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Minutes of the Meeting of the University Planning Committee
Wednesday, May 28, 2025 at 10:30 AM, via Zoom Videoconference

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PRESENT: Catherine Anderson, Lindsay Bolan, Ruth Chen, Saher Fazilat, Lauren Fink, Steve Hranilovic, Jerry Hurley, Andy Knights, Jake Nease, Mahmut Parlar, 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: Sean Van Koughnett, *Associate Vice-President, Students*
Lili Litwin, *Vice-President, University Advancement*

REGRETS: David Farrar, Dina Brooks, Carmela Alfaro-Laganse, Karen Bird, Matheus Grasselli, Lena Kahn, David Ogborn, Santee Smith

INVITEES: Juliet Daniel, *Professor and Strategic Advisor to the President, Canada-Caribbean Institute at McMaster*
Marlice Simon, *Administrative Coordinator, Health Research Methods, Evidence and Impact*
Martin Horn, *Deputy Vice-President, Research*
Chris Longtin, *Manager, Strategic Initiatives, DeGroote School of Business*
Manaf Zargoush, *Associate Dean, Faculty Affairs & Accreditation, DeGroote School of Business*
Arlene Fajutrao Dosen, *Executive Director and Assistant Dean, Student Success, Student Affairs*
Susan Wright, *Senior Director, Advancement Campaign, University Advancement*
Iain Clarkson, *Budget Director, Budgeting Services*
Lou Mitton, *Controller, Financial Affairs*
Omer Ahmed, *Associate Vice President and Chief Financial Officer*

OPEN SESSION

1. Notice of Meeting - May 14, 2025

The notice of meeting was circulated on May 14, 2025.

2. Approval of Agenda

It was duly moved and seconded,

Motion:
that the University Planning Committee approve the agenda for the meeting of May 28, 2025.

The motion was **Carried.**

3. Business Arising

There was no business arising.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – April 23, 2025 (Open Session)

Approval

It was duly moved and seconded,

Motion:
that the University Planning Committee approve the open session minutes of the meeting held on April 23, 2025, as circulated.

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

5. Chair's Comments and Update

Jerry Hurley, *Acting Provost and Vice-President (Academic),* advised members that McMaster did well in the recent round of government funding, with notable success in STEM fields, biomanufacturing, and nuclear isotope research. Maureen MacDonald has been appointed as the new Provost, effective July 1 2025, and was welcomed to the role. Reviews in both the Secretariat and the Registrar’s Office have concluded, and the resulting reports are pending. Additionally, two successful Health Sciences convocation ceremonies have taken place, with ceremonies for other Faculties scheduled to follow.

6. President's Advisory on Building an Inclusive Community (PACBIC) Annual Report

Juliet Daniel, *Professor and Strategic Advisor to the President, Canada-Caribbean Institute at McMaster* and Marlice Simon, *Administrative Coordinator, Health Research Methods, Evidence and Impact*, provided an overview of the item.

The Committee raised a question regarding the feasibility of identifying a suitable candidate for the faculty co-chair role within PACBIC. It was confirmed that such roles typically come with a course teaching release and a financial stipend. Concerns were expressed about the lack of administrative support, which was acknowledged as a challenge, though it was noted that support might be arranged through the Office of Community Engagement, pending consultation with the President. Efforts to schedule a meeting with key stakeholders were mentioned, with a tentative plan to meet in June. Additional concerns were voiced about the length of time since the last meeting with the President, which occurred in September 2023 and that many members' terms have since ended. Appreciation was expressed for the efforts made to reinitiate PACBIC's activities.

This item was for information.

7. Research Centres & Institutes Annual Report 2024

Martin Horn, *Deputy Vice-President, Research,* provided an overview of the Report.

The Committee heard about the sustainability of current funding models for research centres and institutes and the effectiveness of existing review mechanisms, particularly regarding the challenges of securing reviewers and the predictability of review outcomes. Concerns were expressed about the difficulty of terminating underperforming institutes, despite initial ease in establishing them. The discussion also addressed government pressure to streamline operations by closing ineffective programs and centres. Clarification was sought on the criteria used in five-year reviews, including activities, financial status, and external recommendations. Questions were raised about the value of identifying the Faculties housing various centres to better understand interdisciplinary collaboration. Issues of inequity in funding, donor influence, and access to staff were highlighted, with a call for greater transparency in spotlighting practices and structural reform. The need for a collaborative and consultative approach under incoming leadership was emphasized.

This item was for information.

8. Report from Undergraduate Council

Approval

Catherine Anderson, *Acting Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning*, presented the Report from Undergraduate Council.

a. AI Essentials for Marketing Professionals

It was duly moved and seconded,

Motion:
that the University Planning Committee approve the non-academic microcredential in AI Essentials for Marketing Professionals, as circulated.

The motion was **Carried.**

b. Digital Marketing Strategy for SMB Growth

It was duly moved and seconded,

Motion:
that the University Planning Committee approve the non-academic microcredential in Digital Marketing Strategy for SMB Growth, as circulated.

The motion was **Carried.**

A member asked for clarification regarding whether faculty full-time equivalents (FTEs) should be allocated to support these initiatives and who would be responsible for managing the courses, including the associated time commitments. Clarification was also sought on the costs involved, as well as the importance of understanding the course modality and assessment methods. Chris Longtin, *Manager, Strategic Initiatives, DeGroote School of Business,* noted that these elements would be incorporated into the financial modelling, with a detailed review of fees scheduled for the next University Student Fees Committee meeting on June 10, 2025.

9. Report from Graduate Council

Approval

Steve Hranilovic, *Vice-Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies*, presented the Report from Graduate Council.

C. Longtin and Manaf Zargoush, *Associate Dean, Faculty Affairs and Accreditation*, from the *DeGroote School of Business* were in attendance to answer questions from the Committee.

a. Graduate Academic Certificate in Data Science, Applied AI, & Organizational Leadership.

It was duly moved and seconded,

Motion:
that the University Planning Committee approve the establishment of the graduate academic certificate in Data Science, Applied AI, & Organizational Leadership, as circulated.

The motion was **Carried.**

A question was raised regarding whether the courses were exclusive to business students or open to individuals outside the DeGroote School of Business and the University. It was clarified that the courses are open to all, with particular interest noted from students in Humanities, especially around topics such as ethics. Further questions were raised about how such broadly relevant courses are integrated into the development and approval process. S. Hranilovic explained that while the Graduate Academic Certificate processes are defined by policy and are comprehensive, they are not particularly nimble. The current approach involves deconstructing existing Masters programs into smaller, stackable credentials to increase accessibility for external participants. The intent is to position these offerings as part of a broader educational spectrum.

10. IQAP Cyclical Program Reviews

C. Anderson and S. Hranilovic provided an overview of the items.

a. IQAP Cyclical Program Reviews

b. Resubmission of 2023 IQAP FARs from Graduate Council

C. Anderson explained that some IQAP materials were not submitted through the appropriate governance cycle and are now being reported to ensure it is captured appropriately.

These items were for information.

11. Report from Student Affairs

Information

Sean Van Koughnett, *Associate Vice-President, Students*, presented the Report from Student Affairs.

J. Hurley highlighted the breadth and complexity of Student Affairs, with appreciation expressed for the team's efforts in managing a diverse and challenging portfolio. A question was raised regarding Student Accessibility Services (SAS), particularly from instructors seeking clarity on what improvements are forthcoming to better support their teaching responsibilities. It was acknowledged that the rapid increase in accommodation needs has outpaced current capacity. In response, a pilot initiative was introduced in which participating instructors redesign one course each to reduce the need for students to activate accommodations, in collaboration with SAS, MacPherson Institute, and others. Questions were also raised about the scalability of such efforts and the sustainability of support if demand continues to rise. Arlene Fajutrao Dosen, *Executive Director and Assistant Dean, Student Success*, *Student Affairs*, noted that the University Planning Committee and Budget Committee have been supportive, with a model being developed across Faculties. The role of disability specialists working directly with faculty members was emphasized, along with the importance of proactive engagement through the SAS portal. Further discussion addressed the need for alignment between accommodation strategies and faculty expectations.

This item was for information.

12. Other Business

There was no other business.