

Attendance: See Appendix A for listing of members in attendance.

Lisa Kalynchuk, chair of Council called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m., observing that quorum had been attained.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

D'EON/FLYNN: *To adopt the agenda as circulated.*

CARRIED

2. Opening Remarks

The chair made brief remarks, referring to the protocol at meetings and welcoming all members back in the New Year. She expressed that she was pleased with the collegiality and engagement shown at Council meetings in her first months as chair and that she looked forward to seeing it continue in 2017.

3. Minutes of the Meeting of December 15, 2016

Beth Williamson, university secretary indicated that a correction to 8.1. Request for decision – Nominations to the Review Committee of the Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning had been submitted, comprising the addition of two sentences at the beginning of the first paragraph under item 8.1 as follows:

A Council member asked about the criteria for choosing members and whether any criteria existed. Tamara Larre referred to the criteria set out in the Council Bylaws for nominations.

WILSON/AITKEN: *That the December 15, 2016 Council minutes be approved with the correction as noted.*

CARRIED

4. Business from the Minutes

The chair noted four items of business arising from the minutes and each was addressed in turn.

1. In response to the question on the number of visiting speakers hosted by the university and how that number might compare to U15 comparators, the chair reported that the coordinating committee discussed the question at its recent meeting. Members were in favour of further analysis, and therefore the question has been referred to the research, scholarly and artistic work committee to discuss with the vice-president research and to report back to Council.
2. Michelle Prytula, dean of Education responded to a question about the activities undertaken during a recent trip to China by a group of individuals from the College of Education, reporting that a group of four individuals travelled to China to further work previously

established and to engage in a collection of opportunities to forge new relationships. Dr. Prytula briefly outlined the itinerary and objectives for the trip relative to each educational institute visited. Among those visited were Tianjin Normal University, Beijing Language and Culture University, Beijing Normal University, Beijing Institute of Technology, Yunnan Agricultural University, and Concorde Chinese Canadian School. Dean Prytula indicated the trip was productive and expressed her openness to engage in discussions with members of Council, should anyone have further questions or interest.

3. Patti McDougall, vice-provost teaching and learning responded to the question of the impact that the new fall break is having on students by presenting slides containing faculty and student survey data on the question of whether the expectations associated with the fall break week were being realized. Dr. McDougall reported that 86% of students surveyed were satisfied with the fall break week compared to 58% of faculty members surveyed. Dr. McDougall indicated that the slides would be appended to the minutes.

Comments included the importance of having a break in the first term, particularly for first-year students who may be experiencing transitional issues, the question of whether the break will be extended to students in the colleges of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine with future discussion to occur in February with students in these colleges, and the increasing prevalence of mental health issues among students. Dr. McDougall noted that those between the ages of 18-24 are at the highest risk for the onset of mental health illness. The university has seen an increase in the use of student support services over the past five years related to student mental health.

4. Chad London, dean of Kinesiology and vice-chair of the Huskie Athletics Board of Trustees responded to the question of why the composition of the Board of Trustees does not include a graduate student representative. Dr. London indicated that the board will be reviewing revisions to its draft terms of reference in March to ensure its governance structure supports its goals. The purpose of the board is to provide strategic guidance to Huskie Athletics. A key topic is engagement with students. Dr. London reported that the working groups reporting to the Board of Trustees include student representation and consultation has occurred with the Huskie Athletics Student Council.

5. Report of the President

President Peter Stoicheff referred members to his written report, and reported on his presentation to the City of Saskatoon at the “Let’s Talk 2020 campaign,” a daylong session among city councilors to talk about trends that cities are considering around the world as they imagine their futures.

President Stoicheff spoke of the educational landscape across the country and the role of Universities Canada as an advocacy body that focuses the federal government on post-secondary education. The president referred specifically to the education committee of Universities Canada and its action plan on Indigenous Action, which is under development. Further information can be found at: <http://www.univcan.ca/priorities/indigenous-education/>.

A national steering committee on university gatherings to build reconciliation is supported by Universities Canada. Blaine Favel, former Chancellor and Vice-Provost Patti McDougall are involved in lobbying for this initiative. The goal is to sustain the national forum on building truth and reconciliation that the university was the first to hold with the *Building Reconciliation National*

Forum in November 2015. The third national forum will be held at the University of Manitoba in the fall of 2017.

President Stoicheff noted three areas of deep concern in anticipation of the federal budget: driving innovation through discovery as Canada falls behind other OECD¹ nations in investments in research and development; mobilizing Canada's talent to succeed in the global economy through the next generation of entrepreneurs and innovators; and developing tomorrow's Indigenous leaders, with the request to the federal government to commit additional financial assistance to Indigenous students by lifting the cap on the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) for Indigenous college and university students. In addition, a parliamentary committee is conducting a review of *The Copyright Act*; of particular concern is the importance of protecting fair dealing and the exemption for educational institutes.

The president drew attention to the university's recent success in the CFI Major Science Initiatives (MSI) funding competition, resulting in the Canadian Light Source (CLS), InterVac/VIDO, and the SuperDARN Canada network receiving major awards comprising one-fifth of all CFI funding announced in the competition. Special note was made of the leadership of Professor Kathryn McWilliams of the Department of Physics and Engineering Physics in leading the SuperDARN Canada network, which enables the prediction of electromagnetic storms above the earth.

President Stoicheff concluded his remarks by commenting on the work done by Universities Canada in the recent past on the future of the liberal arts and universities as cultural hubs. There were no questions of the president.

6. Report of the Provost

Interim Provost Michael Atkinson presented the provost's report to Council. Provost Atkinson projected a slide on the university's integrated planning process and associated timeline. Planning efforts will culminate in a fourth integrated plan being submitted to Council for approval in the fall of 2017.

The chair invited questions of the provost. A Council member spoke of reports in the media about tuition, specifically that Canada has the second highest tuition fees in the OECD as reported by *The Guardian*. Further, as reported by Statistics Canada, Saskatchewan has the second highest tuition fees in the country and ranks lowest in terms of student financial aid. He asked when the university would look at the impact of these high student fees on current students and the effect of student debt on past students. Other concerns expressed related to perceived corporatization within the university and the exclusion of some faculty from undergraduate teaching responsibilities.

Provost Atkinson acknowledged the spirit of concern evident in the comments and agreed the university needs to do more to support its students. With respect to setting tuition rates, the university has adopted a responsible process that includes consultation with students. The rate of inflation experienced by the university is higher at around 2.5% compared to the 1.1% inflation index reported by the Consumer Price Index (CPI). To contextualize the reports referenced, he noted that the average tuition rate in the College of Arts and Science is lower than the average across Canada, but that the higher number of professional colleges within the university elevates

¹ Nations belonging to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

the average tuition fee reported by Statistics Canada. He suggested that the topic of student financial concerns could be considered further by Council through its committees.

7. Student Societies

7.1 Report from the USSU

Kehan Fu, president of the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union (USSU) presented the USSU report, reporting on student union activities throughout the month of January, including promotion of the uSAFE app, the Women in Leadership week, and work with the Nasser Family Emergency Student Trust, which assists students facing unexpected financial difficulty.

7.2 Report from the GSA

Ziad Ghaith, president of the Graduate Students' Association, presented the GSA report to Council. In addition to the Three-minute Thesis (3 MT) competition and the GU15 Conference for graduate students among the U15, he reported on the governance restructuring within the GSA and continuing efforts to formalize a new graduate student/supervisor agreement. The agreement template is a co-project with the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies and will be considered and implemented appropriately through the university's governing bodies.

8. Planning and Priorities Committee

Dirk de Boer, chair of the planning and priorities committee (PPC), presented the committee report to Council.

8.1 Request for Decision – Respiratory Research Centre in the College of Medicine

Professor de Boer referred to the report before members requesting approval of the Respiratory Research Centre as a centre that will build knowledge of respiratory disease and increase research activity in the clinical sciences to provide improved health care to those suffering from respiratory illnesses. Professor de Boer indicated that proponents made revisions throughout the review process in response to feedback received. These revisions included placing milestones in the proposal against which the centre's progress in fulfilling its mandate will be tested.

Discussion of the proposal included the observation that the centre has a budgetary structural deficit, which will be realized in the fourth year of its existence. Professor Darcy Marciniuk, lead proponent of the centre, indicated that funding agreements with the Saskatchewan Lung Association and the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation (SHRF) are pending but were not included in the budget as written confirmation has not yet been received. Other discussion focused on external versus internal funding support, the source of the funding, the opportunity cost associated with the internal funding, and the sustainability of centres in general. Vice-President Chad spoke of work underway to review the categorization, governance, leadership, and sustainability of centres which will culminate in an overall report recommending revisions to the university's centres policy and guidelines. The need for a structured reporting and review process of centres has been identified, and Dr. Chad noted that over the last several years, many of the university's Type B centres have been reviewed. In response to a question from a Council member about information on these reviews, Dr. Chad indicated that the

centres' review documents are publicly available and that she would reference their location on the university website in the minutes.²

De BOER/K. WILSON: *That Council approve the Respiratory Research Centre as a type A centre in the College of Medicine.*

CARRIED

9. Academic Programs Committee

Kevin Flynn, chair of the academic programs committee presented the committee report to Council.

9.1 Request for Decision – Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Indigenous Studies

Professor Flynn reported that the Department of Indigenous Studies has had special-case doctoral students for the past ten years but is limited by the requirement that there be only four students in the program at any one time. Standardization of the special-case program as a regular program recognizes the success of the special-case program, allows increased enrolment, and places the university on a competitive footing with the University of Alberta and the University of Manitoba which have regular-case Ph.D. programs in Indigenous studies. Culturally and philosophically, the program supports important commitments honoured by the university to Indigenous students, who comprise the majority of students in the program.

Questions from Council members clarified details of the qualifying and comprehensive exams and student timeline in program. Indigenous students are underrepresented in doctoral studies, and a plea was made for the university to provide additional funding to these studies as many Indigenous students do not have funding beyond the master's level. Professor Rob Innes of the Department of Indigenous Studies responded to a question about the sustainability of the program, indicating that the regularized program will enable more even distribution of courses among the faculty in the department, rather than having a small subset of the faculty teach the special topics reading courses. He expressed confidence in the program, reporting that the number of faculty within the department has increased and with this expansion, the department has grown in capacity and maturity.

FLYNN/J. WILSON: *That Council approve the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Indigenous Studies, effective September 2017.*

CARRIED

9.2 Request for Decision – College of Medicine – Changes to Approved Grading System

Professor Flynn explained that the College of Medicine uses a pass/fail grading system for students in its M.D. program and all final grades are reported as a pass or fail on the student's transcript. However, a numeric grade is also assigned and used internally within the college to identify those students at academic risk and to determine student eligibility for scholarships and awards. The numeric grade does not appear on the student's transcript. The proposed change is to the literal grade descriptors and sets a higher standard, with any

² The self-study documents and external reviewers' review report are posted under the name of the relevant centre on the *Centres* website. See list of centres and institutes at: <http://centres.usask.ca>

percentage grade below 70% denoted as a failure. The change is supported by the college's student curriculum review committee, which includes student members who have both voice and vote on the committee.

There were questions about the percentage of medical students who fail and what the equivalent percentage grade of an F is for medical students on their transcript. Note was made of these questions for future response.

FLYNN/J. WILSON: *That Council approve the changes to the literal grade descriptors for courses taught as part of the MD program, effective September 2017.*

CARRIED

9.3 Request for Decision – Retroactive Approval of Changes to Approved Grading System in the College of Dentistry

Professor Flynn referred Council to the context presented in the previous item. Similar to the College of Medicine, the College of Dentistry used a pass/fail system in the past, but changed to a numerical percentage system in 2012/13. At the time of this change, the request to have Council approve the change to a minimum passing grade of 60% was inadvertently not submitted. The requested retroactive approval corrects this oversight to ensure that appropriate documentation exists for the non-standard minimum pass scores in Dentistry.

FLYNN/J. WILSON: *That Council provide retroactive approval to the changes to the literal grade descriptors for courses in the College of Dentistry, effective immediately.*

CARRIED

10. Governance Committee

Louise Racine, chair of the governance committee, presented the committee report to Council.

10.1 Notice of Motion – School of Environment and Sustainability Faculty Council Membership

Professor Racine outlined the changes submitted which provide clarity to the membership of the School of Environment and Sustainability Faculty Council with respect to the definition of standard faculty member appointments within the school. As the membership of faculty councils are listed within the Council's Bylaws, a notice of motion is required.

Professor Racine read the motion to Council:

That Council approve the membership changes to the Faculty Council of the School of Environment and Sustainability as shown in the attachment and that Council's bylaws be amended accordingly.

11. Research, Scholarly and Artistic Work Committee

Paul Jones, chair of the research, scholarly and artistic work committee, presented the committee report to Council.

11.1 Report for Information – Changes to Terms of Reference for the New Researcher and Distinguished Researcher Awards

Professor Jones reported on the changes made to the terms of reference of the New Researcher and Distinguished Researcher awards. Discussion occurred on the number of awards made by the university relative to internal awards made by other U15 universities. Karen Chad, vice-president research, indicated the university lags behind other U15 universities in terms of the number of awards it makes to recognize its own researchers. A Council member spoke of her concern about the lack of recognition of childcare leaves and the impact of such leaves upon research productivity and the qualifying timelines that apply to many awards.

12. International Activities Committee

Gordon Zello, chair of the international activities committee, presented the committee report to Council.

12.1 Report for Information – Mid-year Report of the International Activities Committee

Professor Zello reported that the international activities committee (IAC) has a broad mandate on behalf of Council and invited Council members to bring any international issues to the committee. Presently, the IAC is actively involved in the development of the university's Blueprint on Internationalization. The mid-year report submitted to Council acknowledges the international activity reports from colleges and schools that the committee has received over the past two years.

11. Other Business

The chair invited the university secretary to provide an update on Council elections. Ms. Williamson reported that a call has been issued for nominations in the categories of member at large and college faculty representatives. Nominations close February 1, 2017. Ms. Williamson asked that Council members encourage their colleagues to submit a nomination.

12. Question period

The chair invited questions. A member inquired about the status of the question of what access Council members should have to Council committee minutes. The chair indicated that the governance committee of Council considered the question and supported the present practice of keeping Council committee minutes confidential but that excerpts of committee minutes may be released at the discretion of the committee chair upon request. The chair noted the suggestion to modify the guidelines to provide clarity on when a committee chair might decline to provide the minutes would be submitted to the governance committee chair for additional consideration.

13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by motion (FLYNN/RACINE) at 4:35 pm.