

## Minutes of the Meeting of the University Planning Committee

Wednesday, January 17, 2024 at 10:30 AM, Gilmour Hall, Council Room (Room 111)

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- PRESENT:** Susan Tighe (Chair), Carmela Alfaro-Laganse, Karen Bird, Arlene Dosen, Ori Epstein, Lauren Fink, Saher Fazilat, Khaled Hassanein, Steve Hranilovic, Andy Knights, Mark Larché, Jake Nease, Brenda Vrkljan, Nicole Wager, Andrea Thyret-Kidd, (University Secretary & Privacy Officer), Michelle Zheng, (Associate University Secretary), Sherri Keene, (Assistant University Secretary)
- OBSERVERS:** Dina Brooks, Kim Dej, Matheus Grasselli, Sean Van Koughnett
- CONSULTANTS:** Ehab Kamarah, Melissa Pool
- INVITED:** Vivian Lewis, *University Librarian*  
Debbie Martin, *Associate Vice President, Real Estate and Partnerships*
- REGRETS:** Ryan Clarke, David Farrar, Lili Litwin
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### OPEN SESSION

#### 1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – December 13, 2023 (Open Session)

It was duly moved and seconded,

**that the University Planning Committee approve the open session minutes of the meeting held on December 13, 2023, as circulated.**

The motion was **Carried**.

#### 2. Chair's Comments and Update

Susan Tighe, *Provost and Vice-President (Academic)*, highlighted that the month of November was busy with government advocacy activities. There was an event held in Ottawa related to research and another event in Queens Park related to funding for teaching and students. S. Tighe noted that since there is no indication that the government will commit to the Blue-Ribbon Panel funding recommendations, advocacy is increasingly important. The Council of Ontario Universities (COU) is also doing advocacy work and running radio advertisements about how Ontario universities contribute to the economy. COU will be hosting an event in February with Provosts across universities to discuss fiscal responsibility. Saher Fazilat, *Vice-President, Operations and Finance*, added that McMaster is using Uniforum data as a benchmark to understand the current state and what can be done in terms of cost savings. The University is taking measures today to avoid taking drastic measures in the future. S. Tighe advised if the government provides the University with funding, the proactive cost-saving

measures taking place now will be an exercise in efficiency and these efficiencies will be reinvested into the research enterprise and the University's core business.

S. Tighe noted that the Equity and Inclusion Office has a number of ongoing activities and training around empathy and compassion to help people understand other points of view. Members were encouraged to participate in Professor Hippo-on-Campus Mental Health Education Program, if interested. Ongoing work on Artificial Intelligence (AI) was also noted and there are coordinated discussions and activities taking place led by Kim Dej, *Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning* and Matheus Grasselli, *Deputy Provost*.

A Member asked if the recent announcement by the government about capping the number of international students will change the University's international recruitment strategy. It was clarified that it will not affect the University's planning for numbers, but the University is monitoring the situation closely. The targets provided by the Deans were modest and it is not expected that the announcement will impact the overall caps.

### **3. Business Arising**

S. Tighe advised the Committee that Abdul Razak Alozi, the graduate student representative has completed their studies and will no longer be attending meetings. This makes quorum more difficult to achieve so members were asked to inform the Secretariat if they are unable to attend meetings.

S. Tighe then welcomed Ehab Kamarah, *Associate Vice President and Chief Facilities Officer*, to the Committee. Saher noted that Ehab comes to McMaster from University of Illinois and is returning to McMaster University. Ehab was an employee of McMaster from 2015-2018.

### **4. Report from the University Library and McMaster Museum of Art**

Vivian Lewis, *University Librarian*, provided members with an overview of the Report from the University Library.

The Committee discussed how the new business library will change the space allocations for rare collections, the risk mitigation strategies in place and how the library utilizes the University of Toronto Libraries at Downsview storage program. The Committee then discussed various opportunities for revenue generation and ways to showcase the museum and library.

This item was for information.

V. Lewis withdrew from the meeting.

### **5. Report from Undergraduate Council**

K. Dej explained that at its meeting on December 12, 2023, the Undergraduate Council approved, for recommendation to the University Planning Committee, the closure of the Honours Life Sciences – Sensory Motor Systems Specialization (B.Sc.). It was noted that this program is capped at 30 students and the program did not feel it had the capacity to focus on this specialization compared to other programs that are not capped.

A Member asked for clarification regarding two key faculty members that departed from the program and how decisions about re-hiring faculty are made before a program formally closes. It was explained that the Deans, Department Chairs, and Provost are all involved when faculty members leave. Commitments are made to students accepted into a program to ensure they finish.

It was duly moved and seconded,

**that the University Planning Committee approve, for recommendation to the Senate, the closure of the Honours Life Sciences – Sensory Motor Systems Specialization (B.Sc.), as circulated.**

The motion was **Carried; 2 abstentions.**

## **6. Other Business**

There was no further business.