

Minutes of University Council
2:30 p.m., Thursday, January 22, 2009
Neatby Timlin Theatre

Attendance: See appendix A.

1. Opening remarks

A memorial tribute was delivered by Professor Karen Wright, Assistant Dean, Undergraduate Programs, College of Nursing, for Professor Stella Mildred Dyck, Professor Emerita, College of Nursing, 1980-1993. Professor Dyck retired from the college in 1993 and passed away July 13, 2008.

Following a moment of silence, the chair called the meeting to order.

The chair began by thanking the president for his email communication, sent yesterday, with respect to the financial situation facing the university in the wake of the economic downturn.

2. Adoption of the agenda

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

CARRIED

3. Minutes of the meeting of December 9, 2008

KALRA/FERGUSON: That the minutes of the meeting of December 9, 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

President MacKinnon commented on his email, sent earlier this week to members of the community, regarding the university's response to the economic downturn and the board of governors' request that the university provide an analysis of potential scenarios along with a strategy for handling each scenario. He noted that Vice-President Florizone has been tasked with developing these scenarios and expressed the view that the conversations surrounding the economic downturn will lead to a more enlightened understanding of the situation. He invited council members to comment on this or any other aspect of his written report.

A member asked about the status of the university's applications for Canada Excellence Research Chairs; the president responded that applications for these chairs have been forwarded to the federal government and have been sent out for international peer review. The university does not expect to hear anything until April, when 40 applications will be identified on a nation-wide 'short list'.

6. Report of the provost

Provost and Vice-President Academic Brett Fairbairn drew council members' attention to the updates regarding PCIP and the implementation of the second integrated plan and regarding the health sciences deans council contained in his written report. He also commented on the ongoing work of the commitment leaders and drew attention to the timing and stages of the various searches and reviews identified in the report.

The chair observed that she has not yet been able to find updates from the commitment leaders on the web site; the provost committed to ensuring that these are posted soon.

7. Student society reports

7.1 Report from the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union

Brea Lowenberger presented the report as academic vice-president of the students' union, beginning with wishes to council members for a happy and healthy 2009. She expressed regret at the resignation of the external vice-president external, Nicole Kenney and wished Nicole well in her future endeavours. She invited council members to visit the new USSU web site, and particularly the sections on the *Be Book Smart* campaign and the Place Riel project.

7.2 Report from the Graduate Students' Association

Janice Victor, president of the GSA, presented the report, noting that at the GSA Council meeting this afternoon there would be some changes made to the criteria for bursaries. She expressed hope that she would be able to bring a fuller report on the progress of the graduate commons to the February meeting.

8. Academic programs committee

Gordon Hill presented this item as chair of the academic programs committee.

8.1 Medicine: termination of Bachelor of Science in Physical Therapy

HILL/BICKIS: That Council approve termination of the Bachelor of Science in Physical Therapy degree program, effective immediately.

CARRIED

8.2 SESD: revisions to criteria for admission (criteria for students from American-curriculum high schools; criteria for establishing English proficiency)

HILL/BICKIS: That Council approve revisions to the criteria for meeting undergraduate admission requirements for students from American-curriculum high schools, such that a combination of high school grades and SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) or ACT scores will be acceptable, effective for the May, 2009 applicants, AND

That Council approve revisions to the criteria for establishing English proficiency for undergraduate applicants for admission, effective for the May, 2009 applicants.

CARRIED

Discussion included the suggestion that Ireland should be included in the list of countries where English is the official language of instruction, since Northern Ireland is listed (though the United Kingdom is not listed). The Director of the Centre for Continuing and Distance Education reported that the language centre had raised some concerns around the acceptability of only two years of high school English. The centre supports the changes to the minimum scores for TOEFL subsections but questions the acceptability and reputability of the IELTS test, and suggests the university undertake a watching brief. It was suggested that in future members of the language centre faculty be consulted when a change to the English proficiency requirements is being considered. Claude Lang, Director of Enrolment, indicated that he is planning to have some research conducted into the performance of students who have been admitted with various types of language score in their studies at the University of Saskatchewan.

A member expressed the opinion that all students, not just those whose first language is English, should be required to complete an English proficiency test.

Another member asked about the standards required for students coming from French-language schools in Quebec. Mr. Lang confirmed that students from Quebec schools where French is the language of instruction must meet English-language criteria for admission.

8.3 Items for information

The following items were received for information:

- Academic schedule for 2009-10
- Edwards School of Business: change of name of major to Human Resources
- Letter regarding review of M.Sc. in occupational therapy and speech language pathology
- Update on other committee activities

Two corrections were noted to the academic schedule: the date for the GAA meeting in 2009 is Tuesday, April 7, and the GAA meeting in 2010 should be Friday, April 9, which is the day following the last day of classes.

9. Bylaws committee

Professor Linda Ferguson presented the report as chair of the committee. The following items were received as notices of motion for the February meeting of Council:

9.1 Notice of motion re revisions to Council Bylaw Part One IV – creation and composition of council committees (g): re ex officio members

A correction was noted in the attachment; the item labeled (a) should be labeled (g).

9.2 Notice of motion re revisions to Council Bylaw Part Three V – faculty of the School of Public Health

It was noted that under section (o) the appointment should read “0.25” rather than “.025” and also that section (q) (vii) should read “with a less than 0.25FTE commitment to the school.”

10. Nominations committee

This report was presented by Malcolm Reeves, chair of the nominations committee.

10.1 Sessional members for academic programs and planning and priorities committees

The chair called three times for nominations from the floor; there being none, she called for the vote.

REEVES/WALLEY: That Council approve the nomination of Leslie Ehrlich, Sociology, as sessional lecturer representative on the academic programs committee, effective immediately, until June 30, 2009, and

That Council approve the nomination of Will Buschert, Political Studies and Philosophy, as sessional lecturer representative on the planning and priorities committee, effective immediately, until June 30, 2009.

CARRIED

10.2 Search and review committees

The chair called three times for nominations from the floor; there being none, she called for the vote.

REEVES/WALLEY: That Council approve the nomination of Dan Pennock, Associate Dean, College of Agriculture and Bioresources as the general academic assembly member on the search committee for dean of the College of Arts and Science, and

That Council approve the nomination of Trever Crowe, Associate Dean, College of Graduate Studies and Research, as the council member on the review committee for vice-provost, faculty relations, and

That Council approve the nomination of Doug Thorpe, English; Louise Humbert, College of Kinesiology; Declan Quinn, psychiatry; and Len Haines, College of Education as the general academic assembly members on the review committee for vice-provost, faculty relations.

CARRIED

10.3 GAA member for student residence-college quarter project phase I – steering committee

The chair called three times for nominations from the floor; there being none, she called for the vote.

REEVES/WALLEY: That Council approve the nomination of Baljit Singh, Western College of Veterinary Medicine, as the general academic assembly member on the student residence-college quarter project phase I steering committee.

CARRIED

10.4 GAA member for climate change commitment committee

The chair called three times for nominations from the floor; there being none, she called for the vote.

REEVES/WALLEY: That Council approve the nomination of Janet McVittie, College of Education, as the general academic assembly representative on the climate change commitment committee.

CARRIED

11. Other business

11.1 Joint board/council committee to review search and review procedures for senior administrators

The University Secretary presented this item, indicating that the board of governors approved a parallel motion at its December meeting. There was a question about the time lines for this review; the Secretary indicated that the board's motion did not stipulate any time lines, but that council could suggest time lines in approving the motion; otherwise the committee will set its own work schedule.

KALRA/HILL: That a joint board/council committee to review search and review procedures for senior administrators be struck and that the nominations committee of Council be asked to nominate three members of the General Academic Assembly to serve on this committee.

CARRIED

11.2 Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy policy

This item was presented by the secretary and received for information.

11.3 Revisions to Conflict of Interest policy

This item was presented for information. There was a question about the ways in which the former conflict of interest policy was not in compliance with tri-council agreements. Dr. Susan Blum, Director of Research Services indicated that the tri-council agreements call for the policy to include students as well as employees, and also require that the policy make specific reference to use of research funds. There was also a question about the bullet on p. 109 which makes reference to services performed by university members, and whether this example is in violation of some collective agreements. It was pointed out that this example is from the prior policy and does not represent a change. It was suggested that when the policy undergoes further revisions, this example be revisited in the light of collective agreements.

11.4 Policy oversight committee annual report

This item was received for information.

11.5 Request for input for Accountable Professional Expense Fund policy

Council members were invited to provide input on the draft policy. There was considerable discussion of the paragraph on p. 126 with regard to the appropriate level of oversight and direction that deans and department heads should be exerting over faculty members' funds. Members of Council expressed the view that the clause would lead to pressure to use the allowance for assigned duties within the department rather than to the benefit of the individual. These funds, it was argued, should be used at the discretion of the faculty member and not at the direction of the department head.

There was also a question about the rationale for reducing the claim times to 6 months; it was explained that this change is being proposed in response to comments from the auditor that the university is not timely in its claims.

Representatives of the financial services division pointed out that the general intent of the revisions is to ensure compliance with tax laws. Associate Vice-President Financial Services Laura Kennedy thanked members for their input and indicated that a meeting is scheduled with department heads on February 6 to elicit further feedback from that group.

12. Question period

No further questions were raised

13. Adjournment and next meeting

The meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m. Next meeting is at 2:30 p.m., Thursday, February 26 in Neatby-Timlin Theatre.