

Minutes of University Council
2:30 p.m., Thursday, December 14, 2006
St. Thomas More College Auditorium

Attendance: See Appendix A.

1. Opening Remarks

Chair Jim Merriam called the meeting to order at 2:35 p.m. and declared it properly constituted with respect to quorum. He welcomed non-members of Council who have been invited to attend in order to participate in the discussion of the Themes for the next round of Integrated Planning.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

Items 11.3, 11.4 and 11.5 were removed from the agenda; consideration of these items is deferred until January.

GREER/MacDONALD: To adopt the agenda as amended.

CARRIED

3. Minutes of the meeting of November 16, 2006

KALRA/ARCHER: To adopt the minutes of November 16, 2006 as circulated.

CARRIED

4. Business Arising from the minutes

At the last meeting, a member of Council asked about the University's course scheduling arrangements in the event the proposed February Family holiday comes into effect; a response to this question is included as part of the Academic Programs Committee report (Item 12.1).

5. Report of the President

The President made supplementary remarks related to Item 8, Discussion of Themes for Integrated Planning, emphasizing the importance of planning in a university context and of the consultation process. He observed that by all indicators widely thought to be relevant in university circles, the University of Saskatchewan has made substantial progress in the last few years—the campus infrastructure has been significantly renewed; discussions with government at all levels have been fulsome, respectful and productive; funding requests to government have been met with a positive response that has allowed us to hold tuition increases over the last few years; we have, thanks to the

excellent work of George Lafond, made tremendous progress in the Aboriginal achievement model; funding for grants including CFI and Tri-Council grants continues to rise; and graduate student numbers are also on the rise. These developments cannot be attributed to mere happenstance but are the result of an enormous amount of work on the part of all members of faculty and staff. Led by the Provost, this effort has emphasized evidence-based decision making and the necessity for strategic choices.

As an example, the President invoked the attention that the institution has been paying to enrolment planning. In the past, our approach to enrolment has been somewhat passive: students simply came and classes were filled. The environment has changed, and we now need to pay close attention to demographics and to the nature of the competition. This necessitates engagement in enrolment planning, including eliminating the notion of enrolment quotas and establishing out of province and international targets for enrolment.

The President conceded that “planning” is a word that is not always welcomed by members of the academic community—but stressed that planning is a reality of our personal lives, of companies and of governments. At a university, planning activities emphasize the importance of collegial processes as a core value.

In closing, President MacKinnon reflected that he sees the themes that are emerging through our planning processes to be among the most fundamentally important signposts to guide his own work in the foreseeable future, and he thanked members of the university community for attending today’s Council meeting.

6. Report of the Provost

Dr. Atkinson began his remarks by drawing Council members’ attention to pages 13-15 of the agenda materials, where some of the initiatives undertaken as part of the first round of planning, especially proposals for the Schools of Environment, Public Health and Public Policy, are highlighted.

In addition to his written report, he shared some of the recent developments around dissolution of the Extension Division, establishment of the University Learning Centre and the Centre for Continuing and Distance Education, the anticipated creation of a President’s Round Table on Outreach and Engagement and an Office of University Community Relations, and changes envisioned for the Division of Media and Technology. He also reported on the impact of the dissolution of the Extension Division on faculty and staff, the outcome of offers of separation, transfer and re-training, and the cost to the University of decisions related to these offers.

7. Student Society Reports

Brad Flavell, Vice President, Academic, reported for the USSU on several new developments:

- External Vice President Alice Collins has organized an open mic campus-wide dialogue on Canada’s role in Afghanistan for January 24, 5:00 p.m. at St.

Thomas More College Cafeteria. Mr. Flavell invited Council members to pass word of this event on to their colleagues.

- The USSU recently invited presentations from four different prospective Health and Dental Plan providers, then evaluated these and brought a recommendation to USSU Council. They were slated to vote last week to choose between two of these providers but the USSU Council felt inadequately prepared and so postponed the decision until today. The USSU expects to be able to pass savings along to students with a change in provider.
- The USSU has also negotiated a rate for bus passes for students and will be bringing this to a vote on February 21. Consultations with the City have been very positive. The students would like to see sustainability as a strong focus of the next round of planning and believe the bus passes will contribute to this by reducing both traffic and emissions.

There was no report from the Graduate Students' Association.

8. Themes for the Second Integrated Plan and Second Planning Cycle

The Chair invited Professor John Rigby to present the report as Chair of the Planning Committee. Professor Rigby began by noting that along with Ms. Pauline Melis and Mr. Barrie Dubray, he has visited 9 colleges and has emphasized 3 things:

- **Collegiality of the Process:** planning on this campus has and will continue to be a collegial process. University administrators are doing this planning *with* Council and not *to* Council. The process began with a campus consultation in the form of a retreat on October 21-22. Members of Council and the Board of Governors were invited, along with students and deans. The retreat included fascinating presentations by Herb O'Heron and Doug Elliott on demographics in Canada and Saskatchewan respectively. (Professor Rigby noted that pages 22-24 of the agenda materials gives a synopsis of information arising from those two presentations). The process for development of the themes for the second planning cycle arose out of this retreat, at which the Provost "floated" 16 possible themes; these were reviewed, discussed, dissected, in some cases rejected. What Council now sees is a subset of the original 16, with one or two that have been added as a result of subsequent discussions and consultations. Professor Rigby assured Council that while the Planning Committee hopes these themes are on the right track, if Council responds by saying that they are not, the Planning Committee will listen and will take the advice back and do some more work.
- **Value of this process:** this is how we can bring our strengths, our interests, our passions to bear on the University of Saskatchewan. Then as colleges and units bring their individual plans forward to Council, one of the first questions will be 'where does this fit in the Integrated Plan?'
- **Intent of the process:** this is a continuation of the first Integrated Plan, not a replacement for it. The strategic directions are still in place; themes relate to how we carry out the spirit and intent of those directions.

Professor Rigby then invited Provost Michael Atkinson to introduce the themes and explain their relationship to the process for the next round of planning. Dr. Atkinson pointed out the eight major themes identified in the document and a series of subthemes associated with each one, and he also drew attention to the risks and trends identified on the first few pages.

The Provost stressed the importance of being able to report on progress against a plan by identifying specific goals and initiatives in connection with each subtheme. He assured Council that the plan will not be finalized until Colleges and units have had an opportunity to contribute. The University's plan will focus on institutional imperatives. There will be many other initiatives and priorities that will belong to the Colleges and rightly so. There will be some overlap but not everything in the College plans will show up on the University's plan.

The Provost and the Chair of Planning invited comments and questions from the floor.

Discussion focused on the following areas:

- *Internationalization/Globalization:* The Chair of the International Activities Committee asked how the new themes fit together with important statements made in foundational documents, and observed that the current themes seem to be very provincially and locally focused.
- *Enrolment:* The Chair of the Budget Committee noted while reviewing the University's funding mechanism, she was struck by the importance of enrolments to support an infrastructure the size of the University of Saskatchewan: a huge proportion of our funding, both tuition and government, is driven by enrolments. She encouraged colleges to think of the role of the student experience and of recruitment of faculty as part and parcel of our enrolment numbers.
- *Sustainability:* Several visitors to Council spoke passionately about the opportunity that exists to make the University of Saskatchewan a leader in addressing and solving environmental sustainability problems. Connections were drawn to the ethical responsibilities of universities, to the experiential learning model, to First Nations teaching and sense of place, to the attractiveness of environmental programs (such as the former Certificate in Ecological Education) for recruiting new students, to the potential for cost savings and for attracting funding from new sources. A member of the Campus Sustainability Network tabled a copy of a letter to the President entitled "Social and Environmental Sustainability: Key Components of the University of Saskatchewan Community" and asked that this be shared with the Integrated Planning Office and the Planning Committee.
- *Undergraduate teaching:* Another visitor to Council spoke as the representative of a group of concerned teachers on campus who believe it a significant oversight not to include a theme specifically on undergraduate teaching, and who advocate nurturing of a culture of teaching on campus. He indicated the group has put together a draft proposal to be considered in integrated planning and will be submitting it to the Provost.

- *Instructional Design:* Another visitor to Council noted the University has some excellent instructional designers in the Extension Division, and stressed the importance of their skills if the University is to proceed with its plans for enhancing on-line learning.

At the suggestion of a member of Council, it was agreed to delay conclusion of the consultation process on Themes until late January 2007.

9. Bylaws Committee

9.1 Notice of Motion re Amendments to Council Bylaws

This item was received for information, as a Notice of Motion to be considered at the January meeting of Council.

10. Planning Committee Report

Professor John Rigby presented the report as Chair of the Committee.

10.1 Approval of Feeds Innovation Institute (Type A Centre)

RIGBY/MacDONALD: That Council approve the Feeds Innovation Institute as a Type A Centre (College of Agriculture and Bioresources).

CARRIED

11. Nominations Committee Report

Professor Bev Pain presented the report as Chair of the Committee.

11.1 Appointment of Chair of Research Committee

PAIN/HAMILTON: That Council approve the appointment of Rob Pywell as Chair of the Research, Scholarly and Artistic Work Committee until June 30, 2007.

CARRIED

11.2 Appointments to the Planning Committee

PAIN/HAMILTON: That Council approve the appointments of Terry Wotherspoon, Department of Sociology, and Andrew Van Kessel, Department of Animal and Poultry Science, to the Planning Committee effective January 1, 2007 to June 30, 2009.

CARRIED

12. Academic Programs Committee Report

Professor Trevor Crowe presented the report as Chair of the Committee.

12.1 February Holiday

This item was received for information. A member of Council asked that information be circulated widely as soon as possible to let instructors of second term courses know how this change will affect them.

12.2 Music Program Changes

This item was received for information.

13. Instructional Development Committee

Professor Malcolm Reeves presented a verbal report on behalf of the Chair.

14. Other Business

None.

15. Question Period

No questions.

16. Next meeting

2:30 p.m. Thursday, January 25, 2007 in Neatby-Timlin Theatre.