

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

A tribute to Dr. Ian McDonald, former dean of the College of Medicine and professor emeritus from the Department of Psychiatry, was delivered by Dr. David Keegan, clinical professor and professor emeritus from the Department of Psychiatry. A tribute was also given to Dr. David Popkin, professor and dean emeritus from the College of Medicine by Dr. Femi Olatunbosun, professor from the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences. A moment of silence was observed.

The chair called the meeting to order at 2:48 p.m.

1. Adoption of the agenda

TYLER/RIGBY: To adopt the agenda as circulated.

CARRIED

2. Opening remarks

The chair extended New Year's greetings to all in attendance and noted that the Council newsletter, "Council Matters", was delivered to all faculty by email on December 24th and is posted on the Council section of the university secretary's website.

3. Minutes of the meeting of December 19, 2013

A correction to the minutes was requested and agreed to by the President, to add at the end of the first sentence of the last paragraph on the second page, the clause: "...and student academic matters." followed by the sentence, "The president agreed with this principle."

BRENNA/TYLER: That the Council minutes of December 19, 2013 be approved as circulated with the noted amendment.

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 on those significant matters she has worked to address over the fall term. The College of Medicine continues to advance *The Way Forward*, as the implementation plan for the college's vision. The provincial government supports the plan and is willing to work with the university in the development of an alternative funding plan which will protect faculty time for teaching and

research. The president reported that recently she and Colum Smith, acting dean of the College of Medicine, served on a panel for the Canadian College of Health Leaders with leaders from the Saskatoon Health Region, and that they continue to work on building strong relationships with the health regions.

Regarding *Vision 2025*, the president advised that after two months of focusing internally, she has turned her focus externally, meeting with the FSIN's Education Committee. Meetings are also scheduled with the Chamber of Commerce, Deputy Ministers' Council and others to gather comments and feedback. Work continues on a revised draft. The tentative schedule is that the *Vision 2025* document will be submitted to Council for consideration of endorsement in April.

Thirdly, the president commented briefly on the TransformUS initiative. Meetings have concluded with each unit leader with budget authority, and through these meetings she has learned an incredible amount of what is occurring on campus.

Regarding the federal and provincial budgets, which will be released in the next month, the president advised that both are expected to be tight. The president noted she continues to consult federally and provincially and press the cause for the universities at large, and also provincially specifically for the needs of the University of Saskatchewan.

The president referred to the U15 group of Canadian universities and quoted from a recent publication by the U15 to illustrate why it matters that the University of Saskatchewan is a part of the U15, as follows:

U15 universities are major contributors to Canada's science, technology and innovation (ST&I) ecosystem. We represent a \$5.3B annual research enterprise, attract more than 85% of the private sector's investment in university research, receive 80% of Canada's competitive research awards, and hold a portfolio of more than 2800 active intellectual property licences. Our researchers partner with thousands of small, medium and large business to help them innovate and become increasingly globally competitive. We educate more than 565,000 people annually, attract more than one-third of Canada's total international post-secondary students (and more than half of Canada's international university students), and produce about 75% of Canada's PhDs. Our institutions employ more than 100,000 people and have an economic impact of more than \$100 billion annually.<sup>1</sup>

The president then called for questions. A Council member referred to a comment made by Robert Campbell, President of Mount Allison University, regarding reliance on revenue from international students that results in dependence on a particular stream of funding and this would be a concern for a university in an inappropriate way, and asked whether President Busch-Vishniac had similar concerns. In response the president concurred with what she believed President Campbell was saying to the extent he has identified that a

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<sup>1</sup> *U15 Response to Federal ST&I Consultation Paper, Seizing Canada's Moment: Moving Forward in Science, Technology and Innovation, January 24, 2014, U15 Group of Canadian Research Universities*

percentage of government funding is targeted for specific purposes and has increased over time, which removes the decision-making from where it belongs.

A Council member noted a number of letters to the editor of *The StarPhoenix* regarding TransformUS cuts and asked senior administration to comment on where the university's budget needs are at this moment. The president advised that senior administration has been clear about how the deficit amount was derived, and invited the provost to respond more directly.

Dr. Fairbairn noted that he responded to similar questions at the last Council meeting. In summary, the administration identified in 2012 that based on reasonable assumptions the university would face a \$44M deficit by 2016 if no action were taken. Actions have been taken resulting in reducing the deficit by \$15M by 2016 and maintaining a balanced budget through both permanent and one-time measures. As a result, approximately one-third of the budgetary gap has been accounted for, which represents significant progress; two-thirds of the gap remains to be addressed to achieve a balanced budget in 2016 and sustainability beyond. The Council member asked whether a financial town hall could be held to confirm the cuts that have in fact been made to assist in decision-making. The provost noted that in spring the multi-year budget framework is updated and addressed at the Board and Council. Also administration will present the framework to the capital and finance budget sub-committee of the planning and priorities committee of Council. Dr. Fairbairn agreed that the budget could be reviewed again at a town hall and committed to also thinking about other means in which to make the university's budgetary information more accessible. In the meantime, he referred Council to the information provided on the university website from the financial town halls held last year.

A Council member noted that there have been widespread questions about the deficit and asked whether in the interest of transparency, the administration would work with the unions on campus to have an independent audit examination to demonstrate if the deficit claimed by administration is correct. The president noted that this is a question for the Board of Governors which has financial authority and advised that the university's financial books are independently audited. Administration is currently in discussions with the University of Saskatchewan Faculty Association about the transparency of the information. The provost added that one can only audit financial information from the past so the current and prior years can be reviewed but that an audit would not apply to projected budgets. He noted that one can review the multi-year budgets, but this is different than an audit of past information.

A Council member referred to the U15 mandate that the president had quoted noting that faculty aspire for everything in this mandate and agree with it, but she wondered about matters beyond this mandate – for example with respect to artistic work. The president agreed that everything that was in the quoted paragraph is reflective of a source of pride for the university, but there are certainly other pieces, such as artistic work and engagement of Aboriginal students which are also sources of pride for the university.

A Council member noted the timing of the recent TransformUS town hall meetings and suggested that the times were not convenient for students or alumni and recommended having another town hall meeting at which all stakeholders can attend, perhaps in the

evening. He also noted that the spirit of Council's vote in January 2013 to approve the undertaking of program prioritization included consultation with students in this prioritization. He expressed that he thought this should be a continued intent and encouraged further consultation with students. The president explained that there were four town hall meetings, the students were invited to three of them and the fourth was for department heads. In addition to these meetings there were mechanisms put in place to collect responses including emails, letters and postings to the website. The president noted that there has been concern expressed that when the task force reports were released it was just before or at the beginning of final exams; however, the USSU executive was consulted and recommended that the reports be released.

The president advised that there is a desire to continue moving the process forward so that some actions may be taken this year as even a short delay could have a significant impact, resulting in the need to make deeper cuts later on. The president also clarified that she was asked why if she had time to meet with 33 unit leaders she did not have time to meet with the USSU executive. The president noted, in fact, she meets with the USSU and GSA executive monthly, and will be meeting with them this coming Monday. These meetings will continue because students are important. Also, the deans have been asked as they speak with their units regarding TransformUS to ensure they are including the students in their college.

A Council member asked whether the president was disappointed with the level of student response. The president advised that she was not disappointed. Students were placed on the task forces because they belonged there; the student voices were influential, they were heard and they had an impact. There are also student members on Council, Senate and the Board of Governors. She stated that it is not true that any of these are token students, but rather these students are people who have played an important role to make sure students are heard. Also, more student reaction has been received online. The president advised she believes because we have promised all students that if they are currently in a degree program they will not be impacted, that a number of students have determined that they need not address this issue. The Council member asked whether consultation is happening at college and unit levels, to which the president advised that all units have been asked to make sure consultation occurs. As an example she cited the meeting that the College of Arts and Science held with its students the previous afternoon.

An undergraduate student in the College of Arts and Science commented that she was disappointed in hearing that the president was not disappointed in the student response, because she was disappointed in the student response. The student noted that there is a feeling of exclusivity that surrounds this process and that the students are not being taken seriously. She pointed out the fact that there was a public reaction taken with a banner on the overpass over College Drive and that students feel their voices are not being heard. She also expressed her disappointment that all of the town hall meetings were at the same time and encouraged senior administration to be more supportive of student involvement, noting that speaking with student associations and bodies is not the same as speaking directly with students.

## 6. Report of the Provost

Brett Fairbairn, provost and vice-president academic, referred members to his written report in the meeting materials. He noted that earlier in the week a letter was sent to all members of the GAA from the chair of council and himself in response to questions received that touched on matters of governance and how decisions are made at the university. This letter provided information on the university's tricameral governance and decision-making. University Council considers both academic and financial matters in making its decisions and this is very important to both Council and the GAA. Dr. Fairbairn added that Council, and notably Council's planning and priorities committee, is an extremely important partner for him in his work.

Regarding TransformUS, Dr. Fairbairn advised that the consultation period extends to the end of the month and following that PCIP will develop an implementation plan, using a principled approach. Through the ongoing consultations and other forms of input, themes of questions and comments from those meetings have been recorded. The provost advised that he hopes to be in a position to provide more information on PCIP's progress in February. His intent is that the plan will be relatively short and coherent consisting of 10 to 20 pages, which will outline areas of work to be done at the university and how to proceed with each. The plan will comment on the information collected in developing that plan and provide an update on the process.

The provost called for questions. A Council member noted that he was not surprised that the USFA and university administration appear to be on a collision course over the reduction of academic positions. He expressed that providing all relevant budget information to the faculty association and other unions would provide validity on the projected budgetary shortfall and assist in the process. He asked why the provost was not willing to open the books and provide evidence of a budgetary shortfall. The provost advised that this information might be something that administration addresses with unions, but not through University Council, as there is a difference between collegial self-governance which is the mandate of Council, and employer and employee discussions which take place with collective bargaining units. The provost noted that it is also important to talk about financial matters at Council and particularly with the planning and priorities committee. He explained that disclosing further information will be reviewed within all of these relationships to the extent appropriate within each relationship.

The provost advised that he has taken care to regularly talk about the key drivers in the university's budget and briefly recapped these: 70% of the university's revenue is from the provincial grant, followed by tuition fee revenue and then other miscellaneous revenue. On the expenditure side, 75% is compensation to employees of the university. The university's key source of revenue from the province is optimistically projected to increase by 2% per year. Given these key drivers, if no action is taken, there will be growing deficits over the years. The multi-year budget updates budgetary projections annually. Reports are also issued each year on the university's budget. The provost noted that it is always possible to communicate more and that he would look for additional means to communicate the university's financial position.

A Council member referred to the article by the economist, Eric Howe, in the latest issue of *VOX* and asked the provost if he had a response to the key points raised in that article. The provost advised that he has seen a copy of the article and although he did not wish to debate one person's expression of opinion, he did note that many of the comments delving into the nature of the task force process were askew of his reading of the process. The provost advised that having read the task force reports he thought it was clear that the groups used their judgment and took many aspects into account, as appropriate to any prioritization methodology.

Comments were received from a Council member who expressed his belief that there is deep skepticism among students and faculty, that there is a predisposition to exclude students and to infantilize faculty and that administration should take the skepticism seriously. He advised that there is an initiative for a group to have a meeting with the Board of Governors and there is also an initiative to have a special GAA meeting. The Council member noted that the provost was showing an inclination to implement the recommendations rather than begin again, and that a number of faculty members are very strongly transforming anxiety to initiative. The provost noted that these initiatives were unknown to him and that he would look into them further. In response, a Council member spoke in support of administration working proactively to head off a budgetary crisis and that although he acknowledged the process was not perfect, that no process would be, and that it was better to work together than against each other.

## 7. Student Societies

### 7.1 Report from the USSU

Max FineDay, president of the USSU, spoke to the challenges facing the university with the TransformUS process. He noted that he believed it is a process that is failing the whole university community, not just students. He advised that in conversations with students the students feel unheard and uninvolved which they are finding disappointing. He stated that students can and should be able to be represented on further deciding bodies in the TransformUS process.

Mr. FineDay referred to a public letter from the president, which spoke to input in the task force groups from students, and that finding further effective student input now lies with student administrators. Mr. FineDay stated that in fact, the USSU or any other student association has had no communication from senior administration on offering student input into this process, which he believes to be a troubling lack of process. He advised that the president did consult the USSU with regard to the release of the reports, and the USSU executive did want the reports out as soon as they were available to provide the most time for students to go through them; however, the USSU was not consulted on the timeline. He advised that releasing the reports at the height of exams and with holidays to follow resulted in students being required to go through pages of reports during a time when students were otherwise occupied. Mr. FineDay stated that student leaders should be consulted specifically by senior administration.

Mr. FineDay advised that he moved the following resolution at USSU Council which was passed unanimously:

Whereas student associations, the USSU and student constituencies have not and will not be formally consulted;

And, whereas the timeline for consultation is inadequate due to the complexity of the reports and the significant time required for meaningful review and discussion;

And, whereas there is no student representation on the Provost's Committee on Integrated Planning;

And, whereas student have expressed concern with the implementation of the reports moving forward,

Therefore be it resolved that the University Students' Council on behalf of its members has lost confidence in the TransformUS process.

Mr. FineDay advised that other student bodies on campus will be considering similar motions as the students feel left out of the process. He noted that this is not to take away from the work of the task forces, especially the student involvement on the task forces, however for this process to have legitimacy it should be met with cooperation and not division. He asked senior administration to take another look to determine how best to work together with the student body.

Mr. FineDay's comments were followed by applause. The chair thanked Mr. FineDay for his report noting his pleasure at hearing student comments.

## 7.2 Report from the GSA

Kiri Staples, vice-president operations and communications for the Graduate Students' Association, presented the GSA report to Council. Ms. Staples highlighted the graduate research conference that will be held March 6-8 with the theme of the conference being, 'Curiosity'. The conference is intended to be interdisciplinary in nature, with students and researchers asked to speak about the purpose of their research and what makes them passionate about it. Ms. Staples strongly encouraged both students and faculty to participate in the conference to make the event successful and directed Council members to the GSA website for more information.

Ms. Staples also noted the GSA awards gala which will be held on March 8 at the Radisson Hotel. She encouraged Council members to participate and attend the event.

## 8. Research, Scholarly and Artistic Work Committee

Caroline Tait, chair of the committee, presented this item to Council.

### 8.1 Item for information: Mid-year report

Professor Tait noted that she enjoyed working with an excellent committee, and particularly noted the engagement and contributions of the student members on the committee. She highlighted the areas covered by the committee during the year including TransformUS, the review of the College of Graduate Studies and Research and the College of Medicine vision and implementation plans. Work continues on a report on undergraduate research that will likely come to Council in April.

Professor Tait requested feedback to inform the committee as it considers its priorities in the coming year and asked members to send their thoughts to her in this regard. Potential topics suggested to date include the expression of artistic works, interdisciplinary multi-research, which has changed dramatically over recent years, the guidelines for Indigenous research on campus and looking at industry partners involved in mentoring graduate students and researchers.

The Council chair noted that any responses could also be submitted to the Office of the University Secretary for communication to Professor Tait.

## 9. Academic Programs Committee

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

### 9.1 Request for Decision: College of Arts and Science BA & Sc in Health Studies

Professor Dobson noted the decision before Council relates to the honours and four-year degree programs in Health Studies which have an element of interconnectedness. The program has been developed over a number of years with a great deal of consultation and has three streams of concentration: biology development and health; individual society and health; and culture, environment and health.

DOBSON/KROL: That Council approve the Bachelor of Arts and Science Honours and Four-year degree programs in the field of Health Studies in the College of Arts and Science.

CARRIED

### 9.2 Request for Decision: College of Graduate Studies and Research MA in Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies

Professor Dobson noted that this program was identified as an important area of development as far back as 2004. It is a 15-credit research focused thesis-based master's program. Students will be admitted every two years to allow for a small number of faculty to accommodate the program. In response to a Council member's question as to whether the university had a master's program in this area previously, Professor Dobson advised that there have been undergraduate programs and special-case master's students, but this would be the first regularized master's program. David Parkinson, vice-dean of the College of Arts and Science,



advised that there has been an array of undergraduate programming in women's and gender studies and this serves to broaden the scope from that programming. The program provides an opportunity to students from other disciplines and that faculty and students have been seeking graduate-level programming in this area for some time.

DOBSON/KROL: That Council approve the Master of Arts degree program in the field of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies from the College of Graduate Studies and Research.

CARRIED

### 9.3 Request for Decision: College of Medicine Admission Qualifications

Professor Dobson explained that in the past completion of the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) was only required for students who were not already attending the University of Saskatchewan or the University of Regina. As the new MCAT is more reflective of the needs of the College of Medicine and the students the college is trying to recruit, the decision submitted is to require all applicants to write the MCAT to facilitate comparison of students. In the past, the admission scoring for students was based 65% on the interview and 35% on grade point average; whereas now 50% will be based on the interview, 20% on the MCAT and 30% on the grade point average to determine the student's ranking and therefore their eligibility for admission to the college's M.D. program. Professor Dobson advised that there has been broad consultation including with medical students who are strongly in favor of this change.

DOBSON/KROL: That Council approve the College of Medicine admission qualification requirement for the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) of all Saskatchewan residents who apply for entrance into medicine effective for applicants as of October 2015.

CARRIED

## 10. Nominations Committee

Professor Krol, chair of the nominations committee, presented the report to Council.

10.1 Request for Decision: Nominations to review committees for the dean of the Edwards School of Business and the dean of the Western College of Veterinary Medicine.

Following the motion being read, the chair asked three times if there were any nominations from the floor. Hearing none the vote was then taken.

KROL/WOTHERSPOON: That Council approve nominations to the review committees for the dean of the Edwards School of Business and the dean of the Western College of Veterinary Medicine as presented in the meeting materials.

CARRIED

11. Other business

There was no other business.

12. Question period

There were no questions.

13. Adjournment

In his closing remarks the chair encouraged Council members to encourage colleagues to run for Council positions, and noted that nominations will close on February 3, 2014.

On behalf of Council, the Chair recognized Cathie Fornssler, committee coordinator, on her retirement after more than 30 years on campus. Her various contributions through the years were noted, and she was thanked in particular for her many contributions to Council. A gift was presented.

PARKINSON/DOBSON: That the meeting be adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

CARRIED

Next meeting – 2:30 pm, February 27, 2014