



MINUTES OF UNIVERSITY COUNCIL
2:30pm Thursday, September 17, 2020
Via WebEx

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:31pm.

2. Tributes

None.

3. Adoption of the agenda

(Urquhart/Bell): *That the agenda be approved as circulated.*

CARRIED.

4. Opening remarks

The Chair of Council, Dr. Jay Wilson, acknowledged that Council meets on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis, paying respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of our gathering place and reaffirming our relationship with one another. He also noted that given the remote meeting modality, that members may be connecting from other locations and that we acknowledge our shared relations with the Indigenous peoples of this land.

Dr. Wilson thanked those who participated in Council orientation last week, including the new Council members and chairs, and he thanked the President and Provost for their remarks at the orientation.

He thanked Council members for their patience with the asynchronous Council meeting format that had been the case since March 2020. He assured Council that these meetings had followed applicable protocols, bylaws, and other governing documents.

The chair informed Council members of the protocols for the synchronous remote meeting.

Dr. Wilson reported that the regular monthly meetings between Council chairs and the President's Executive Committee continued to take place over the summer months. He reported that the discussion topics at the last meeting were the pandemic response, the fall enrolment and re-opening plan for research and teaching, and the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy.

5. Approval of Minutes of the meeting of June 18, 2020

(Walker/Card): *That the minutes be approved as circulated.*

There was one minor amendment.

CARRIED.

6. Business Arising from the Minutes

None.

7. Report of the President

President Stoicheff echoed the remarks of the Council chair, welcoming the new Council members and committee chairs. He emphasized the importance of the president's accountability to the governing bodies, and to Council in particular during the pandemic.

President Stoicheff also thanked the members of the crisis management and pandemic response team (PRT) for their work since March 2020. He recognized that the university's success in dealing with the pandemic and moving quickly to the remote delivery of courses was due to the hard work of faculty, staff and students. He noted that the immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic was at first dealt with on a day-by-day basis by the Crisis Management Team, which evolved into the PRT. He committed that a verbal report from the PRT would be a standing item on the Council agenda, presented by the chair of that committee, Dr. Darcy Marciniuk. He also reiterated that the hybrid model of program delivery would continue into the winter semester. This announcement was made as early as it was to allow students and faculty to have certainty in planning for the Winter 2021 term.

He reminded Council members that the University of Saskatchewan (USask) on any given day has approximately 30 thousand people on campus, which is equivalent to the fourth largest city in the province. Proactive planning for the pandemic has assisted in the province's efforts in flattening the curve.

In other news, the president acknowledged the recent announcement of the opening of the Prince Albert (PA) campus, which he called as a tremendous step for Indigenization at this university. He emphasized that the PA campus would enable access to post-secondary education in the North for those who could not otherwise attend the Saskatoon campus. He thanked Greg Fowler, Vice President Finance and Resources, and Patti McDougall, Vice Provost Teaching, Learning, and Student Experience (VPTLSE), and others, for their work in achieving this significant milestone for the university.

The President noted that the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Policy was being presented to Council. He recognized that the road to achieving true EDI will be long and challenging, but that we are moving in the right direction in alignment with the priorities expressed in the university's *Mission, Vision, and Values* statement. A strong policy will set the foundation and expectations of the university's leadership and of the campus community for ensuring EDI.

The president reported that the President's Executive Committee (PEC) is working with the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union (USSU) to develop an MOU on anti-racism and thanked the USSU for their early work on the initiative. He noted for Council that the Discrimination, Harassment, and Prevention Services would be expanded to assist with the operationalization of the EDI policy and the anti-racism MOU.

President Stoicheff welcomed Dr. Baljit Singh as the incoming Vice President Research. He thanked Dr. Karen Chad for her extraordinary service and leadership in the position.

There was a round of Q&A.

There was a question about the university's financial situation given the pandemic. The president answered that a full response to the question would be forthcoming at the October Council meeting [Table 1. action item 1].

There was another question about the status of the Kenderdine campus. The President replied that the reopening of the Kenderdine campus continues to be a top priority. The vision is being articulated and developed by faculty, staff, and stakeholders, which will enhance Indigenization, encompass research on the Boreal Forest, expand artistic works, and expand sustainability activities. There is also an architectural plan in place that pays homage to this important historical site. Funding is needed to see this vision through, which will be a priority in the upcoming comprehensive campaign.

There was a request for an update on the job losses that have occurred as a result of the pandemic, and of plans for potential future cuts. In addition, a report on planned tuition increases was requested. The President reported that no decisions have yet been made with regard to tuition, but that the university would not be seeking through next year's tuition rates to redress fully the financial losses incurred by the decision to keep this year's tuition rates the same as last year's. A report will be forthcoming as progress is made [Table 1. action item 2]

8. Report of the Provost

Dr. Melissa Just, Interim Provost and Vice President Academic, delivered the report of the Provost.

Dr. Just acknowledged the recent reports of retention issues of Indigenous faculty and staff at USask. She reported that senior leadership is listening carefully to the concerns raised by some members of Indigenous community, and that meetings are underway with the President and Provost to discuss the issues with the University of Saskatchewan Faculty Association (USFA), senior leaders, groups of Indigenous faculty and staff, and other groups or individuals as needed or requested. Together they will work toward a productive and shared path forward.

The Provost recognized the significant efforts across the university to ensure that teaching and learning experiences over the summer and this semester were robust and fulfilling. She provided an overview of the enrolment numbers for the fall, noting that they were better than the conservative projections presented to the Board of Governors in March 2020.

There was a round of Q&A.

There was a question about international graduate students' potential access to on-campus learning over the next two years given the pandemic. Dr. Patti McDougall responded that extensive efforts are underway with the federal government to advocate for international students' return and access to campuses in Canada.

There was a request for an update on progress on the *University Plan: 2025*. The Provost responded that a report will be provided to Council at either the December or January meeting [Table 1. action item 3].

9. PRT (Pandemic Response and Recovery Team) Verbal Report – Presented by Darcy Marciniuk, Associate Vice-President Research, PRT Chair

Dr. Darcy Marciniuk, Associate Vice President, Research and Chair of the PRT gave an update on the university's response to the pandemic. He noted that this report would be a standing item on the Council agenda this year, and that the updates would take the form of verbal reports so as to provide the most up-to-date information possible.

Dr. Marciniuk reported that as of Tuesday, September 15, 2020 over 6,200 individuals had completed the COVID-19 Safety Training Course. Adherence to the mask policy has been excellent. He reminded Council members that as of September 15, 2020, that the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) would be mandating self-isolation for anyone in contact with a confirmed case.

He also reported that over 730 research permits had been approved for approximately 780 students, 630 staff, and 330 faculty. 450 students are currently in the university residences. Two residence buildings are reserved in case of the need for quarantine spaces.

A major focus for the People and Resources departments has been ensuring supports for on-site safety, and additional health and wellness supports. The possibility of opening an on campus COVID-19 testing site is also being explored. All of these protocols, practices, and guidelines have been reviewed by the SHA.

There was a question about the 'blanket' prohibition on international travel, whereas some grants require work abroad. Dr. Marciniuk responded that these requests could be considered on a case-by-case basis, perhaps using the same portal for on-campus research requests.

There was another question about whether there are any people of colour on the PRT. Dr. Marciniuk responded that no, there are none on the PRT team but that there are on the Advisory Hub, which is an expanded committee of the PRT. There has also been interaction with various groups on campus to ensure respect for various perspectives.

10. Student Societies

10.1 Report from the USSU

The chair welcomed the USSU president, Autumn Larose-Smith to give the USSU report. She reported that the USSU executive focused on orientation and transition of executive leadership over the summer. The new executive is looking to the USSU's *Path Forward* strategic plan that was developed by last year's executive to guide their focus this year. She thanked PEC and the President for working the MOU to develop an anti-racism policy. She provided an update on the renegotiated UPass bus pass for students with the City of Saskatoon, which will now be on an opt-in basis. She reported that three of five of the USSU Centre coordinators have been hired back. She also reported hearing from the student community that they are satisfied with the quality of education being provided during these unprecedented times, and that there is an appreciation for the emphasis on providing safe spaces for students.

There were no questions related to the USSU report.

10.2 Report from the Graduate Students' Association (GSA)

The chair welcomed the President of the GSA, Humaira Inam, to present the report from the GSA.

The GSA President outlined four priorities for the coming academic year: 1) supports for mental health and wellbeing; 2) enhanced coverage for mental health support services for graduate students; 3) networking and peer support, while working with the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies to celebrate graduate student successes; 4) implementation of the student-supervisor agreement that is now mandatory for all entering graduate students. The GSA will also be doing more to ensure there is a sense of community for graduate students even in this remote learning environment.

There were no questions related to the GSA report.

11. Academic Programs Committee (APC)

The Chair called on Dr. Susan Detmer, Chair of APC to present an item for decision.

11.1 Request for Decision: Academic Courses Policy and Syllabi Changes

(DETMER/DETERS) It is recommended that Council approve the rescinding emergency "COVID-19 Declaration Regarding Syllabi Changes" and revert to the existing language in the Academic Courses Policy, effective immediately.

There was a question about the proposed amendment to the policy vs. the need to be nimble in these uncertain times. Dr. Detmer responded that the proposal is simply to return to the policy as prescribed before the COVID-19 situation in March 2020. Given the hybrid program delivery for fall and winter, we have the opportunity to better plan for remote delivery where possible. This will give students more certainty for the year ahead. Dr. McDougall also responded that the course syllabus is a form of contract with the students. The policy stipulates that courses can still change through the semester with the approval of the people in the class and of the department and/or college.

CARRIED.

12. Governance Committee

12.1 Request for Input: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy

The Chair called on Dr. Terry Wotherspoon, Chair of the Governance Committee to present a request for input.

Dr. Wotherspoon recalled the President's introduction at the beginning of the meeting on the importance of EDI among the university's priorities. Dr. Wotherspoon mentioned that given the commitments we have made as an institution and the environment we are working and living in that this proposed EDI policy is timely. He noted that there are a number of other policies, documents, and strategies that will bring together these various commitments. The policy will be accompanied by an action plan that will spell out the commitments and present a means by

which our progress against those commitments can be assessed. He also noted the extensive consultation that was conducted in the development of the proposed policy. Cheryl Carver, Associate Vice President, People and Resources was also present to answer any questions.

There were no questions or comments at the meeting related to the proposed policy.

13. Nominations Committee

13.1 Request for Decision: University Review Committee nomination for 2020/21

The Chair called on Dr. Paul Jones, Chair of the Nominations Committee to present two requests for decision.

(JONES/LAMB) It is recommended that Council approve the nomination of Hongming Cheng to the University Review Committee (URC) effective immediately to June 30, 2023.

The Chair of Council called for nominations from the floor three times.

CARRIED.

13.2 Request for Decision: University Review Committee nomination for 2020/21 no.2

(JONES/LAMB) It is recommended that Council approve the nomination of Nurul Chowdhury to the University Review Committee (URC) effective immediately to June 30, 2023.

There was a question about whether the Nominations Committee was expecting to have to fill more vacancies this year due to the additional pressures related to the pandemic. Dr. Jones responded that he could not say at this time.

The Chair of Council called for nominations from the floor three times.

CARRIED.

14. Coordinating Committee of Council

14.1 Report for Information: Council Report Deadlines – presented by Jay Wilson, University Council Chair.

Dr. Wilson reminded Council that as Council Chair, he is also the chair of the Coordinating Committee. As such, he was bringing forward for information the deadlines for Council reports.

15. Other business

15.1 Report for Information: Annual Report of the Policy Oversight Committee 2019-20 - presented by Chelsea Willness, University Secretary and Chief Governance Officer.

Dr. Wilson called on Dr. Chelsea Willness, University Secretary and Chief Governance Officer, to present the annual report of the Policy Oversight Committee. She highlighted the *Report of the Joint Committee for the Review of the University's Conflict of Interest Policies*. The joint committee engaged in a rigorous review of the Responsible Conduct of Research Policy, the Gift Acceptance Policy, and the Conflict of Interest Policy. The joint committee found that these policies were significantly robust and made a

recommendation to the Board of Governors that the Conflict of Interest Policy should have accompanying guidelines or procedures.

There was a question about what types of supports would be put in place for dealing with conflicts of interest or perceived conflicts of interest. Dr. Willness responded that this work is in the very early stages and that the recommendation to develop procedures was going to the Board in October.

15.2 Other Business

There was no other business.

16. Question period

There was a question from the GSA about PRT's planned access to recreation activities and facilities. Dr. McDougall replied that reopening the fitness centre and the Library are high priorities. The goal, however, is to keep these facilities safe so that when they are opened, they can stay open. Dr. Chad London, Dean of Kinesiology, also replied that they have been in conversations with the GSA and USSU about the safest and best ways to reopen the fitness facilities.

There was a question about how many students have chosen not to return to the university this year in response to the requirement for remote learning. Dr. McDougall replied that enrolment data would be brought forward to Council in October [Table 1. action item 4]. She also noted that the timing of the announcement of hybrid program delivery arrangements for winter was intended to provide students with the ability to make choices about the full academic year without academic penalty.

There was a request to reinstitute the practice of tracking Council action items in the minutes, to which the Chair agreed.

There was a question about the university's progress on the Signature Areas of Research, and a request for a progress report to be provided to Council [Table 1. Action item 5].

There was another request to provide a report to Council on the work of the Joint Committee to Review the Search and Review Procedures. Dr. Willness responded that this report would be forthcoming at the October Council meeting [Table 1. action item 6].

17. Adjournment

(Gjevre): The meeting was properly adjourned at 4:34pm.

Table 1. Action Items

Pg. and no.	Action item	Responsibility	Timeline
p.3 s.7	1. Financial update	President	October 2020
p.3 s.7	2. Tuition rates 2021/22	Provost	TBD
p.3 s.8	3. Update on the University Plan	Provost	Dec 2020/Jan 2021
p.7 s.16	4. Report on enrolment 2020/21	VPTLSE	October 2020
p.7 s.16	5. Report on the Signature Areas	OVPR	TBD
p.7 s.16	6. Report of the Joint Committee to Review the Search and Review Procedures	University Secretary	October 2020

Appendix A: listing of members in attendance.

Next Council meeting is October 15, 2020 – Please send regrets to Michelle.Kjargaard@usask.ca.

