



*Minutes of University Council
2:30 p.m., Thursday, March 18, 2010
Neatby-Timlin Theatre*

Attendance: See appendix A.

1. Opening remarks

Dr. Card called the meeting to order at 2:35 p.m., declaring that quorum had been obtained.

The chair invited Dr. Bob Cram, Executive Director, Centre for Continuing & Distance Education, to present a memorial tribute for Professor Emeritus Robert Brack, who had a 40-year career at the University of Saskatchewan. In 1983, Professor Brack became Director of the Extension Division and Community Relations for the U of S. His work included extension services, adult learning, alumni relations and providing distance education to communities across Saskatchewan. Bob Brack retired from the U of S in 1992 and passed away January 16, 2010.

Following a moment of silence, the business of Council resumed. The chair introduced Dr. Douglas Freeman, the new dean of the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, who is attending Council as a guest today.

2. Adoption of the agenda

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

CARRIED

3. Minutes of the meeting of February 25, 2010

It was noted that Item 12 of the minutes of February 25 contain a statement that should be corrected to record the loss of "between 5,500 [not 5.5] and 6,000 monograph books."

PROCTOR/JAECK: That the minutes of the meeting of February 25, 2010, be approved as corrected.

CARRIED

4. Business arising from the minutes

No business was identified as arising from the minutes.

5. Report of the president

Noting that the president was unable to be in attendance, the chair invited the provost to present the president's report. The provost conveyed regrets from the president, who has been unexpectedly detained in his return home from travels. On the president's behalf, the

provost reminded Council members of the date of the state of the university address to the General Academic Assembly, which will take place at noon on April 9.

6. Report of the provost

The provost commended members of Council to his written report, and indicated a correction to the timing of the workshop on signature research areas. The item should read “from 11am till 12:30 pm,” and the location is the Exeter Room of Marquis Hall.

7. Student societies reports

7.1 Report from the USSU

Warren Kirkland presented the report as president of the USSU. He expressed thanks to members of Council and the administration for their participation in the white ribbon campaign this week, noting that the event gained attention in the local and Regina press. He reported that the USSU is organizing a housing rights and responsibilities session for orientation in the fall, and invited input and advice concerning this session.

Mr. Kirkland also reported that the crane in place for Place Riel construction will be coming down next weekend. In closing, he conveyed thanks to the faculty members who have been nominated for USSU teaching excellence awards. A total of 111 professors were nominated, representing the results of over 11,000 surveys. Results will be released on March 28.

7.2 Report from the GSA

Devin Ens, academic vice-president, presented the report on behalf of the GSA. He noted that the graduate students are reviving the aboriginal students’ association under a new name, the Indigenous Graduate Student Council. This group had its first meeting yesterday.

The GSA is currently undergoing a constitutional review, including deciding on whether the aboriginal students’ representative will become a permanent executive position or a liaison position. This review process is important in helping the GSA to redefine its role as a more coherent organization with more continuity from year to year. Nominations are still open for the GSA elections, and Council members are urged to encourage any of their graduate students who would make good executive members to run for a position. The association hopes not to have all of its executive positions acclaimed; an election will help encourage graduate students’ sense of citizenship and ownership.

Mr. Ens reminded Council of the graduate student conference on intellectual property in the academy, taking place on May 12-14. Graduate students should be encouraged to consider presenting on the topic of intellectual property and its relationship to academic work.

Graduate students are excited about the teaching and learning charter; most graduate students see this as a very good thing and an important way to define a sense of citizenship in the academic community. Mr. Ens noted that Council’s forum is a good model of

citizenship on campus, as was the Board of Governors' annual public forum last week. Graduate students were very pleased to hear at that event that student assistant rates are going up and will continue to go up; this represents a great move in the right direction.

The graduate student commons is increasingly becoming the place where graduate students find each other, and graduate students are very pleased and excited about the College Quarter project. The university needs more services and businesses nearby, to help create the sense of intensity and urban college spirit you would expect in this part of town. They are considering ways of identifying space in that construction project that would bring the GSA up to the standards of student union business activity.

8. Planning and priorities committee

Dr. Jay Kalra presented this item as chair of the planning and priorities committee.

8.1 Report for information: Update to the Multi-Year Operating Budget Framework 2008/09 – 2011/12

Dr. Kalra provided Council members with an overview of the importance of the multi-year operating budget framework, and the process that has gone into the preparation of the update. He noted that one key budgetary factor remains unknown: the provincial grant to the university, which will be announced later in March. This uncertainty requires the university to consider various scenarios in its planning and projections. Dr. Kalra invited the provost to update Council on the work of his office on this framework.

Dr. Fairbairn expressed appreciation for the close working relationship of his office with Council and with the planning and priorities committee and its subcommittee, particularly in an environment of considerable financial uncertainty. He noted the provincial budget will be announced on Wednesday March 24, and conveyed a qualified and cautious optimism about how the university will fare in the near future. The university has spent considerable time in preparation for possible scenarios and in ensuring that the strategic directions of the university are not unduly compromised by the economic situation. The provost stressed the importance of making reasonable assumptions and taking prudent decisions based on these assumptions. He reminded Council members that the university is moving into the second year of a two-year budget measures exercise to permanently reduce the operating budget by 3% or \$10M. His office is working with units to minimize the impact of these measures on students and academic programs. He also stressed the importance of the board having encouraged the university to continue to pursue opportunities, and pointed to the significant building projects that are going forward on our campus as a result.

Referencing the operations forecast that was tabled in the fall, the provost reminded Council members that the university has asked the provincial government for a 5.2% increase in its operating budget. Since last fall, however, the province's revenues have declined considerably. Nevertheless, the university is regarded by the province as an institution that manages its affairs prudently, and the university continues to receive the message that the province considers higher education to be a priority. These signals are tempered by the experience of universities across the country, where any increase at all

would be considered good news. Dr. Fairbairn noted that he and Vice-president Florizone will be in Regina on Wednesday to hear the budget. Following the budget announcement, the board of governors should be in a position to make a decision about tuition rates before the end of April, and the university's 2010-11 budget will be considered by the board at its May meeting.

The provost then paused for questions about the operating budget framework. In response to a question about the reference on p. 22 to future changes to projected pension payments, Dr. Florizone indicated that this has to do with ongoing discussions with the pension superintendent about changes in rules around when payments are due and about whether universities need to pass a solvency test or a going-concern test. In response to another question, about the university's thinking around differential fees for international graduate students, the provost referenced the need to provide more and better services for international students. He indicated that while the recommendation to the board on tuition is still in preparation, there is a general sense that the institution should not introduce anything like a differential fee for international graduate students too quickly. There was a follow-up question on the support given to students on outbound exchanges, and it was noted that this is part of the conversation being initiated by Tom Wishart in his role as special advisor on internationalization.

Another member asked about the impact of salary settlements at other universities on our approach to budgeting; the provost noted that the university's compensation strategy is based on market principles and merit, and is driven by the strategic imperative to recruit and retain outstanding faculty. The associate vice-president for human resources cautioned that since the university is currently in open bargaining with the faculty association, there is an agreement that compensation will not be discussed in an open forum.

The provost then went on to talk about tuition fees, which are an input into the university's 2010-11 budgets. He indicated that while tuition shapes the revenue side of the question, the university does not set tuition just according to what's necessary to balance the budget. Tuition fees are set according to principles, and this year the board approved a set of principles: comparability, affordability and accessibility, and quality. He indicated that the spectrum of possibilities for the operating budget is between 0 and 5.2%, and if the university receives something in the middle of that range, tuition will be driven by the principles and not by the operating budget. The only scenario in which that conversation is significantly different is if the operating grant is closer to 0; then the board would have to put everything on the table including revisiting the plan around tuition. Otherwise tuition is not closely related to the provincial decision and certainly never in a mechanical kind of relationship.

9. Report for information: Progress report on the review of the university search and review procedures for senior administrators

John Rigby presented a report as chair of the review committee. He described the nature and purpose of the committee, its work to date and the consultations that have been undertaken, including a survey of individuals who have been involved in search and/or review committees in the past three years. He indicated that the committee is committed to conducting a comprehensive and thorough review, and to having a document to Council for feedback before the end of the academic year.

10. Verbal report on Council elections

The secretary reported that 9 members of the general academic assembly were elected by acclamation on February 22, 2010, and one college vacancy was filled by acclamation, and that as a result of the second call for nominations, an additional 15 members have declared that they will stand for the 12 vacancies. An election will be held in late March/early April.

There was a question about why the first group of nominees was acclaimed and not required to stand for election with the second group; the secretary indicated that this is the procedure called for in Council's bylaws.

11. Other business

No other business was raised.

12. Question period

There were no further questions.

13. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m. Next meeting is at 2:30 p.m., Thursday, April 15, 2010 in **Goodspeed Theatre** (ESB).