

Minutes of the Meeting of the University Planning Committee

Wednesday, September 18, 2024 at 10:30 AM, Council Chambers, Gilmour Hall

- PRESENT:** Susan Tighe (Chair), Carmela Alfaro-Laganse, Karen Bird, Lindsay Bolan, Ruth Chen, Saher Fazilat, Lauren Fink, Shivam Gupta, Steve Hranilovic, Lena Kahn, Andy Knights, Jake Nease, Heather Sheardown, Brenda Vrkljan, Andrea Thyret-Kidd (University Secretary & Chief Governance and Privacy Officer), Michelle Zheng (Associate University Secretary), Sherri Keene (Assistant University Secretary)
- CONSULTANTS:** Ehab Kamarah, *Associate Vice President & Chief Facilities Officer*
Melissa Pool, *Associate Vice-President Academic Planning and Finance*
- OBSERVERS:** Dina Brooks, *Executive Vice-Dean & Associate Vice-President (Academic)*
Kim Dej, *Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning*
Matheus Grasselli, *Deputy Provost*
- David Ogborn, *McMaster University Faculty Association*
Sean Van Koughnett, *Associate Vice-President (Students & Learning) and Dean of Students*
- INVITEES:** Andy Knights, *Acting Vice-President (Research)*
Martin Horn, *Deputy Vice President Research*
Jonathan Sherbino, *Assistant Dean, McMaster Education Research, Innovation & Theory (MERIT)*
Brent Davis, *University Counsel*
- REGRETS:** Catherine Anderson, David Farrar, Mahmut Parlar
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OPEN SESSION

Susan Tighe, *Chair of the Committee*, welcomed members to the meeting and asked members to introduce themselves. The following new members were welcomed; Catherine Anderson, Lindsay Bolan, Ruth Chen, Shivam Gupta, Lena Kahn, Heather

Sheardown, Mahmut Parlar, and David Ogborn. S. Tighe noted that Jake Nease is Chair of the Budget Committee for 2024-2025.

Members were informed of the voting procedures.

1. Notice of Meeting - September 4, 2024

The notice of meeting was circulated on September 4, 2024.

2. Approval of Agenda

It was duly moved and seconded,

Motion:

that the University Planning Committee approve the agenda for the meeting of September 18, 2024.

The motion was **Carried**.

3. Business Arising

There was no business arising.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting - May 29, 2024 (Open Session)

It was duly moved and seconded,

Motion:

that the University Planning Committee approve the open session minutes of the meeting held on May 29, 2024, as circulated.

The motion was **Carried**.

5. 2024 - 2025 Meeting Dates and Membership

These items were for information.

- a. 2024 - 2025 UPC Meeting Schedule
- b. 2024 - 2025 UPC Membership

6. 2024 - 2025 Budget Committee Membership

This item was for information.

7. Chair's Comments and Update

Susan Tighe, *Provost and Vice-President (Academic)*, expressed that it has been a great start to the year and there has been positive feedback from entering students about the Welcome Week events. During the most recent Senate meeting, the preliminary enrolment numbers were provided, and the international student enrolment targets were not met. While domestic enrolment was up by 12%, the international targets were off by 27%. The November 1st headcount will be critical to understanding the impact this will have. On a more positive note, the number of applicants increased across the board and McMaster is still a popular destination for domestic students. Relative to other institutions, McMaster is in a break-even position. This is positive despite challenging times ahead.

The search for Vice-Provost Indigenous will begin and there are a few reviews being embarked on this Fall including the Office of Community Engagement, McMaster Continuing Education, and the Faculty of Social Sciences. It was noted that a review is routine whenever there is a change in leadership.

8. Proposal for the Establishment of the McMaster Health Research Education, Innovation and Theory Centre (MERIT)

Approval

Andy Knights, *Acting Vice-President, Research*, Martin Horn, *Deputy Vice-President, Research*, and Jonathan Sherbino, *Assistant Dean, McMaster Education Research, Innovation & Theory (MERIT)*, presented the proposal for the establishment of the McMaster Health Research Education, Innovation and Theory Centre (MERIT). Members heard that the Centre is intended to advance the growth in health professions research and applied research. It will have a core membership of 10 scientists and funding is provided through operating grants and supporting departments through a 50/50 model.

The Committee raised questions regarding why the Centre will be co-chaired by a Vice-Dean of Research and Vice-Dean of Education as this is unusual, how it will be different from the MacPherson Institute and if it will be complimentary to the services already provided. The Committee discussed the various opportunities available across campus for potential collaborations such as with the Faculty of Engineering and offering undergraduate student internships.

It was duly moved and seconded,

Motion:

that the University Planning Committee approve, for recommendation to Senate and the Board of Governors, the establishment of the McMaster Health Research Education, Innovation and Theory Centre (MERIT), as circulated.

The motion was **Carried**.

M. Horn and J. Sherbino withdrew from the meeting.

9. Report from Vice-President Operations and Finance (including Legal Services)

S. Tighe explained to new members of the committee, that through the course of the year, UPC will receive planning reports from various academic and administrative units. The reports come on a tri-annual basis from the academic and administrative units across the campus. This was the first of the reports for this year.

Saher Fazilat, *Vice-President, Operations and Finance* and Brent Davis, *University Counsel*, presented the Report from the Vice-President, Operations and Finance (including Legal Services).

S. Tighe commented on the increasing collaboration between academic and administrative units, recognizing the need for alignment and avoiding duplication of efforts, especially given limited financial resources. The growing complexity of legal issues due to stricter government regulations and the need for expert legal advice was noted. B. Davis and S. Fazilat emphasized that while efforts were made to reduce external legal expenses, legal demands surged during COVID-19, particularly around vaccine mandates, although they are now decreasing. As a global University, these challenges are seen as part of operating in a more complex environment.

The Committee sought clarification on why the projected trend for the cost for legal services plateaus when the current trend is rising. A member expressed interest in comparing the trends with other institutions, however it was noted that this information is not typically disclosed. Additionally, a member requested an update on the campus plan post-COVID, specifically regarding building occupancy, class space, and whether the changing needs and usage patterns have been addressed.

This item was for information.

B. Davis withdrew from the meeting.

10. Other Business

There was no other business.