

Attendance: J. Kalra (Chair). See appendix A for listing of members in attendance.

A tribute to Dr. Chaturbhuj Sisadia from the Western College of Veterinary Medicine was given by Dr. Barry Blakley, the department head of Veterinary Biomedical Sciences in the Western College of Veterinary Medicine.

The chair called the meeting to order at 2:43 p.m., observing that quorum had been attained.

1. Adoption of the agenda

DOBSON/KALYNCHUK: To adopt the agenda as circulated.

CARRIED

2. Opening remarks

The chair welcomed members and visitors and noted the items coming before Council. At the chair's invitation the university secretary provided the election results for Council's faculty representatives being: Michael Nickerson for the College of Agriculture and Bioresources; Bill Roesler for the College of Medicine; and James Montgomery for the Western College of Veterinary Medicine; all for three-year terms commencing July 1, 2014 until June 30, 2017.

3. Minutes of the meeting of March 20, 2014

Two corrections were noted for the minutes, the first to note that Dr. Richard Farrell is not a department head; the second to add the word "socioeconomic" before the word demographics in the second paragraph of the report from the USSU.

MICHELMANN/DOBSON: That the Council minutes of March 20, 2014 be approved as circulated with the amendments noted.

CARRIED

4. Business from the minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

5. Report of the President

President Ilene Busch-Vishniac commented on a number of events that have occurred since the last Council meeting including: the USSU has held its election re-electing Max FineDay as USSU president; Izabela Vlahu was elected as in-coming GSA president; and the USSU held their annual awards ceremony. The president also noted that she had attended the send-off for third year nutrition students, met with the Student Medical Society of Saskatchewan, and hosted a dinner for the Aboriginal Student Leadership group. The president commended the incredible year for Huskie Athletics noting that 11 teams made the national playoffs with six teams finishing in the top six in Canada.

The president provided comments on the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) meeting and the discussion on faith-based institutions and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom. The issue is not whether or not institutions should be afforded religious freedom, but that in describing and constituting themselves some institutions have taken issue with those in the lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender (LGBT) community. She noted that at a meeting of the executive heads of the AUCC a number of options were proposed. Although as yet there is no consensus, there is an awareness of the situation and a desire by the AUCC to have a clear stand on the issue. The president noted that there will be more information provided at a later date when a motion comes forward.

The president informed Council that she had been invited to join the Science, Technology and Innovation Council of Canada (STIC) which meets four times a year in Ottawa with the ministers of Science and Technology and of Industry. The Tri-council agencies report through STIC and it is an extremely important council and the president noted how pleased she was to have been invited for a three-year term being one of two university presidents on the council.

During the question session with the president, a Council member noted that the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) has been clear that if Trinity Western in establishing a law school requires a faith test that it will not be recognized as a university by the CAUT.

The chair congratulated the president on her appointment to STIC.

6. Report of the Provost

Dr. Brett Fairbairn, provost and vice-president academic, referred to his written report and highlighted three items including a report on expenditures made from the Academic Priorities Fund since its inception, which has been provided in response to a previous question at Council. The action plan that PCIP will release by May in response to the task force reports, will include a set of project briefs for each action proposed in the action plan document, and a set of responses to the taskforce recommendations to indicate which ones are covered by projects proposed, which ones the university should not take action on and why, and which ones will be left with unit leaders for consideration of further actions. The provost advised that the action plan will include some projects that are already underway such as the graduate education review of the College of Graduate Studies and Research. Thirdly, the provost noted that his report includes the provost teaching award winners and he congratulated them on their accomplishments. The provost then called for questions.

A Council member, noting that the report refers to principles and criteria factored into the action plan, including the new vision document, asked Dr. Fairbairn to provide more information on how the vision document will factor into the recommendations that will come forward through the TransformUS process. The provost advised that as PCIP has been developing the proposals and identifying projects to recommend and launch, they have been mindful of the discussion of the vision document and have been considering what the emerging content of the vision document signifies.

A Council member asked the provost what he meant by vertical silos in his report. The provost advised that the concept of silos signifies when parts of the organization are inwardly focused and have difficulty communicating with other parts of the organization.

7. Report of the Vice-president Research

Dr. Karen Chad, vice-president research, provided her report to Council on initiatives happening across the campus and specifically provided updates on the Research Mentorship Program and the One Health Initiative, one of the university's signature areas.

Regarding the Research Mentorship Program, Dr. Chad reported on a number of consultation groups that looked at the factors that helped contribute to an individual faculty member's success. The number one factor identified was the need for mentorship. Thereafter a university-wide research mentorship program was established as a joint effort of the office of the vice-president research and the provost's office. The program matches a personalized research mentorship team to new faculty members for a period up to five years. Dr. Chad noted that within the U15 there are 12 universities with teaching mentorship programs; however, only two of these are institutional programs, and none are research-focused..

Dr. Chad outlined that the goals of the Research Mentorship Program are to improve research success for new faculty, enhance the teacher-scholar model across campus and advance our research-intensive culture. She provided further detail on the participation rate of new faculty members in the program and the value of the program, as reported in a survey of new faculty participants and by mentors, in terms of their ability to contribute towards the success of new faculty enrolled in the program. Although the program is still in its early stages, the long-term goal is to have a 100% participation rate of new faculty members.

Regarding the One Health Initiative, Dr. Chad advised that the university is looking at solutions for issues at the intersection of human, animal and environmental health. She advised that more than 40 faculty members participate in the One Health initiative, as well as industry and government partners. A strategic plan submitted to the Council of Health Science Deans and PCIP identified the following four areas of research strength: food safety, water and health, infectious diseases shared by animals and humans, and one health community needs and services. Dr. Chad listed the faculty members leading each of the four areas. Dr. Chad also noted the university's success in being awarded a Canada Excellence Research Chair in Integrated Infectious Disease Mitigation. In concluding her remarks, Dr. Chad noted the undergraduate one health program, one health leadership experience and how the initiative is encouraging widespread collaboration across disciplines.

Dr. Chad received a number of questions. A Council member noted that he had heard that at the end of the Mitacs executive in residence announcement earlier in the month, a First Nations woman made critical remarks and was ignored by those present. Dr. Chad agreed that his description was fairly accurate and indicated it was unfortunate that individuals often do not know how to deal or respond to comments such as these. She acknowledged the importance of the issue raised, which relates to one of the thematic areas of the International Minerals Innovation Institute (IMII) being social consciousness, public policy, duty to consult and duty for engagement. Dr. Chad noted that she would bring forward the incident and lack of response, to the IMII as she sits on the board.

A Council member noted that there were four sub-groups under the One Health Initiative however none of them applies to the arts side of the College of Arts and Science and recommended that the arts be reflected within the initiative. Dr. Chad agreed that each of the thematic areas needs to embrace all of the disciplines and advised that the calls to participate go to the whole academy but that further facilitation may be needed to reach all faculty.

Other questions related to: the challenges and opportunities of open-source publishing –Dr. Chad advised that she would report further on the move towards open source publishing after speaking

with Dean Williamson, University Library; and progressing the Research Mentorship Program through non-participating colleges –Dr. Chad advised that Dr. Jim Thornhill (with support from Dr. Jim Germida) will be meeting with both participating and non-participating colleges and seeking advice from other universities with successful programs.

8. Student Societies

8.1 Report from the USSU

Jenna Moellenbeck, vice-president, operations and finance, of the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union, delivered the report. She recalled the key initiatives of the USSU over the year, including the establishment of a fall reading week in support of student mental health, and the adoption and implementation of an open textbook policy at the university to alleviate student financial stress related to the cost of textbooks, which the provincial government has recently signed onto. The USSU will seek faculty support to implement the policy in their classes.

Regarding TransformUS, Ms. Moellenbeck advised that during the consultation and feedback period the USSU held its own consultation with different student groups and compiled responses into a report that was provided to PCIP. The hope and expectation is for university leaders to continue dialogues with student university leaders after the action plan has been released. Ms. Moellenbeck also reported on a number of other initiatives that the USSU brought forward over the year and named the new members of the USSU executive that had been elected for the 2014-15 year including: Max FineDay returning as president, Elias Nelson as vice-president operations and finance, Desiree Steele, vice-president academic affairs and Jack Saddleback, vice-president student affairs.

The chair asked Ms. Moellenbeck to pass on Council's appreciation for the work of the USSU to the entire USSU leadership.

8.2 Report from the GSA

Ehimai Ohiozebau, president of the Graduate Students' Association, presented a report on the work that has been accomplished by the GSA over the past three years, including access to the GSA commons, active participation by GSA members in governance, the new GSA website and increased graduate student scholarships. He thanked both the president for her support as an advocate for graduate students, and various academic units involved in the implementation of the devolved scholarship program.

Mr. Ohiozebau advised that the GSA has been working with the USSU in many areas such as the tuition waiver program support and open textbook policy; and the USSU has worked with the GSA on the provincial government's student retention program. Mr. Ohiozebau noted that the GSA provided increased advocacy since last year for students in the area of racial discrimination, and he advised that this needs to be addressed calmly and seriously, especially for international students. He advised that his hope is that the GSA will receive support to help students in this area. Regarding the GSA conference and gala, he advised that both were very well attended and he thanked all those who were in attendance.

In closing, Mr. Ohiozebau thanked the University Council for its support, and, in particular, thanked his supervisor and member of Council, Prof. Paul Jones for his kindness and support during his term as GSA president

The chair congratulated Mr. Ohiozebau for his leadership and work done for the GSA and provided congratulations and thanks to all of the GSA executive, noting that Council will continue to work effectively with the new executive.

Adam Baxter-Jones, acting dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Research, also provided his thanks to the work Mr. Ohiozebau has done noting that he has been outstanding in his leadership with the UPASS, scholarships and graduate retention programs. He also thanked Prof. Jones for his support of Mr. Ohiozebau.

9. Planning and Priorities Committee

Dr. Fran Walley, chair of the committee, presented this item to Council.

9.1 Request for Decision: Vision 2025: From Spirit to Action

Dr. Walley advised that the planning and priorities committee is recommending that Council approve the document as the new institutional vision document containing the new vision and mission statement for the university. The document is intended to become an institutional statement of the university's broadest goals and objectives and lay the foundation for the university's future integrated plans and foundational documents. Dr. Walley noted that she has heard it described as the foundational document of all foundational documents. The vision document does not supplant the current university's integrated plan, but rather provides guidance and direction for future university plans. The document speaks to the university's collective mission, vision and values and guiding principles and, as such, it is appropriate that Council be asked to approve the Vision 2025 document to voice its support of this collective vision and direction of the university.

Dr. Walley noted that an earlier version of the document came to Council in October at which time the committee reported on its discussion with the president. The committee expressed support for various elements but also suggested revisions. Input from the committee and subsequently from Council, Senate and the Board of Governors helped to further shape the document as did extensive feedback that was sought through town halls, public meetings and meeting with student organizations, alumni and administrative units, and government representatives. A number of colleges and departments also invited the president to present the draft document to their faculty, students and staff. Dr. Walley noted the significant changes made to the document since October.

Dr. Walley noted that at the most recent committee discussion of the document it was clear that there are many ways of articulating the vision. In recommending approval the committee signifies that despite having differences in opinion regarding the wording in the document, when taken on balance and as a whole the majority of the committee agreed to the document. Dr. Walley advised that it is from this perspective that the committee submits the document to Council for approval.

The president was invited to speak to the motion. She commented on why the university needs a vision document advising that it allows us to articulate where we as an institution are headed, describes our values and what makes us unique among our peers, provides a framework as a touchstone as other units are developing plans, and allows us to develop and refresh our foundational documents.

The president advised that she found the process of developing this document delightful and exciting. She tried to make sure it was open and transparent and sought input from as many

people as she could. The president advised that she also went to the USSU, GSA, Indigenous Student Council, alumni events and at least three committees of Council (planning and priorities, teaching, learning and academic resources, and research, scholarly and artistic work). Many comments were received, which frequently reflected dissenting views, and therefore not all comments could be incorporated.

Importantly, the president advised that between October and the present, the document has become the university's vision document, rather than the president's vision document. This does not mean everyone will agree with every word in the document, but rather that everyone feels they have had a chance to be a part of the process and is in agreement with the stance of the document. The document has become bolder and briefer. The Aboriginal engagement section was completely re-written after extensive consultation with students, faculty and staff on campus. The president concluded her remarks, by expressing that she has thoroughly enjoyed the process of shaping the vision document for the institution and very much appreciated the comments and feedback received.

A Council member asked what the relationship was between the vision statement and the University of Saskatchewan's mission statement. The president advised that a mission statement is "what we are meant to do as an institution" and a vision is "what do we want to achieve down the road in 10 to 15 years". The Council member asked whether the University of Saskatchewan mission statement that was approved in 1993 would continue to stand. The president clarified that if the Vision 2025 document is approved by Council, Senate and the Board of Governors, then the mission statement included in this document would replace the 1993 mission statement.

A Council member noted that it is an aspirational document with substantial operational implications, and recommended tabling the motion of approval of the document until after the release of the TransformUS Action Plan to see how PCIP interpreted the document in relation to the Action Plan. The university secretary advised that a motion to postpone temporarily is not debatable or amendable and requires two-thirds majority of votes cast for approval.

FINDLAY/BROOKE: It is recommended that the document Vision 2025: From Spirit to Action be temporarily postponed for consideration until the next Council meeting.

DEFEATED

A Council member asked why this document was not called a mission statement so the community could compare both this document and the 1993 mission statement and come to a conclusion. The president advised that the mission statement has been in the document from the beginning, although its wording has changed slightly. She stated that this has been called a vision statement because a vision is what we are trying to achieve so it is a more appropriate name for the whole document.

A Council member asked how much weight the president envisioned the document having in its entirety. The president advised that Dr. Walley's description of the vision document being the foundational document of all foundational documents is the correct way to think about the document. The document is a statement of the university's aspirations, the values it holds dear, and its mission and vision.

A Council member registered two concerns with the document in its current form the first being on page six in the fourth bullet that states: "We will ensure our employees reflect the values of the university". He advised that this statement has a coercive element in it and it

should be revisited so it does not contain coerced collegiality. Secondly under the programs and planning section in the second bullet where it states, “We will honor a culture of planning, implementing plans and evidence-based decision-making”, he recommended that “culture” be replaced with “cult” which would align more with academic and health “leanness”.

A Council member noted that she has been very interested in the process and appreciative of some changes such as inclusion of “scholarly and artistic work” and also language from the Learning Charter and referring to “social responsibility, diversity and equality”. She asked for the benefits of having the document approved today, rather than having the document discussed today and inviting colleagues to discuss it within their colleges, with a later approval date. Dr. Walley replied that there were pragmatic reasons for bringing the document to Council today being the desire to have it approved by Council, Senate and the Board of Governors before the end of the academic year. Also, there has been much consultation over the past months regarding the document.

A Council member noted that there have been visionary and mission statements from Walter Murray and founders of the university and again in 1993 that the university belongs to the people of Saskatchewan. A Council member also noted article 4.1 in the University of Saskatchewan Act and noted he finds that the present document, which he believes had its origins in the Dickeson algorithm of program prioritization processes, adds nothing that is not already embodied in the current mission statement. He stated that there is no necessity to approve a document that is not a creation of Council, however if Council should approve the document then Council will be held accountable for what is written and also the subsequent interpretations that will be made of it. His belief is that the 1993 mission statement is much more than the present document, and therefore indicated he could not support the new vision document.

A non-Council member spoke against the document, citing complaints with the institutes highlighted in the document, and that the values articulated in the document do not translate into the university’s approach to workforce planning.

A Council member asked to what extent is the document amendable by Council to which the president responded that people who wish to can propose amendments to the motion.

A Council member recognized that much work has gone into the document and many people have been consulted and he commended the president on her inclusiveness. Nonetheless he provided several suggestions to improve the document, related to greater focus and integration of the vision statement with the statement on Aboriginal means and development in the document.

In response to a concern raised by a Council member regarding the timing of the development of the Vision 2025 document and the TransformUS process, the president clarified that a draft of the vision document was available at the time the task force reports and recommendations were being developed. The purpose of the documents also differs, as the vision document is intended to have a lifespan of 10 to 15 years; whereas TransformUS is meant to result in more immediate actions.

The provost added that PCIP considered the document as one of many documents, principles and criteria that it is referencing. The document does not come from the Dickeson model and has a different focus and purpose as outlined. This document is well-suited to being the longer term vision. There will be strategic documents for shorter terms as well as four-year planning documents to focus on four-year periods, all of which will be shaped and informed by this Vision document.

Dr. Walley informed Council of an amendment to the document suggested by the president to delete “We will ensure our employees reflect the values of the university, and it is our responsibility to make certain that” in the fourth bullet under “People” on page six and replace it with the remainder of the sentence, “We will embed sufficient professional development in our operations so that our personnel can grow their skills and expand their knowledge.”

A Council member spoke in favour of the original motion noting that he views the document as one that he would like to live into and become and he was inspired by it. He noted that he sees it moving the university forward in the necessary direction. Recognizing that as a tri-cameral organization approval will also be sought of Senate and the Board of Governors; he recommended that Council approve the document, understanding that the president may seek modifications in the future.

A Council member noted that he believed the language was problematic and if the president was willing to make the modification suggested, that would encourage him to support the document.

A Council member suggested an additional modification to delete the sixth bullet in the Resources, Focus and Partnership section, which reads, “we will craft mechanisms to help us select which opportunities we will respond to in a timely fashion,” due to the administrative tone conveyed by the sentence.

A Council member noted her regret that the following two clauses from the 1993 mission statement will be missing, “today, the university continues to provide liberal, artistic and professional education, enriching the lives of the people of the province,” and, “to offer a rich array of challenging academic programs.”

A brief recess was taken to confirm the amendment proposed by the president in the section on “People.”

The chair called for the vote.

WALLEY/KALYNCHUK: That Council approve the document Vision 2025: From Spirit to Action, with the amendment to the section on “People”, as the new institutional vision document of the University of Saskatchewan.

CARRIED (50 in favour, 5 opposed)

10. Planning and priorities committee and academic programs committee

10.1 Report for information: Joint report on disestablishment processes of Council

Dr. Walley and Dr. Dobson provided the presentation to Council on the role the planning and priorities (PPC) and academic programs committees (APC) play with respect to the disestablishment processes of Council. Council was advised that the report contained in the written meeting materials includes important attachments as well as links to provide further information and background. The University of Saskatchewan Act is the definitive legislation governing disestablishment, supplemented by Council and committee guidelines.

Dr. Dobson noted that recommendations are to come to Council for program additions, major program revisions and program deletions. APC can approve minor programs but is to report to Council for information.

Dr. Dobson advised that historically, the characteristics of programs considered for termination include: continually low student enrolment; inactivity for longer than five years; significant program weakness in one or more of teaching, research and scholarly work or other activities specific to the program; and persistent lack of necessary resources or inefficient use of available resources.

Dr. Dobson also noted the program termination assessment criteria. He explained that if Council approves of the disestablishment of an academic unit, confirmation is sought from Senate, and the Board of Governors is authorized by Council to disestablish the unit. He noted that the university is not in a financial exigency situation now but even if this was the situation, the Board of Governors is required to consult with Council. Dr. Walley advised that PPC would also be involved in academic unit amalgamation. If a departmental amalgamation requires no new resources, the decision remains with Council and does not require Board approval. The authority to disestablish or amalgamate an academic unit is a decision made by Council. As a result, faculty council approval is not required, but would be of interest to PPC and Council. PPC also has the right to consult with other faculty councils or college committees. Dr. Walley noted that the university does not often disestablish academic units or amalgamate departments so there is not much guidance in this area and that PPC will consider developing guidelines that will be used to provide similar guidance that APC has for program deletions. Given the rarity for college and school disestablishments, PPC will not develop specific guidelines for the disestablishment of entities at this level, and these items will continue to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The chair invited questions to be sent by email to the university secretary and noted that a copy of the presentation would be posted on the university secretary web site.

11. Academic programs committee

Dr. Roy Dobson, chair of the academic programs committee presented these reports to Council.

11.1 Request for Decision: Four-year and honours degree, biology and biotechnology-program termination

Dr. Dobson noted that this program was initially established as part of the Virtual College of Biotechnology. The program has been disbanded and no longer in the calendar. The responsible faculty member is no longer available to contribute to this program and it no longer serves academic needs. All students in the program will be able to finish their programs.

DOBSON/WALLEY: That Council approve the termination of the honours and four-year degree in biology and biotechnology, effective September 2014.

CARRIED

11.2 Request for Decision: Four-year and honours degree, biomolecular structure studies – program termination

Dr. Dobson advised that the biomolecular program has no student enrolment, faculty support or funding.

DOBSON/WALLEY: That Council approve the termination of the honours and four-year degree in biomolecular structure studies, effective September 2014.

CARRIED

12. Research, scholarly and artistic work committee

12.1 Report for information: undergraduate research

Dr. Caroline Tait, chair of the research, scholarly and artistic work committee asked that this item be moved to be considered at the next Council meeting, to which the chair agreed.

13. Other business

There was no other business.

14. Question period

There were no questions.

15. Adjournment

PARKINSON/CHANG: That the meeting be adjourned at 4:58 p.m.

CARRIED

Next meeting – 2:30 pm, May 22, 2014