

Minutes of the AFC meeting held on May 19, 2020
Held by Zoom

PRESENT: S. Asselin; R. Baker; K. Bessant; C. Boult; K. deForest; R. Dwivedula; R. Elliott; J. Forsythe; R. Gasse; S. Grills; A. Hanemaayer; P. Harms; R. Hinthner; E Holland; L. MacKay; M. Malainey; M. Malazdrewicz; A. Marshall; A. McCulloch; K. McKenzie; E. Mihelakis; S. Medd; J. Naylor; S. Petrella; D. Ramsey; W. Robles; B. Rose; K. Saunders; D. Smid; B. Strang; D. Taylor; D. Winter; K. Wong; L. Wood; L. Xu; F. Zehtab-Jadid; H. Zhuang; C. Kazakoff-Lane (Library); Sh. Grills (Student Services); L. Murray (recorder); L. Robson (Chair).

ABSENT: A. Abdou; B. Ashton; J. Dolecki; H. Gillander; D. Klonowski; C. Mattes; V. Maud; L. Mayer; C. Schneider; K. Spice; M. Torabi; H. Venema; D. Wilson.

REGRETS: J. Allan; K. Noll.

LEAVE: D. Combet; R. Kramer; D. Lakevold; C. Mason; D. Racine; E. Varley.

Dr. Robson introduced Dr. Docherty and noted that at the last AFC meeting, Arts Faculty Council requested that the President explain the rationale behind the changes to the Board Budget Committee. The Board wished to make some changes to their structures. An Audit and Risk Committee and a Human Resources Committee of the Board were created. There is also a separation of Finance, from the old Audit and Finance Committee. This meant that the former BBC was no longer viable. The new committee has faculty representation, decanal representation but no board members on the committee as it will be recommending to the Board. These changes were made a couple of weeks previous but just recently went through the President's Advisory Committee.

Dr. Naylor inquired as to how this committee would be working through the potentially difficult budget situation. Dr. Docherty believed the committee will begin meeting next week and the meeting to approve the budget will be held late June. Dr. Strang questioned what the Province actually has told us. Is the new 1% cut on top of the expected cuts, and what is the mandate regarding not being able to use our carry forward to offset the loss of budget. Dr. Docherty was speaking from memory but noted that the 1% cut was anticipated though some other Universities would also incur one-year cuts. Eg. U of M has a 1% cut to its base funding plus 4% more for this year only. Public sector accounting standards changed a couple of years ago and have been implemented over a couple of years. Though this is Federal, every province administered them differently. Now for every expenditure you must have revenue. Surplus from previous years cannot be used as budget. Dr. MacKay asked what happens to that carry forward funding. Dr. Docherty was not sure. Dr. Robles asked if the 1% cut was for this year only, or would it continue going forward. Dr. Docherty believes that the 1% cut to our base funding will go forward. Dr. Winter raised concerns about the lack of BUFA representation on the new committee and matters of academic freedom. Dr. Docherty noted the importance of having both BUFA and University honour the articles of the C.A. He also noted that 3 other unions were given just 2 representatives in total.

MOTION :(Robles/Petrella) – THAT the Agenda be approved with items 4.5 Possible New Integrated Liberal Arts Degree and 5.4 Fieldwork Policy be postponed to the second half of this meeting as the speakers of these motions will attend next week’s meeting.

CARRIED.

MOTION: (Gasse/Rose) – THAT the minutes of March 3 and March 10, 2020 be approved.

CARRIED.

3.0 Chairs Report

Besides the 1% decrease to budget we are expecting lower enrolment and there will be revenue losses in parking, housing, HLC, etc. As of May 1 our applications are down from last year but actually up from two years ago.

Planning for the Fall: At the last Chairs meeting we discussed the end of term and how it went. Students certainly felt the challenge but instructors also noted how impressed they were with their students. The Dean thanked everyone for turning on a dime and getting the students through the term. Everyone needs to be acknowledged for their efforts. Social distancing will remain for the time being, and so the Dean had asked Chairs for their Department’s ideas as to how they wish to work in the fall and what needs they have to make it happen. By the end of May, she plans to provide the President with a broad plan for the Faculty. Most signs point to classes being on line for the Fall if at all possible; some hybridity will be used for those that cannot be solely on line.

Communications recently noted 10 Covid-related working groups that are being created, and the Dean is on three: the Course Scheduling and Space Allocation, the Professional Development and Learning Support, and Budget Planning. You too can volunteer to sit or contribute ideas to these committees by emailing the appropriate committee chair.

Equipment and technology needs are urgent. Sourcing out equipment and deciding on learning technology will be important. Because there are so many platforms available to instructors, Dr. Robson is suggesting you may wish to review resources such as the Manitoba Flexible Learning Hub out of the U of M which has put a lot of information on line. This is at MBHub.ca and accessible to everyone. We also have our own CTLT for support. Erica Brown and Kevin Klassen will be offering instruction on Microsoft Teams. Darlene Paquette is doing Zoom training, and Curt Shultz is providing a session on best practices for emergency Remote Instruction. Please note that Curt refers to asynchronous courses (while our focus is on synchronous courses). However, the discussions between BUFA and the university are still ongoing regarding how to interpret article 33. While these resources are useful, they are not necessarily conceived by scholars or by those who are using them. In our faculty several colleagues have stepped forward and offered their time and knowledge about different platforms. We can create our own Information Sharing Network where those in our faculty who have used these platforms can provide us with their experience, tips, and knowledge of pitfalls. Please contact Dr. Robson if you feel you have knowledge to share.

Dr. MacKay raised concerns about how many different platforms students may be required to learn. Dr. Robson said that these types of concerns for the students come up at every meeting she’s at. However, she would think that academic freedom and our various ways of teaching need to be supported. She does feel that students are nimble and we do plan to help them get up to speed before the Fall. Dr.

Ramsey, who is the Arts Rep on CTLT agreed that these concerns are being discussed. Instructors raised a variety of concerns for students and the lack of direction. Dr. Robson noted that she feels we need to make our teaching desires and needs known. Members also inquired why decisions haven't been made to date. Others raised concerns about having to use their PDA for equipment. The Dean noted that for now, she will approve equipment required for teaching from the Dean's budget. Ms Kazakoff-Lane noted that the library has shifted resources to assist instructors more with virtual reference. The library can assist with copyright needs, use of open textbooks or readings packages, digitizing chapters, and other ways of using course management systems to avoid copyright infringements. She highly recommended having a login page for students to access readings without violating copyright. Dr. Naylor inquired about physical access to books. Ms Kazakoff-Lane indicated that no firm plan was in place but that it seems some sort of pickup will be available.

4.0 New Business

4.1 Elections

Dr. Robson and Dr. Winter advised of some updates and corrections to the list of nominations.

MOTION: (Winter/Robles) -- THAT all those nominated for Arts Faculty Council Committees be elected.

CARRIED.

MOTION: (Winter/Robles) -- THAT those nominated for University Committee be elected.

CARRIED.

MOTION: (Winter/Gasse) – THAT all those nominated for Senate positions be elected.

CARRIED.

7.0 Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:57 p.m.