

Minutes of University Council
2:30 p.m., Thursday, October 18, 2007
Neatby-Timlin Theatre

Attendance: See Appendix A.

1. Opening Remarks

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:30 pm, and declared the meeting properly constituted with respect to quorum.

Condolences were expressed by Professor Barry Ziola, on behalf Dr. Sergei Fedoroff and of members of Council, to family and colleagues of Dr. Emma Irene Grodums, Professor Emerita, Department of Microbiology (1961-1982). Dr. Grodums passed away in Vancouver on August 20th, 2007.

Following a moment of silence, the business of Council resumed.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

REEVES/KALRA : That the agenda be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

3. Minutes of the meeting of September 20, 2007

CLARKE/STEEVES: To adopt the minutes of September 20, 2007 as circulated.

CARRIED

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

No business was identified as arising from the minutes.

5. Report of the President

Regrets were expressed on behalf of the President, who is in Estevan today as part of the President's Tour of the province. Acting Provost Dr. Ernie Barber was invited to address both the President's report and his own. Dr. Barber highlighted the section of the President's report that speaks of the McCall Report on Accessibility in Higher Education, and noted that a response to the report by the President will be published in tomorrow's edition of *On Campus News*. He spoke of some of the policy issues embedded in the report as they relate to tuition, student loans, and accessibility to postsecondary education, particularly by students of northern and remote communities. These and other issues were addressed by the University in its response to the interim version of the report that was tabled earlier this year.

6. Report of the Acting Provost

The Provost indicated that his office has been very busy with the integrated planning process and with coordinating the review of college and unit plans. He invited Ms. Pauline Melis to present on the progress of the second planning cycle. Ms. Melis reported that 16 out of 25 plans have been received, and expressed satisfaction at the extent to which the entire campus, including its governing bodies, has been involved in the development of the next University Plan. The Planning and Priorities Committee has struck a subcommittee to review the college plans, all of which will all be made available by November 1 at www.usask.ca/ip. She called members' attention to the *Update on Integrated Planning* which was circulated at the door.

There was a question about the implementation of the Schools and the effect that staffing the schools will have on departments and potentially on accreditation.

7. Student Societies

7.1 Report from the USSU

Josie Steeves, Vice President Academic, reported from the USSU. She noted that the students are very supportive of the recommendations of the McCall Report. She also mentioned concerns that some students are expressing about liberal arts programs in the University and their perception that funds have been diverted from these programs to fund initiatives such as the Schools. Finally, she reported that the USSU has decided to recognize its prospective membership in the CFS and to hold another referendum on membership within the next 24 months.

7.2 Report from GSA

The written report was received for information; there was no verbal report.

8. Update on the Status of Enrolment Planning

The Provost indicated that the University is budgeting on the basis of an anticipated 'flat' enrolment, even as it redoubles its efforts to achieve and sustain higher enrolment through effective enrolment. He looks forward to the initiatives that will be submitted by colleges and units in their unit plans to improve both recruitment and retention. He then invited Dr. David Hannah, Associate Vice President for Student and Enrolment Services, to present information on the census day figures. Census Day was October 10 and the results were circulated at the door. The report shows that undergraduate and graduate enrolment is very close to last year's levels. Highlights of the report are summarized on the first page of the report, which for the first time includes data on retention. Dr. Hannah noted that demographics of Saskatchewan suggest that graduation rates from high school will begin to decline in 2009.

There were questions about the relationship between head count and credit unit enrolment; the physical and space challenges inherent in accepting more students

into some programs; the ways that the tuition structure may provide barriers to students' taking courses extra to their program; an item in the McCall report that suggested that there were 1,000 or more aboriginal students who were unable to access federal funding for their postsecondary studies; the University's approach to meeting demand in areas where there is open capacity; the percentage of our out-of-province students coming from Alberta; and the reasons for the decline in Open Studies students. There was a suggestion that the University direct more attention to improving retention rates across programs.

The Provost concluded with observations about the gains in graduate student enrolment and congratulated members of the community on the relative success of the University of Saskatchewan in maintaining enrolment at a time when many institutions across the country are experiencing declines in enrolment.

9. Planning and Priorities Committee

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

9.1 Disestablishment of the Virtual College of Biotechnology

Dr. Rigby presented some background on this initiative and the consultations that have gone on in arriving at this recommendation. He provided assurances to Council that neither students nor faculty members would be 'stranded' nor adversely affected as a result of this initiative, and also that the recommendation before Council does not in any way suggest that the University is backing away from programming in the area of biotechnology. A member commented on lessons that should be drawn from the experiment that was inherent in creating a Virtual College. While the specific issues have been addressed, he urged that Council and the University be attuned to the possibility of equivalent kinds of problems arising in relation to the new schools, and be prepared to take prompt action if/when they do.

RIGBY/RHODES: That Council approve the disestablishment of the Virtual College of Biotechnology, effective June 30, 2008, or as near that date as is feasible.

CARRIED

9.2 Undergraduate Platforms

Professor John Rigby, Chair of the Planning and Priorities Committee, presented a *Request for Input* from Council on the concept of Undergraduate Platforms in interdisciplinary and intercollegiate areas of study, and led Council through the discussion points outlined in the document.

There was a thorough discussion of the item, including questions about the interdisciplinary subject areas that might make use of the platform model, the relationship of platforms to Schools, the role of Academic Programs Committee in the development of this proposal, the extent to which a platform may limit student choice, and whether the

courses in the platform will be restricted only to students in interdisciplinary programs or be accessible to other students as well.

Advice for the Committee included a strong suggestion that for each course in the core component there be a particular academic department identified as its home, to ensure accountability; that there be a clear academic home for the platform itself; that the platforms be developed with sensitivity to the accreditation requirements that adhere to some professional programs; that the process and governance model for platforms be streamlined enough that barriers do not stop the innovation of new programs; that attention be paid to the sequencing and scheduling of courses for students to enable them to fulfil the requirements of the platforms; and that the notion of platforms should not be held up with a discussion of how undergraduate programming can be introduced to schools. It was pointed out that a platform is not a program but it provides an opportunity to bridge across disciplines and programs and to satisfy core competency requirements.

9.3 Update on Integrated Planning

This item was provided for information.

10. Bylaws Committee Report

Professor Barry Ziola presented the report as Chair of the Bylaws Committee.

10.1 Changes to Council Bylaws

The Chair of Council pointed out that the required 30 days' motion for Bylaws requirements has been given, and that a 2/3 majority is required to approve this item. He also reminded Council that it has the right to ask that the individual changes to the Bylaws be considered separately rather than being considered in an omnibus motion.

It was noted that the name of the Department of Agricultural Economics as it appears in Part Three, Section IV.3 should now read "Department of Bioresource Policy, Business and Economics."

ZIOLA/CROWE: That Council approve amendments to the Council Bylaws as distributed with the agenda materials, and with the appropriate change to the name of the former Department of Agricultural Economics wherever it appears.

CARRIED

10.2 Disposition of Program Termination Subcommittee

ZIOLA/CROWE: That the function of the Program Termination Subcommittee, and the procedures for program termination, be assigned to the Academic Programs Committee, and that upon delegation the Program Termination Subcommittee as established in 2001 be dissolved.

CARRIED

11. Joint Request from Bylaws and Outreach and Public Service Committees regarding Membership of the Round Table on Outreach and Engagement

ZIOLA/WALLEY: That in order to ensure effective representation from Council on the Round Table on Outreach and Engagement, its faculty membership be restated as follows: “four members of the General Academic Assembly appointed by Council,” and

That in order to ensure effective student representation on the Round Table on Outreach and Engagement, its membership be revised to include “one graduate student appointed by the GSA and one undergraduate student appointed by the USSU,” and

That Council instruct the Nominations Committee that faculty membership on the Round Table should include representation from Council.

CARRIED

12. Nominations Committee Report

12.1 Appointment to Academic Programs Committee

The Chair called for nominations from the floor. There being none, the motion was put to a vote as follows:

POST/RICHARDSON: That Council approve the nomination of Michel Desautels, Physiology, as a GAA member of the Academic Programs Committee, to June 30, 2010.

CARRIED

13. Question Period

There were no additional questions.

14. Adjournment and Next meeting

The next meeting is at 2:30 p.m. Thursday, November 15 in Neatby-Timlin Theatre.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.