

Minutes of the Meeting of the University Planning Committee

Wednesday, November 22, 2023 at 10:30 AM, Gilmour Hall, Council Room (Room 111)

PRESENT: Susan Tighe (Chair), Karen Bird, Ryan Clarke, Arlene Dosen, Ori Epstein, Lauren Fink, Khaled Hassanein, Steve Hranilovic, Mark Larché, Jake Nease, Abdul Razak Alozi, Brenda Vrkljan, Nicole Wager

OBSERVERS: Kim Dej, Matheus Grasselli, Sean Van Koughnett

CONSULTANTS: Melissa Pool

INVITED: Melanie Heath, *Associate Dean of Graduate Studies (Social Sciences)*
Robert Innes, *Chair of the Indigenous Studies Department*
Sherri Keene, *Assistant University Secretary*
Christine Richard, *Associate University Secretary*
Andrea Thyret-Kidd, *University Secretary & Privacy Officer*

REGRETS: Carmela Alfaro-Laganse, Dina Brooks, David Farrar, Saher Fazilat, Andy Knights, Lili Litwin, Debbie Martin

OPEN SESSION

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – October 18, 2023 (Open Session)

It was duly moved and seconded,

that the University Planning Committee approve the open session minutes of the meeting held on October 18, 2023, as circulated.

The motion was **Carried; 1 abstention.**

2. Chair's Comments and Update

S. Tighe, *Provost and Vice-President (Academic)*, thanked members who serve on Budget Committee and expressed appreciation for the attention, detail and thoughtful discussion that took place during the recent Budget Conferences. A special thanks was noted to Nicole Wagner, *Chair of the Budget Committee* and to the Office of the Secretariat for ensuring the meetings ran smoothly. S. Tighe explained to the Committee that all units were encouraged to bring forward budgets that were prudent due to constraints on the budget and that despite the University currently being in a surplus, it is important to be mindful and strategic about investments being made. Members heard that a lot of time is

being spent on ensuring the institution remains financially healthy and that all investments made are directed towards high quality teaching, research, and student experiences.

S. Tighe then invited feedback from Budget Committee members about this year's fall budget conferences. Members noted that more uniformity in the documentation submitted by units needs to be encouraged and work should be done to help identify potential issues in future years. Members were pleased that senior-level support unit budget envelope leaders were also invited to attend the budget conferences this year to allow for better understanding of the broader pressures being faced by the University.

The Committee discussed the composition of the Budget Committee and the importance of ensuring overlap and rotation in positions on the Committee to carry forward the work successfully. A Member noted that succession planning and broadening acumen is important for Budget Committee and involving a member of The Management Group (TMG) to understand how decisions are made could be considered in the future as well.

S. Tighe advised the Committee that the Blue-Ribbon Panel released its report, and this has been highlighted in the November 2023 Newsletter from the Office of the Provost. Members were encouraged to read the full report and it was noted that throughout the budget process, no assumptions are being made that there will be an increase to the University's revenue based on funding from the Government.

3. Business Arising

There was no business arising.

4. Report from the School of Graduate Studies

Steve Hranilovic, *Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies*, provided an overview of the Report from the School of Graduate Studies.

S. Tighe acknowledged S. Hranilovic's leadership stepping into the role of Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, in a time when there was a lot of work to be done and thanked the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) team.

The Committee asked questions regarding how new systems being proposed by SGS will effect change as it relates to admission offer letters and the TA mass hire process and how these systems will integrate with current systems. The Committee discussed strategic recruitment and relationship building beyond graduation. It was noted that much of the research-based degrees are focused on relationship building with graduate supervisors but students in programs with less direct interaction with supervisors are more difficult to track after graduation. The Committee discussed the complexity of SGS being centralized and being able to find the appropriate supports for faculty supervising students as well as student supports. S. Hranilovic noted that the function of SGS is a coordinator for these non-academic elements and while there is work to be done in this area, resources within SGS are scarce, making it difficult to implement change.

This item was for information.

5. Report from Graduate Council

S. Hranilovic, *Chair of Graduate Council*, explained that at its meeting on November 14, Graduate Council approved the proposed new M.A. in Indigenous Studies. Graduate Council is now recommending that the University Planning Committee approve the establishment of the M.A. in Indigenous Studies as outlined in the circulated materials. S. Hranilovic then invited Melanie Heath, *Associate Dean of Graduate Studies (Social Sciences)* and Robert Innes, *Chair of the Indigenous Studies Department*, to provide an overview of the proposed new M.A. program.

The Committee discussed the importance of moving this program forward and S. Tighe reinforced that the scholarship piece is outstanding and noted the inclusion of world-class researchers. Members asked questions regarding the plan to implement admission of students from outside formal education systems, what the initial cohort size and growth plan will be, having people outside of McMaster serve as supervisory committee members, and whether there will be flexibility to offer remote learning components.

It was duly moved and seconded,

that the University Planning Committee approve, for recommendation to the Senate, the M.A. Program in Indigenous Studies, as circulated.

The motion was **Carried**.

6. Other Business

There was no other business.