

**Minutes of University Council**  
**2:30 p.m., Thursday, October 23, 2008**  
**Neatby Timlin Theatre**

*Attendance: See Appendix A.*

1. Opening Remarks

Condolences were expressed on behalf of Council by Professor Emeritus Barry Brown, College of Education, to colleagues of Gerald James Langley. Professor Langley's teaching career with the College spanned four decades, from 1947 to 1980, and took him to many locations in the province. Dr. Langley died August 13, 2008.

Professor Angela Ward, College of Education presented the next tribute, to Professor Janet Johnston. After completing her Ed.D. at the University of Houston, Dr. Johnston returned to Saskatoon to join the staff of the College of Education. She achieved the rank of Full Professor and served twelve years as the Director of Field Experiences before retiring in 1988. Professor Johnson passed away August 28, 2008.

Condolences were also expressed to family and colleagues of Professor Byron S. Wenger, Anatomy Department (1969-1987). Professor Rick Devon, Head, Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology presented the tribute to Professor Wenger, who died on September 8, 2008.

Dr. Barry McClennan of the Department of Biochemistry paid tribute to his former colleague Dr. Peter D. Shargool, Professor in Biochemistry from 1968 until 2002. Dr. Shargool served as Professor of Plant Biochemistry. He passed away October 6, 2008.

Following a moment of silence and quorum having been met, the Chair opened the meeting at 2:50 p.m. She encouraged engagement by Council members in the discussions and decisions before them.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

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

CARRIED

3. Minutes of the meeting of September 25, 2008

GRANT/McAULIFFE: That the minutes of the meeting of September 25, 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 Provost brought regrets from President MacKinnon, who is attending AUCC meetings in Ottawa and was unable to be at Council. Dr. Fairbairn proposed that he present his own and the President's report together under Item 6.

6. Report of the Provost

The Provost drew members' attention to items in his own and the President's reports, focusing particularly on the implementation of the second integrated plan and on the Provost's Prize for Innovative Practice in Teaching and Learning, which went to the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, and the Provost's Project Grant for Innovative Practice in Teaching and Learning, which went to the Department of History. He expressed congratulations to all those involved.

The Provost then spent some time addressing the matter of how the University will respond to the current economic crisis, and in particular the impact of recent declines in investment rates on endowments. Citing recent announcements by several universities about measures that they have taken to cut costs and write off endowments, Dr. Fairbairn observed that the University has traditionally had a low-risk approach to its investments and as a consequence may not be as severely affected as some other institutions have been. While the University's response will in the near future not involve broad cutbacks, the University may have to go to a 'plan B' solution if the crisis continues, and consider more far-reaching measures. He urged all units to participate in the solution by thinking about what one-time measures they might undertake in order to respond to the shortfalls that will surface. With respect to pensions, he noted that the numbers are of larger size but also longer duration, and also that the University's financial exposure is different for defined benefit plans than for money purchase plans. He reassured members that the need for contributions from operating funds to keep pension plans solvent is not imminent at this time. The Provost then commented on the impact on the University's operating budget, 3% of which--or \$9.6M in revenue--is based on investment earnings. It is unlikely that the University can solve this problem on the revenue side of the ledger; opportunities are not there for substantial growth to offset the decline, and therefore the decrease in revenue will need to be handled through central budget restraint. He identified the fund for capital projects and the University's small contingency allotment as well as operating reserves as potential one-time aids in addressing the problem, but noted that such draw-downs would have to be replenished by operating budgets in the future. He reported that this is a message he has communicated already to the deans and the Planning and Priorities Committee, and that it will be communicated more broadly to the University community in the coming days.

There was a question about the effect of the downturn of the economy on the University's major capital projects. The Vice-President Finance and Resources responded that traditionally funding for projects such as the Academic Health Science Centre has been put into a fixed income pool; this has historically been very secure, and at this point the University is not signaling any major concern.

## 7. Student Society Reports

### 7.1 Report from the Undergraduate Students' Association

Academic Vice President Brea Loewenberger reported on the Victim Advocate Open Mic and Coffee House, classroom talks, approval of the increase to the infrastructure fee for Place Riel expansion, Academic Integrity Week events, and initiatives taken by the USSU leading up to the federal election. She also commended Room Scheduling and SESD and others involved on the early posting of the examination schedule this year—the schedule was posted October 3, the earliest it has ever been posted.

### 7.2 Report from the Graduate Students' Association

President Janice Victor presented the report of the GSA, commending Council members to her written report and highlighting the progress made recently on the Graduate Commons project and the discussions that have been undertaken with postdoctoral fellows on campus. On the first of these, she reported that rising cost estimates have made the GSA much more dependent on donors and the University for support. The GSA is initiating a fundraising campaign, challenging all salaried members of the University to make a contribution.

## 8. Bylaws Committee

Professor Doug Surtees presented the report on behalf of the Bylaws Committee.

### 8.1 Amendments to Council Bylaws Part Two IV with respect to the Terms of Reference of the Coordinating Committee

SURTEES/WURZER: That Council approve an amendment to the terms of reference of the Coordinating Committee by adding the following additional terms:

(1) Setting the agenda for Council meetings.

(2) Receiving and determining the disposition of motions from individual members of Council. In making its determination, the Coordinating Committee may refer the matter to a standing committee, or may include the motion on the Council agenda for consideration.

An amendment was proposed to Term 2, as follows:

SURTEES/WURZER: That Council approve an amendment to the 2<sup>nd</sup> term as follows:

(2) Receiving and determining the disposition of written motions from individual members of Council. The Coordinating Committee will either include the motion on the Council agenda or refer the matter to a standing committee(s), which will then report back on the matter to the Coordinating Committee and Council.

CARRIED

The original motion as amended was then put to a vote and CARRIED.

## 8.2 Changes to Council Bylaws Part Two and Three

Professor Reeves noted that the listing of “Physics” under B.E. should read “Engineering Physics.”

SURTEES/CARTER: That Council approve the amendments to the Council Bylaws Part Two and Three outlined on pages 29- 31 of the agenda material, with the change noted.

CARRIED

## 8.3 Appointment to Chair of Nominations Committee for 2008/2009

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

SURTEES/HARRISON: That Council approve the appointment of Malcolm Reeves as Chair of the Nominations Committee for 2008/2009.

CARRIED

## 9. Planning and Priorities Committee

### 9.1 Request for decision *A Framework for Assessment: Beyond Systematic Program Review*

The Chair cited a conflict of interest with respect to this item, and indicated that she had asked Len Proctor to chair this portion of the meeting to allow her to comment.

Professor Proctor assumed the chair and invited Jay Kalra, Chair of the Planning and Priorities Committee, to present the item. Dr. Kalra spoke about the history of program assessment at the University and the process and consultation that led to development of this framework. He then invited Provost and Vice President Academic Fairbairn to provide a perspective on the document.

Dr. Fairbairn outlined the role of the review of Systematic Program Review in the changes that have gone into the approach to assessment being proposed in the document. He reviewed the importance of assessment to planning and the need to keep assessment in balance with what is being assessed. He also drew members’ attention to the extensive input and review that has gone into the present draft. He reminded members that the document itself is a framework intended to articulate some guiding principles, and that in adopting it, Council would be directing the administration to carry out the intent and goals of the framework and to report back on how it has done this. He then commented on how the cost of assessment would be borne, and what would be done with the results of the assessments. Assessment, he pointed out, is a cross-cutting responsibility for all three governing bodies of the university—Council, Board and Senate. The document is “wider but lighter” than SPR, and provides sufficient flexibility to be selective and to provide a full range of tools in order to conduct the forms of assessment that are appropriate to the various kinds of assessment that need to

be undertaken. The intent is to have fewer reviews than under SPR, which proved to be too onerous and too much of an imposition on units.

The Chair then opened the floor for discussion of the document. The Chair of the Academic Programs Committee thanked Dr. Kalra for the opportunity he was provided to have input to the document, and raised a number of questions and suggestions relating to the authority of deans to implement their own program reviews, the absence of a specific statement of the principle that assessment should be “fair, open and follow university-wide procedures,” the relationships between financial allocation and assessment outcomes, and the need to specify 2009-10 as the date the Dean of Graduate Studies must begin implementing assessments of graduate programs.

Other Council members expressed approval of the opportunity for both ‘bottom up’ and ‘top down’ input and the link to the University’s planning processes, of the comprehensiveness of the document and of the openness of the process it describes.

There was a concern expressed about the lack of a voice for undergraduates and for members of the academic community on PCIP, which has oversight of assessment, and also about the lack of specific timelines and procedures for the assessment of administrative units; these concerns led to comments about the appropriate role of governance versus that of administration, and of the Board (which has oversight of administrative units) and Council (which is charged with oversight of academic programs). There was also some discussion about what is meant by “unit” in the document, and by the term “systematic”.

In response to a suggestion that some of these concerns might be addressed by sending the document back to the committee for further wordsmithing, a Council member objected that the time that has been spent in drafting this document has already led to delays in the assessment of some graduate programs, and that Council has already seen the document three times now. He urged Council not to delay any further, expressing the view that the document is solid and addresses important issues, and that its major thrust is clear. The Chair then called the question.

KALRA/GRANT: That Council adopt *A Framework for Assessment: Beyond Systematic Program Review* as the new framework for assessment for the University of Saskatchewan, effective October 23, 2008.

CARRIED

Professor Card resumed the chair at this point.

10. Academic Programs Committee

10.1 Request for approval of revisions to the *Examination Regulations*

Gordon Hill presented this item as chair of the Academic Programs Committee.

HILL/WURZER: That Council approve the revised *Examination Regulations* outlined on pages 61-100 of the agenda material, effective immediately.

There was a vigorous discussion of the document, focused on the following aspects of the regulations:

- Whether it is fair to require students to submit applications for special deferred examinations within three business days when professors are given five days to mark examinations;
- Why the period between the end of classes and the beginning of examinations has been shortened to 24 hours;
- What the basis is for the change to how students with more than three midterm exams on one day are to be dealt with;
- Why the rule about students with more than three midterms in one day was changed;
- Whether faculty are aware of the implications of the new requirement to include learning outcomes on course outlines (though the Council member who raised this welcomed the innovation);
- Whether it is reasonable to require departments to periodically discuss grading patterns and try to reach a common understanding about what appropriate patterns should be;
- What the process for consultation has been, and whether it included all colleges;
- The rationale for including the clause about attendance;
- Whether the requirement that no assignment or exam should be newly assigned in the course after the course outline has been distributed without the consent of all students would pertain only to evaluated assignments
- Whether examinations should be scheduled on the Saturday between Good Friday and Easter Sunday
- Whether one of the references to 'final grades' should say 'mid term' grades

REEVES/RENNY: To refer the proposed revisions of the *Examination Regulations* back to the Academic Programs Committee for further consultation, based on the discussion at Council.

CARRIED

The Chair noted that the Committee meets November 4 and would welcome input.

10.2 Report for information "Agriculture and Bioresources: Termination of Co-op Program Option"

This item was provided for information.

11. Registration Report for 2008/2009

The Chair noted that quorum had been lost.

It was suggested that, the Registration Report being an important matter for all Council members to discuss, this item be deferred to the next meeting.

12. Other Business

There was no other business.

13. Question Period

There were no further questions.

14. Adjournment and Next meeting

The meeting adjourned at 4:53 p.m. Next meeting is on Thursday, November 20 at 2:30 p.m. in Neatby-Timlin Theatre