



UNIVERSITY COUNCIL
 Thursday, September 29, 2022
 2:30-4:30pm
 Neatby-Timlin, Arts 241

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 pm when quorum was reached.

Dr. Dirk de Boer, Council Vice Chair, chaired in the absence of Dr. Susan Detmer, Council Chair. Dr. de Boer summarized the meeting protocols.

Dr. de Boer 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 the importance of Truth and Reconciliation Day on September 30th, and thanked Council members for demonstrating their support for decolonization and reconciliation by wearing orange shirts.

The Chair introduced Julian Demkiw, University Secretary & Chief Governance Officer, whose appointment to the role began July 1, 2022.

No members of the media identified themselves.

2. Tributes

None.

3. Adoption of the agenda

(Augusta/Mousseau): *That the agenda be approved as circulated.*

CARRIED.

4. Council Meeting Modality and Protocols

Julian Demkiw provided further details regarding hybrid meeting options for University Council. He relayed that the Governance Office would be testing and evaluating platforms and rules of order over the course of the semester. His office will work with the Council Executive Committee to implement improvements as they are available. He welcomed feedback as changes are made. He further explained that the September 29th Council meeting was available for live viewing on Zoom, but that those connecting would not be counted in the quorum, and that interactive participation would not be available.

5. Chair's Opening remarks

The Chair welcomed Council members to the first meeting of the 2022-23 academic year, the first in-person Council meeting since February 2020, and the 28th year of the representative University Council. The Chair introduced all the chairs of Council committees, and of the Governance Office. He welcomed the newly acclaimed members of Council, Kyle Anderson and Meena Sakharkar. He reported that the Council chairs had the opportunity to meet with the President's Executive Committee (PEC) on September 15th, where they were able to discuss the plans for Council in the coming year.

6. Approval of Minutes of the meeting of June 16, 2022

(Walker/Mamun): *That the minutes be approved.*

CARRIED.

7. Business Arising

None.

8. Report of the President

The President's written report was provided in the agenda package. Video remarks were submitted by the President and played at the Council meeting [President's University Council Remarks](#).

Before and after the Provost's Report, Council members requested that Dr. Airini, Provost and Vice President Academic, convey questions to the President for response at the next Council meeting on October 20, 2022.

A letter to the President on USask's current COVID-19 policies was submitted and received by the Provost. The Council member asked that the President respond to the letter at Council, and commit to the call-for-action with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery. In particular, regarding the masking recommendation.

An update was requested on the "Innovate Canmore Centre", which was approved in February 2021. The Council member recalled that the Centre was supposed to be formed in 2022/23, and requested an update. Further clarity about the nature and purpose of the centre was also requested, especially regarding academic contributions.

Another Council member asked that the President convey his plans to advocate for increased Tri-Agency graduate scholarship funding rates across Canada given his new leadership role with the U15. He suggested that these scholarships should be tied to inflation.

Dr. Debby Burshtyn, Dean of the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, added that she is president of Western Deans Association of Graduate Studies, which is also going to advocate on this issue.

9. Report of the Provost

Dr. Airini, Provost and Vice President Academic, provided a summary of the Provost's Report.

The Provost remarked that it is a pleasure to be meeting in person with Council. She reiterated the President's sentiment from his video regarding the tragedy at the James Smith Cree Nation, and the Chair's comments about Truth and Reconciliation Day. She added sympathy for loved ones, friends, and family of those on the East Coast of Canada facing the hurricane. She further expressed compassion for the Iranian community, and Iranian students at USask, given the recent tragic death of Mahsa Amini.

[Questions for the President received by the Provost are noted under the President's Report in the minutes above, agenda item 8.0.]

10. Pandemic Response and Recovery Team (PRT) Verbal Report

Dr. Darcy Marciniuk, PRT Chair, provided an update on the University's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. He reported that the PRT had recommended pausing the mask mandate as of July 1, 2022, and had since determined that this would continue for the fall of 2022.

There were questions and comments about: COVID-19 case reporting, privacy, and technological options, with the current system potentially encouraging latency in reporting, and placing the burden for reporting on faculty; and mask recommendations vs. mandates in the College of Nursing where students have clinical rotations in the hospitals.

11. Student Societies

11.1 Report from the USSU

Abhineet Goswami, USSU President, presented the report as provided in the materials.

11.2 Report from the GSA

Mostafa Kamal, President of the GSA, presented the report of the GSA as provided in the materials.

12. Nominations Committee

Dr. Angela Bedard-Haughn, Dean of the College of Agriculture presented the request for decision.

12.1 Request for Decision: Jarislowski Enhancement Chair in Regenerative Agriculture

(Bedard-Haughn/Willenborg): *As recommended by the Joint Committee on Chairs and Professorships, that Council approve the Jarislowsky Chair in Regenerative Agriculture, pending the approval of the Board of Governors.*

CARRIED.

13. Academic Programs Committee

Dr. Carolyn Augusta, Chair of APC, presented the report as provided in the materials.

13.1 Report for information: Change – Academic Calendar 2022-23

There was a question about whether Nursing students in the January intake would still get breaks during their program. Dr. Solina Richter, Dean of the College of Nursing, responded that yes, they will get breaks but noted that it is a condensed program.

14. Governance Committee

Dr. Roy Dobson, Chair of Governance, presented the item.

14.1 Report for Information: Animals on Campus Policy

15. Planning and Priorities Committee

15.1 Report for information: University Plan 2025

Dr. Airini, Provost and Vice-President Academic, gave a presentation as provided in the agenda materials. She indicated that this report is looking back to the 2021-22 year, and that a subsequent report looking forward would be presented to Council later in the fall.

A member of Council requested information on which colleges have had the increases in Indigenous learners, and for information specific to Indigenous learners in STEM programs. Data and information were requested about how to engage on a project to “close the gap”. There was another question about which geographical regions USask’s Indigenous students are from.

There was a comment that USask just moved from a position in the top 400-500 universities globally to a 500-600 position, according to Times Higher Education. Dr. Airini responded that PEC is aware and has invested in a rankings project. She offered that the question be directed to PPC, to consider whether for example USask should have bold ambition to be in the top 10 in Maclean's.

There was a comment about only using select indicators when reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals.

There was another statement that the University should reflect on policies that cause overwork and undue taxation on faculty, e.g., ICT policies which are having very negative effect on researchers.

16. Other business

None.

15. Question period

None.

16. Adjournment

(Urquhart): The meeting was properly adjourned at 4:01pm.

Attachments

1. Listing of members in attendance

