

**ACADEMIC COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of September 24, 2024**  
2:30 – 4:04 p.m. [videoconference](#)

**Present:**

Steven Murphy  
(Chair)  
Scott Aquanno  
JoAnne Arcand  
Robert Bailey  
Ahmad Barari  
Wendy Barber  
Mihai Beligan  
Mary Bluechardt  
Toba Bryant  
Amanda Cooper  
Nicola Crow  
Catherine  
Davidson

Ana Duff  
Mikael Eklund  
Nawal Elshamiy  
Shanti Fernando  
Jessica Hogue  
Mehdi Hossein  
Nejad  
Brenda Jacobs  
Les Jacobs  
Hossam Kishawy  
Lori Livingston  
Breanne Mcalpin  
Janet McCabe  
Fedor Naumkin

Scott Nokleby  
Carol Rodgers  
Robyn  
Ruttenberg-Rozen  
Denina Simmons  
Gillian Slade  
Peter Stoett  
Joe Stokes  
Jemma Tam  
Dwight Thompson  
Shannon Vettor  
Ken Wilson

**Staff & Guests:**

Kirstie Ayotte  
(secretary)  
Chelsea Bauer  
Jamie Bruno  
Stephanie  
Callahan  
Carla Cesaroni  
Barbara Hamilton  
Leigh Harkins  
Michelle Heslip

Krista Hester  
Celine Jahan  
Tom Jenks  
Amy Leach  
Jennifer MacInnis  
Brad MacIsaac  
Holly MacPherson  
Kimberley  
McCartney

Christine  
McLaughlin  
Niall O'Halloran  
Darryl Papke  
Andrea Slane  
Sarah Thrush  
Lisa Townsend  
Shelly Windsor  
Adam Wingate

**Regrets:**

Asifa Aamir  
Mitch Fraser

Sayyeed Ali  
Hosseini  
Krystina Clarke

Carolyn McGregor  
Oghenetega  
(Tega) Ubor

### 1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. D. Simmons began with a thoughtful Land Acknowledgement, first sharing their personal reflection and then reading the University's Land Acknowledgement.

### 2. Agenda

A member requested consideration to add an additional two items during Other Business if there is time remaining.

*Upon a motion duly made by M. Hossein-Nejad and seconded by T. Bryant, the Agenda and the Consent Agenda were approved.*

### 3. Chair's Remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first Academic Council meeting of the year and began with the presentation of the October 2024 Honorary Degree Recipients for the Fall 2024 Convocation Ceremonies taking place on October 17, downtown Oshawa at the Regent Theatre.

#### a) October 2024 Honorary Degree Recipients

Dr. Alan Shephard will be recognized for his legacy of leadership and promotion of transformational change and innovation within higher education and for his passionate advocacy of diversity, inclusion and belonging, especially in the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.

Mr. Edmond Vanhaverbeke and Ms. Sylvia Lisk Vanhaverbeke have a long history of championing higher education and student success, volunteering and providing philanthropic support for healthcare, the arts, and conservation. They have also shown a strong loyalty to Ontario Tech University through significant contributions to the campus infrastructure.

The Chair then thanked both returning and new members of the Academic Council for their important role in representing the academic community and participating in strategic matters/discussions through the exercise of the Academic Council's authority to advise the Board of Governors on standards and policies. He also introduced Nicola Crow, the new University Secretary, and extended gratitude to those who provided support during the interim.

He continued by highlighting the success of recent orientation events at both North and Downtown campuses and outlined key themes for the upcoming year, including differentiated growth, competency-based learning, and the ethical use of artificial intelligence (AI), all aimed at improving the student experience while adhering to the University's values of 'tech with a conscience.'

In conclusion he reminded attendees of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30, for which the University observes with a meeting-free day to foster education and reflection on the history and lasting impact of residential schools. Campus-wide resources have been shared with the university community to promote meaningful engagement.

In response to a question regarding the new services on campus, S. Murphy highlighted exciting updates to campus food services, including a new 24/7 marketplace near the library that provides students with food and drink options anytime. He also noted the addition of a Subway and a bubble tea shop in the UA Building, recent upgrades to Hunter's Kitchen in the UB Building and the reopening of the Tim Hortons in Shaw Hall, Isabella's at the Downtown campus and the smoothie shop at the Campus Recreation Center.

In response to a question regarding the references made to "strategic matters" in Academic Council discussions, S. Murphy explained that all governance bodies, including Academic Council, are tasked with strategic conversations relevant to their mandates and for Academic Council, this includes academic matters such as teaching, learning, program creation, budgeting, and addressing funding challenges as part of its role to establish and regulate academic standards, policies and procedures. He emphasized that the Steering Committee is responsible for setting the agenda and determining which strategic topics need to be addressed each month, ensuring time is used appropriately for important issues and affirmed the Committee's commitment to the University's governance structure.

#### **4. Inquiries and Communications**

##### **a) COU Academic Report**

R. Ruttenberg-Rozen presented the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) report from the recent meetings on August 13 and 14, 2024. She highlighted that the focus was on fostering connections with colleges but the discussion shifted to the competition between colleges and universities, emphasizing how Government funding policies are fostering rivalry instead of collaboration.

Limited discussions regarding international students and encampments were noted, along with a brief mention of the upcoming anniversary on October 7, 2024. It was also announced that M. Eklund will serve as the alternate COU representative for Ontario Tech University.

In response to a question regarding college competition and COU strategies, R. Ruttenberg-Rozen mentioned that COU is developing a strategy to attract more Ontario students to local Universities through marketing initiatives. She stressed the necessity of going beyond marketing, as the growing overlap between colleges and universities complicates differentiation. Additionally, she noted that discussions on SMA4 are ongoing, though specific details were not shared.

S. Murphy clarified that he no longer sits on the COU Executive Committee and now participates as an Executive Head. He indicated that the strategy aims to address government funding challenges while fostering collaboration, particularly with Durham College. He pointed out the trend of rising university enrollment alongside declining college enrollment, emphasizing the importance of clearly communicating the reasons for choosing universities and underscored the need to reinforce the unique value of universities in research and education amid increasing competition.

Discussion was raised regarding the challenges posed by college Master's degrees or Doctoral programs, noting the need for universities to reconsider their criteria as more college graduates apply. S. Murphy highlighted confusion in the marketplace due to some universities refusing to accept these degrees, while acknowledging the essential role of colleges in providing trades and specialized programs. Concern was expressed over the government's unclear strategy and whether micro-credentials could help clarify the distinctions between college and university offerings.

L. Jacobs noted Federal research funding is increasingly being directed toward colleges, enabling them to enhance their research profiles, especially in provinces like Alberta and British Columbia, where Colleges have been stronger. In Ontario, however, Colleges have historically struggled in this area. S. Murphy highlighted the current incongruity in government support for colleges and stressed the need for effective advocacy for both colleges and universities amidst changing political dynamics.

## **5. Provost's Remarks**

### **a) Senior Academic Administrator Search Update**

L. Livingston began by welcoming two new Deans that have joined the University. Dr. Amanda Cooper, Dean of the Mitch and Leslie Frazer Faculty of Education, from Queen's University, and Dr. Ken Wilson, Dean of the Faculty of Science, from the University of Saskatchewan, noting both are key additions to the Senior Academic Leadership Team.

She advised that the Deputy Provost Search Advisory Committee is progressing well, with a robust applicant pool and interviews currently underway. She reminded attendees that shortlisted candidates' CV's and letters of interest are available for review by appointment through the Provost's Office until the end of the week.

She noted that the Renewal Advisory Committee for Dr. Hossam Kishawy's renewal as Dean in the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science has begun its work after receiving extensive community feedback. The Committee will be submitting their recommendation shortly to the President and subsequently to the Board for approval.

Lastly, she noted that Dr. Theodore Christou unexpectedly resigned from his position as Dean of the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies effective September 12, 2024 and Dr. Joe Stokes, the University Registrar and Assistant Vice-President

International, has been appointed as Acting Dean. She noted that Dr. Stokes' expertise in student recruitment, admissions and international student matters is critical, especially given recent government changes affecting international student study permits. She also noted that Dr. Pejman Mirza-Babaei and Dr. Carla Cesaroni will continue to oversee daily graduate program operations, including thesis defenses and student progress reports.

In response to a question about the requirement for signed emails and letters for the Deputy Provost Search, L. Livingston clarified that the practice remains unchanged from previous searches, noting that emails sent from a person's account are considered signed.

Also addressing concerns about policy adherence for the acting Dean of Graduate Studies appointment, L. Livingston referenced item 7.2 of the Senior Academic Administrative Appointments policy, which states, "A person appointed to a Senior Academic Administrative Position will normally hold a tenured appointment at the rank of Professor or be qualified for an academic appointment commensurate with that rank." She explained that the policy allows flexibility, and due to the timing of Dr. Christou's departure and the need to manage international graduate students, Dr. Stokes was appointed. She emphasized Dr. Stokes' qualifications, including his PhD, academic experience, teaching and supervising graduate students at Ontario Tech, and holding graduate-level appointments at two other Canadian universities. She also highlighted his research, publications, and grant-securing abilities, expressing full confidence in his capability to manage the role of Acting Dean during these challenges.

#### **b) Enrolment Update (Sarah Thrush)**

S. Thrush presented the enrollment and admissions update, noting key trends for the current term. Domestic applications rose by 8.6% year-over-year, with registrations up 4.6%. In contrast, international registrations dropped by 18.5%, despite a 2.1% increase in applications. Overall, there was a 2.9% rise in incoming new students, achieving 93.7% of the enrollment target. Total registration stands at 101.7% of the overall target, strengthened by domestic students at 104.4%.

She addressed challenges, particularly with international registrations at 88.5% of the target, due to competition and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)-imposed caps. Domestic enrollment remains strong, with a 9% year-over-year increase in Graduate registrations, although the intake target was met at 90%. Master's and PhD programs exceeded targets, but some students are beyond funding eligibility. She noted that the University missed its research-based Master's target due to delays, but there is potential for recovery through the winter intake. Ontario Tech experienced an 8.8% increase in domestic undergraduate applications, surpassing the system's 6.4% rise. International applications from Ontario high schools grew by 7.8%, with confirmations up 3.4% despite increased competition. International confirmations rose by 12.4%, even as the overall system saw a 2.6%.

Demand for programs such as Nursing, Computer Science, and Engineering remains strong, while Social Sciences and Liberal Arts have declined. IRCC caps and delays are affecting international perceptions, but recruitment efforts are ongoing.

S. Thrush acknowledged the concerns regarding the need for specific metrics on the number of PhD and Master's students necessary for Faculty success, as well as the suggestion to establish clear targets aligned with the academic needs of the Faculty. She noted that enrollment management meetings involve discussions with both the Deans and the Dean of Graduate Studies to address programmatic needs and Faculty capacity for Graduate students, with the goal of achieving a balanced approach.

In response to a question about enrollment targets and their relation to current or past numbers, S. Thrush clarified that enrollment targets are set collaboratively with all Faculties and distributed to the Deans and enrollment teams. She explained that the University runs a model to project student numbers, factoring in assumptions about retention and course loads. The current registration percentage of 104.4% reflects higher course loads and retention rates than anticipated. She noted that these projections are also tied to the budget. However, she cautioned that there typically is a drop in numbers due to student attrition between now and November.

#### **6. Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC)**

M. Bluehardt provided a report of the June 18 USC meeting noting that the Major Program Modification for the Pre-Engineering Pathway, the English Language Proficiency measures for Oxford ELLT and Oxford ELP Partnership and the amended Program Nomenclature Directives, were expedited and approved during June 25, 2024's Academic Council to ensure readiness for the new academic year.

#### **7. Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)**

J. Stokes provided the GSC report from June 25 noting that there were no actionable items to report but the Committee discussed a report provided by the Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs (IDGP) Working Group which focuses on distinguishing between professional and research-based programs, enhancing program quality, and addressing financial growth concerns. Feedback from community members helped refine the report, which emphasized best practices and the importance of reviewing new programs and considering flexible, non-degree options. The report will be shared with the Academic Leadership Team for further discussion across Faculty units. In response to a question regarding high application fees for international students, J. Stokes clarified that there is no new requirement for a \$3,000 or \$5,000 fee. The deposit for Domestic students remains \$500, while it increased to \$2,000 for international students due to changes in the Provincial attestation letter process. Funded Graduate students can have their tuition deposit waived by contacting SGPS to process manually. Policies and procedures will continue to be reviewed as needed.

#### **8. Governance & Nominations Committee (GNC)**

L. Livingston provided the GNC report from June 17 noting the discussion of the four motions before the Council today.

### **a) Results of Supplementary Calls for Expression of Interest (M)**

*J. Hogue recused herself.*

*M. Eklund abstained.*

#### **Motion:**

*Upon a Motion duly made by L. Livingston and seconded by T. Bryant, pursuant to the recommendation of the Governance & Nominations Committee, Academic Council hereby approves the following appointments to the Academic Council Steering Committee for the term of September 1, 2024 to August 31, 2025.*

- *Mikael Eklund (Teaching Staff)*
- *Jessica Hogue (Administrative Staff)*

### **b) AC Vice-Chair Nomination (M)**

*J. Hogue rejoined.*

*D. Simmons recused herself.*

#### **Motion:**

*Upon a Motion duly made by P. Stoett and seconded by J. McCabe, pursuant to the recommendation of the Governance & Nominations Committee, Academic Council hereby approves the appointment of Denina Simmons as Vice-Chair of Academic Council for the term of October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025.*

*D. Simmons rejoined.*

### **c) Faculty Council Membership Lists (M)**

L. Livingston noted that the GNC annually reviews and approves the Faculty Council membership lists. She mentioned that not all Faculty Councils were able to meet in time for the September deadline, but the remaining membership lists should be available for the October Academic Council meeting.

#### **Motion:**

*Upon a Motion duly made by D. Thompson and seconded by K. Wilson, pursuant to the recommendation of the Governance & Nominations Committee, Academic Council hereby approves the following 2024-2025 Faculty Council membership lists as presented:*

- *Faculty of Business and IT*
- *Mitch and Leslie Frazer Faculty of Education*

### **d) Faculty Council Vice-Chair Nominations (M)**

L. Livingston noted that, like the Faculty Council membership lists, some Faculties have not completed their nominations in time for the September meeting. She

mentioned that Vice-Chairs typically serve one-year terms and that the Deans have taken EDI perspectives into account when making their nominations to the Committee.

**Motion:**

*Upon a Motion duly made by H. Kishawy and seconded by D. Simmons, pursuant to the recommendation of the Governance & Nominations Committee, Academic Council hereby approves the appointment of the following individuals as Vice-Chair of their respective Faculty Council for the term of September 29, 2024 until September 30, 2025.*

- *Dr. Gabby Resch; Faculty of Business and IT*
- *Dr. Dima Jawad; Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science*
- *Dr. Robyn Ruttenberg-Rozen; Mitch and Leslie Frazer, Faculty of Education*

**9. Research Committee**

L. Jacobs presented the Research report from the first committee meeting of the year, highlighting key updates such as the successful completion of the Animal Care Licensing Review and a visit from Japanese scholars for an annual Chemistry Symposium.

He noted the upcoming Research Excellence Awards on October 29, which will celebrate award recipients and Research Chairs, and announced the launch of two searches for Canada Research Chairs in Advanced Nuclear Engineering and Education and Artificial Intelligence.

He shared that the Research Council is close to establishing an AI Institute, led by Faculty from all six Faculties, to strengthen the University's position in AI education. Additionally, he mentioned the need to renew the Strategic Research Plan by June 2025, with a draft expected for consultation in the new year advising that the plan aims to reinforce Ontario Tech University's status as a research-intensive institution, emphasizing inclusivity and recognition for all researchers. The vision promotes a "pull approach" to research, focusing on understanding community and industry needs rather than pushing out research. Upcoming consultations will identify existing strengths and adjacent areas for development, with the Research Committee actively working on this in the coming months.

**10. Consent Agenda**

- a) Minutes of the Meeting of June 25, 2024\* (M)
- b) Conferral of Degrees – Summer 2024\*

**11. Other Business**

- a) J. Tam volunteered to provide the Land Acknowledgement for the October 2024 Academic Council meeting.

M. Eklund requested to have discussions regarding the Risk Management Policy currently under consultation, the potential reopening of the Space Management Policy



for further review, and the review of Postering procedures. He also inquired about the recent announcement regarding the migration of Banner to a cloud platform.

Due to time constraints, it was agreed to defer these discussions to future meetings to allow for consultation and strategic discussion.

## **12. Termination**

*Upon a Motion made by S. Nokleby, the meeting was terminated at 4:04 p.m.*

Kirstie Ayotte, Assistant University Secretary