility for these programs from the chair of the division to an existing department head in the College of Engineering. In October, 2013, Graduate Council voted to disestablish the division. Due to low enrolment, new admissions to these programs have been suspended pending a review of the environmental engineering graduate programs and the outcome of the TransformUS review process. The consequential amendment to the Council bylaws is to remove the division from the listing of departments and divisions.

WALLEY/RANGACHARYULU: That Council approve the disestablishment of the Division of Environmental Engineering, and

That Council's bylaws be amended to reflect the disestablishment.

CARRIED

10.2 Item for Information: TransformUS task force reports

Dr. Walley recalled that in January 2013 Council gave approval in principle to the undertaking of a process for program prioritization for all academic and administrative programs. The task force reports mark the end of the first phase of the TransformUS process. The planning and priorities committee's intention in tabling the TransformUS task force reports with Council at this time is to facilitate discussion on the process used to develop the reports. She expressed her gratitude to the task force co-chairs for their willingness to meet with members of the planning and priorities committee to discuss and clarify the process undertaken to create the reports, and commended members of the task forces for the many hours of work which they committed to this task.

The floor was then opened for discussion and Dr. Walley invited questions on the process used to create the reports of Dr. Beth Bilson and Dr. Lisa Kalynchuk, co-chairs of the academic programs transformation task force and of Dr. Kevin Schneider and Dr. Bob Tyler, co-chairs of the support services transformation task force.

A summary of the key discussion points and questions raised follows:

Several members thanked the co-chairs and members of the task forces for the tremendous undertaking in creating the reports and respectfully acknowledged their efforts.

In response to the question of how the task forces dealt with inconsistencies regarding the apportionment of resources to the various categories, Dr. Kalynchuk indicated that the inconsistencies were not predominant across all templates. In those instances where the financial information was unclear, the academic task force attempted to seek clarification. In those cases, where clarification was not available, the task force placed the program in quintile 4 as an indication that a more detailed analysis of the program was required. Dr. Tyler indicated that the difficulty related to some units on the support services side was not that the financial information submitted was incorrect, but that some services are funded through several means and sources, and not all sources were recorded on the templates.

To avoid data inconsistencies in the future, Dr. Kalynchuk suggested that an audit of the data in the templates be completed prior to their submission to any reviewing body, and that centralized data collected in a more comprehensive manner populate the templates. Overall, she expressed that the academic task force believed its recommendations to be based on solid information. Those completing the templates were also given the opportunity to provide discursive information about the program.

A member asked whether some units were at a disadvantage if there was lack of clarity regarding their program, due to the fact that not all units were represented on the task forces. Dr. Kalynchuk indicated that as the task forces adhered to a conflict of interest policy, there was no advantage to any unit by having a unit member on the task force. The conflict of interest policy required those members with an affiliation to the program under discussion, or a family member affiliated with the program, to be recused from discussion. Members were also given the opportunity to identify other conflicts of interest, which might not be readily apparent.

The perspective that there are certain disciplines that are central to university mission was submitted, with the question of whether the task force viewed some disciplines as core to the university. Dr. Bilson noted that although discussion was informed by academic values, all programs were reviewed against the information received, and therefore there was no distinction given based on the perception that certain programs had more intrinsic value than other programs.

A member requested an indication of the preference of the support services task force regarding the centralization versus the decentralization of support services. Dr. Schneider indicated that task force responded to evidence of duplication of services and to the importance of support services meeting the needs of stakeholders. The next phase will call upon the university to begin to understand the appropriate mix of centralized and decentralized services. He noted there are examples in the support services report of both types of service models that are working very well.

Given the difficulty of the inconsistencies of the data and the resulting perception that the process was flawed, a Council member asked the co-chairs for their assessment of the Dickeson model. Dr. Bilson replied that although the Dickeson text was full of interesting ideas that the academic task force did depart from the text based on what the task force thought was a suitable process for the university at this time. In response to a question on this deviation, Dr. Kalynchuk indicated that the task force departed from the approach advocated by Dickeson related to the assigning of programs into quintiles, as explained in the report.

The task force believed that to place 20% of programs into each quintile would compromise the process and place programs into quintiles where they did not belong. The end result was that the quintiles were treated as categories rather than quintiles, and Dr. Kalynchuk acknowledged that the use of the word quintile was no longer a correct descriptor. As a result, the task force tried to ensure that the labels assigned to the quintiles gave an accurate description of each category. In response, the observation was made that the Dickeson claim that the cost of education is driven by the proliferation of programs was disproved by the task force, as the task force placed 3% of the university's programs in quintile 1. Many of these programs reflect university priorities and are among the university's costliest programs.

In closing, the chair thanked those members who submitted questions and commended the task force co-chairs and task force members.

11. Other business

There was no other business.

12. Question period

A member inquired when a comprehensive summary of the feedback received by PCIP on the task force reports might be expected. Dr. Fairbairn outlined his anticipation that feedback would be wide and diverse, and encouraged members to refer to the web page set up to collect feedback at: <http://words.usask.ca/transformus/consultation-and-feedback/>. He noted that comments received will not be merged into a single document by PCIP, rather PCIP will report on those themes that become evident in the feedback received.

13. Adjournment

The chair invited all in attendance upon conclusion of the meeting to partake in a holiday season reception in the Neatby-Timlin foyer.

DESBRISAY/PARKINSON: That the meeting be adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

CARRIED

Next meeting – 2:30 pm, January 23, 2014