

**Minutes of University Council**  
**2:30 p.m., Thursday, December 9, 2008**  
**Neatby Timlin Theatre**

*Attendance: See appendix A.*

1. Opening remarks

Condolences were expressed by Dr. Femi Olatunbosun, head of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, to colleagues of Professor Thomas MacLachlan, who taught in the College of Medicine for 30 years. Dr. MacLachlan was head of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology from 1967 until 1983 and retired from the College of Medicine as a professor emeritus in 1991. He passed away November 17, 2008.

The Chair thanked members for making time in a busy month to attend the last council meeting of the term, and expressed congratulations to Professor Ravi Chibbar on his appointment as chair of the scholarships and awards committee. She noted that Council has before it today a document of profound academic importance, the *Teaching and Learning Foundational Document*, and she encouraged a vigorous discussion of the document.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The Chair sought agreement that item 6, *Report of the Provost*, be moved to follow the teaching and learning committee's report.

Card/Kalra: That the agenda be adopted as reordered.

CARRIED

3. Minutes of the meeting of November 20, 2008

Loewenberger/Reeves: That the minutes of the meeting of November 20, 2008 be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

4. Business arising from the minutes

No business was identified as arising from the minutes.

5. Report of the president

The chair invited the president to give his report. President MacKinnon expressed seasons' greetings to members of council and commended council members to his written report. He made supplementary comments concerning three areas: the effect of the economic situation on the university's finances, a matter which the board will be considering in depth at its meetings later this week; strategies for ensuring that the university's enrolment base remains stable in the face of demographic shifts; and the effects of cost escalations on the university's capital building program. The president

also welcomed and congratulated Kevin Veitenheimer of the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour for his recent promotion within the Universities Branch.

A council member asked about the likely reception by the provincial government of the university's request for what may be perceived as a substantial increase in its operating budget. The President commented on the conversation that he expected to take place with government in the wake of the request, and described recent conversations with provincial government officials as candid, cordial, and productive.

6. Report of the provost

This agenda item was moved to follow item 8.

7. Student society reports

7.1 Report from the Undergraduate Students' Association

Brea Loewenberger, academic vice president of the USSU, presented her report and expressed apologies for having missed the November council meeting. She commented on the items in her written report, and at the request of the chair summarized the highlights of the housing event referenced in the report. Another council member asked her about the Canadian Round Table on Academic Materials (CRAM) program and how faculty members could help. Ms. Loewenberger described the "be book smart" campaign, which will create and distribute resources to help students and faculty with the issue of rising student textbook costs. She encouraged council members to find out more at [www.ussu.ca/bebooksmart](http://www.ussu.ca/bebooksmart). She also invited volunteers for faculty representation on her working committee.

7.2 Report from the Graduate Students' Association

There was no report from the GSA.

8. Teaching and learning committee

8.1 Teaching and Learning Foundational Document

The chair invited Professor Richard Long to present the document as chair of the teaching and learning committee.

A member expressed doubt about whether PAWS has been enthusiastically received by students as the document claims, and reservations about whether e-learning should be adopted universally as the document suggests. A suggestion for re-wording of the last sentence of the middle paragraph on p. 33 of the document (p. 57 of the agenda materials) was made by the provost in response to the latter comment, such that the words "appropriately and systematically" replace "universally and systematically." In response to the former comment, Chief Information Officer and AVP for Information and Communications Technology Rick Bunt noted that the Globe & Mail report card on

universities has once again given the U of S straight A's for technology, and that student focus groups have consistently rated PAWS very highly.

Goodridge/Kalra: That Council approve the *Foundational Document for Teaching and Learning at the University of Saskatchewan*, which appears in the agenda material on pages 25-67.

CARRIED

Professor Long expressed thanks to the many members of Council and its committees and others who were instrumental in the development of the document, including members of the former instructional development committee (now the teaching and learning committee) and its former chair, Professor Bob Tyler, members of the planning and priorities committee, members of the steering and drafting committees for the document, and all who provided input and feedback. He particularly thanked Assistant Provost Pauline Melis for her selfless determination to advance the cause of teaching and learning and the student learning experience. He reminded members that approving a foundational document should lead to vigorous implementation activity. Much remains to be done, and his committee looks forward to working with the university community on carrying forward the recommendations of this document.

8.a Report of the provost (item 6 on the agenda)

The provost commended council members to his written report and indicated that he would focus his comments on the operations forecast, a draft of which was included in the planning and priority committee's report and has been submitted to the Board of Governors for approval. He introduced Ginger Appel, the university's new director of budget strategy and planning, whose office has responsibility for development of the document.

Dr. Fairbairn described the purpose of the operations forecast and the way that it contributes to the goals of a well-managed institution. He noted that this is an annual conversation in which the university aims to demonstrate to the province that it is well managed, that it serves provincial as well as wider interests, and that the request is reasonable and well grounded. He described the importance of conveying to government the fact that the university's budget is developed in accordance with strategic goals, policy and principles. He also noted that the development of this document takes place in the context of other plans and documents including the multi-year operating budget framework. He described the discussion and collaboration which goes into development of the document and its close connection to the integrated plan, noting the critical role of PCIP and the importance of input from the campus community including Council. Ultimate approval of the document is by the Board of Governors.

Dr. Fairbairn then pointed out that what is necessary to cover the university's operations next year, with the assumptions and projections that have been made, amounts to a 7.3% increase, which must come from a combination of an increase in the grant and tuition revenues. In addition, targeted funding of 1% for university advancement activities has been requested as part of a strategic move to pursue enhanced financial self-sufficiency and diversification of revenue sources for the University.

Beyond the basic operating grant, the provost noted that the operations forecast provides an opportunity to broach other areas that are of interest to the university that might also be of interest to the province—examples are funding for scholarships and bursaries to promote student access, excellence and retention; accelerating research, development and innovation focused on Saskatchewan priorities (such as matching funds for chairs), items related to capital funding and deferred maintenance and infrastructure, and student housing.

The provost observed that with the market downturn, the landscape has changed rather abruptly. The economic situation affects not only the university's annual operating budget, but its endowment and pensions, and there are collateral impacts such as changes in retirement decisions by staff and changes to donors' intentions. These are issues to be addressed in the short term within the current year. The medium to long term impacts are addressed through the multi-year operating budget and the provost indicated that all of the assumptions in that budget will need to be reviewed.

There was a question about the thinking behind the commitment to expand the fundraising capacity of the institution; Vice President Magotiaux described the shift in mode from a highly successful campaign to ongoing campaigning designed to achieve similar results on an ongoing basis, including leveraging matching opportunities for funding chairs, scholarships, and similar initiatives, both within colleges and centrally. In response to a follow-up question about the connection between provincial and federal funding of chairs, institutes, and research programs, Vice President Chad noted that there is a growing appetite across the nation to identify local and regional areas of targeted priorities and emerging strengths, and that the provincial governments need to be part of this conversation.

A council member asked how much the current economic environment—which includes not only a market downturn but also recent drops in construction costs and inflation, an increase in the availability of labour, and a flourishing economy in the province—figures into these plans. The provost expressed the view that the provincial government will have interesting choices about what to do with its funding, and that the university has no shortage of good ideas. Universities tend to be somewhat countercyclical, and student choices and behaviours are influenced by multiple factors. If the provincial government expresses a desire for stimulus to the economy through construction or research and development investments, the university has much to offer as a partner in the conversation.

A student member asked the provost to expand on his comments about the need for scholarships and bursaries; Dr. Fairbairn responded that the university has a need for all types of student financing, both scholarships and bursaries, undergraduate and graduate, donor-funded and supported from the operating budget. Conversations with the province about this are ongoing.

9. Planning and priorities committee report

9.1 2009 – 10 operations forecast

Professor Jay Kalra, chair of the planning and priorities committee, presented the committee's report for information, commenting on the work that his committee has done to support the development of the operations forecast and to provide input and feedback.

10. Other business

No other items of business were raised.

11. Question period

There were no questions raised.

12. Adjournment and next meeting

The meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m. Next meeting is at 2:30 p.m., Thursday, January 22, in Neatby-Timlin Theatre.