

University of Waterloo
SENATE UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL
Minutes of the 12 January 2021 Meeting
[in agenda order]

Present: Katherine Acheson, Veronica Austen, Monica Barra, Rachel Bruce, Kofi Campbell, Benoit Charbonneau, Victoria Chu, Martin Cooke, Vivian Dayeh, Daniel Davison, David DeVidi (chair), Leeann Ferries, Ariel Gans, Taylor Harris, Brendon Larson, Bruce MacVicar, Cathy Newell Kelly, Francis Poulin, Cristina Vanin, Chris Vigna, Rebecca Wickens (secretary), Richard Wikkerink

Resources: Jennifer Coghlin, Danielle Jeanneault, Amanda McKenzie, Alyssa Voigt

Guests: Donna Ellis, Su-Yin Tan

Regrets: Noor Paray, Jeremy Pittman, Megan Town

Organization of Meeting: David DeVidi took the chair, and Rebecca Wickens acted as secretary. The secretary advised that a quorum was present. The agenda was approved without formal motion.

1. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared.

2. APPROVAL OF THE 15 DECEMBER 2020 MINUTES AND BUSINESS ARISING

The minutes were approved without formal motion. There was no business arising from the minutes.

3. CURRICULAR ITEMS FOR APPROVAL & INFORMATION

Science. Barra provided a brief overview of the course changes under item 1 of the submission. There was a motion to approve the proposed changes on behalf of Senate. Barra and Larson. Carried. Members heard: item 2 of the Science submission should be reclassified as a major modification; the modification involves the reintroduction of advanced standing status for the Doctor of Optometry program. After an overview, there was a motion to recommend that Senate approve the proposed major modification to the Doctor of Optometry program as presented. Barra and Acheson. Carried. Item 3, a report on temporary curricular changes made in response to the pandemic, was received for information.

4. UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATION OUTCOMES – APPROVAL PROCESS

The chair noted that this item is for discussion and will come back for decision at a future meeting. Members heard: this proposal follows the presentation at SUC and discussion at undergraduate operations committee re: the university communication outcomes (UCO) initiative; the outlined process for vetting UCO curricular items is a simplified version of the new program approval process; the intent is to provide centralized oversight to both the financial and pedagogical aspects of proposed changes before they are submitted for approval through the faculty councils and other Senate bodies; because of the academic, financial and strategic implications of UCO, the appropriate location for this activity is the provost's (or their delegate) office; there is some pressure to agree on a process so that academic units can bring forward UCO curricular items.

Discussion included: the importance of the UCO and having a process for vetting changes; interest in developing a university-level statement committing to the UCO; the need for greater clarity on the principles guiding decision-making under this process; the benefits of and concerns with making an individual accountable for the vetting process; potential difficulties in decoupling UCO curricular items from other items; the long-term goal of stability and how to get there; the role of the UCO group in setting its remit and establishing principles for decision-making. The chair thanked members for the discussion and indicated that a revised document will be brought back for decision at a later date.

5. BLENDED LEARNING PROJECT

The chair introduced Donna Ellis and Su-Yin Tan to speak to a project being undertaken by the university teaching fellows to explore class formats that incorporate both online and in person elements (blended learning). Members heard: blended learning has the potential to enable more active and flexible learning, better use of space and more flexibility in scheduling; when the campus reopens for full-time academic activity, space constraints may be eased somewhat through use of blended learning; this is an opportunity for instructors to leverage the online materials they created in response to the pandemic; the adoption of blended learning and the form it takes will vary across programs; CTE and CEL are available to support this activity and welcome questions and feedback.

Discussion included: finding a balance between empowering instructors to adopt new methods of teaching, while not putting further pressure on them at this point in time; capturing the benefits of blended learning while addressing concerns raised by instructors and students over the past year with respect to the online learning; the importance of having a well-considered implementation plan, including systems, messaging and tools to support the initiative. The Registrar indicated that her office would like to be part of discussions.

6. OTHER BUSINESS.

There was no further business.

7. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is 9 February 2021, 12:00 noon – 2:00 p.m. via Teams.

4 February 2021

Rebecca Wickens
Associate University Secretary