New College Council

Meeting of Thursday, March 5, 2020, 12:10 p.m. – 2:00 p.m., Room 2053, Wilson Hall

AGENDA:

1. Minutes of the Meeting of January 27, 2020  (attached)

2. Business Arising from the Minutes

3. Report from Student Councils
   i) NCSC
   ii) NCRC
   iii) Course Unions

4. Report from Standing Committees
   i) Academic Affairs – J. Larkin

5. Review and Reactivation of the Members Committee

6. Update on Program Anniversary Activities

7. Report of the Principal – B. McElhinny


9. Report of the Vice Principal – J. Larkin

10. Report from the Registrar’s Office – K. Huffman

11. Report from the Office of Residence and Student Life – L. McCormack-Smith

12. Report from the Advancement Office – C. Agiropoulos

13. Report from the Communications Office – N. Cahill

14. Other Business

15. Adjournment
NEW COLLEGE COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting of Monday, January 27, 2020
12:10 p.m. –2:00 p.m., Wilson Hall, Room 2053, New College


Regrets:  A. Bruce, K. Edmonds, M. Lo, H. Si

Minutes of the Meeting of December 3, 2019

The minutes of the meeting of December 3, 2019 were accepted as recorded.

Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

Report from Student Councils

• **NCSC**
  ◆ There are many ongoing projects.
  ◆ The annual general meeting will be held February 6. NCSC hopes to get feedback regarding the Wilson Lounge renovations.
  ◆ Grant applications are ongoing and things are going well.

• **NCRC**
  ◆ New's Got Talent will be held on February 1, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. There will be many interesting performances; all are welcome.

Task Force on Student Mental Health

B. McElhinny explained that the President of the University struck a task force nine months ago in response to tragic events on campus. A series of consultations were held through November, and a report with 21 recommendations was issued. The President and the Provost have accepted all recommendations. The report is publicly available, as is the administrative response: [https://www.provost.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/155/2020/01/Presidential-and-Provostial-Task-Force-Final-Report-and-Recommendations-Dec-2019.pdf](https://www.provost.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/155/2020/01/Presidential-and-Provostial-Task-Force-Final-Report-and-Recommendations-Dec-2019.pdf). Appendix A has a summary of the recommendations.

There are six categories. In the original terms of reference, there were four, but the Task Force chose to step outside of the original terms of reference.

The first cluster of recommendations are surrounding mental health delivery at the University and how to strengthen/improve delivery. The second cluster discusses recommendations to improve
internal coordination of student supports across the three campuses. The third cluster urges a review and strengthening of partnerships with community-based organizations and hospitals. The fourth cluster advises a review of the physical spaces in which mental health care is provided on campus. The fifth category discusses building a “culture of care” at the University. The sixth advises a review of institutions systems and policies (e.g. mandated leaves of absence; equitable mental health coverage; and student stressors.)

Mandate 1: Review mental health delivery at the university and make recommendations for strengthening such services, particularly with regard to students with mental illness.

Even healthy students need support and it is critical that they are aware of the support available to them. Colleges provide resources and programs to enhance student wellbeing and support overall wellness. Additional measures are required from other services, such as Health & Wellness, when students are facing more significant mental health concerns. Additional measures are required for other categories of students. There has been a significant increase in the demand for mental health services over the past few years. It is worth noting that 70% of mental health issues first appear within childhood and adolescence. It is important to add counsellors and accessibility advisors, but that isn’t the only thing needed. The university needs to be proactive, not just reactive. Additional measures could include peer support. Importantly, on-campus counselling staff may not represent all communities on campus. Students should be given access to provider profiles to help them make thoughtful decisions. Mental health literacy needs to be expanded across students, staff and faculty. Many stressors are linked to the classroom, but faculty tend not to be as enthusiastic about accommodating. Life skills and strategies to support mental well-being should be embedded into first year curriculum, and strategies for supporting consistent information that can be incorporated into Quercus on a regular basis should be created.

Mandate 2: Review the coordination of student supports related to mental health across the university’s three campuses and make recommendations for improving internal coordination.

Another challenge is the difficulty in finding help when it is needed. Students want a “one stop shopping” button, and current websites and listings are seen as confusing. Accessibility services across the university need to be centralized, with fewer differences across the three campuses. The current response to a mental health crisis tends to be pharmaceutical, particularly when pressure on the system is high. There needs to be more attention given to providing an appropriate range of responses. This will require marked university restructuring, including a creating director role to oversee all three campuses.

Mandate 3: Review partnerships with community-based organizations and hospitals and make recommendations for strengthening such partnerships.

Access to acute mental health care must be increased. Currently, the only option on campus after hours is to call campus police, which is not always appropriate. Ongoing conversation between the University, local hospitals and CAMH is critical. Mental health training should be provided to all first-line contacts for students.

Mandate 4: Consider the physical spaces in which mental health services are provided on all three campuses and recommend improvements as necessary.

Some of the spaces used for the delivery of mental health services are not therapeutic or private. The Koffler Student Centre needs to be re-structured. Additionally, more non-academic wellness
spaces need to be created on campus. This should be kept in mind when considering the Wilson Lounge renovations.

Culture at U of T

The current culture of academic excellence and the rank of the University of Toronto causes loneliness and isolation. There are many stressors, particularly for international and first-generation students; ESL students; and grad students. Instead, a “Culture of Care” needs to be developed.

Institutional Systems & Policies

Standardized syllabus and extension protocols across divisions are recommended to help reduce stress and provide more consistent guidelines for students. VOI forms can be complex and in some cases students pay a fee to obtain them. The Faculty Registrar’s Office is exploring using a self-declaration of illness for deferred exam petitions. As policy, students apprehended by Campus Police under the mental health act are handcuffed, even when going voluntarily. This needs to be addressed. Health care coverage for students depends on the student union and can affect the kind of care available to students. Concerns were raised about the mandated leave of absence policy. The policy has been used eight times since its inception; all in cases where students have threatened harm to others. There is concern around the policy, and the Provost understands the controversy. Students want a more transparent protocol regarding the University's response to tragic events. Students feel the university withholds information; however, the university will support the wishes of the family, who have discretion about whether and how a student death is made public.

A redesign team will work on implementing recommendations. Some of the members of the team are specialists in mental health. There will also be an ongoing task force, as well as the creation of a new “wellness board”. As fundraising priorities are developed, student mental health will be identified as a key area. The University will support research projects that examine student mental health.

Discussion followed.

S. Mojab welcomed the addition of the “Culture of Care”. However, there isn’t very much mentioned regarding language/ideas to support faculty and staff. With faculty being the first point of contact for many students, and the expectation that they manage these cases as well as the forms related to accommodation and access, there is a lot of stress. There needs to be more support for faculty members managing these tasks. The University pushes for larger classes, but doesn’t have the resources for more tutorials or Teaching Assistants.

M. Papaconstantinou agreed that there is no mention of how faculty can be supported. Additionally, there is no mention of commuter students. The feelings of isolation are higher in the commuter population than those in residence. Often, they can’t participate in campus activities.

L. McCormack-Smith said that many students don’t understand the benefit to participating in the extra curricular and co-curricular programming that’s available to them. Faculty need to encourage students to engage with the community.

L. Zuo mentioned that this report will be discussed at the NCSC plenary. There is a lot of student-focused language in the report, but an ongoing issue is the lack of staff available at Health &
Wellness. This contributes to very lengthy waitlists, and students don’t want to wait months for help.

S. Doyle-Wood asked what definition of mental illness is being used. Students struggle with many structural barriers (childcare, work, family issues, OSAP anxiety). Many students are rendered invisible. B. McElhinny agreed that structural issues must be flagged, but noted that faculty are not off the hook, as they can (often inadvertently) contribute to student stressors.

A. Guerson commented that there needs to be a discussion about the types of care that can exist in a large classroom. Students may not have time to come to events outside of class time.

L. McCormack-Smith stated that a number of the large first-year courses are designed to have students fail. This is terrifying for students who have never failed at anything in the past.

J. Larkin advised that the “Culture of Care” and what faculty can do in the classroom will be the topic of the next New Pedagogy meeting.

K. Huffman said that there is a lot of discussion around the cultural piece. Top tier students enter first year with a plan to enter specific programs and then are not admitted to those programs. The impact on students’ well-being when not accepted to their desired program can be devastating. Health & Wellness struggles with managing student demand. It would be helpful if the University had better referral information. Community resources with ongoing supports are needed.

J. Larkin mentioned that many students are not aware that they have access to off-campus counselling via their student benefits. Undergraduate students have $1,500 worth of funding available and have access to a network of psychiatrists and psychologists willing to offer services at a reduced rate.

L. McCormack-Smith reminded Council that front-line staff don’t deal only with complex needs. For some students, housing and food is a more critical, immediate need. We need to support students in being independent.

B. McElhinny advised that for faculty and staff to support students, we must address our own health. The Principal’s Office is working on scheduling a workshop about mental health in the workplace.

Report of the Principal

B. McElhinny reported the following:

- Native American and Indigenous Scholar Association Conference – New College is sponsoring this conference, which will be held May 7-9, 2020. New College has been chosen as the site for the “care hub”, which will include being a feast site (currently working with an indigenous chef); space for elders; and a space for childcare. Additionally, there will be a series of artistic events held here: an art exhibit installed in the Lounge; beading; live painting; and a mural created during the conference based on its themes and available for installation in the College afterwards. New College submitted a proposal for Indigenous elders and students to attend from Durham Region.
• **Fossil Fuel Divestment** – C. Desai and A. Trotz are working on this initiative, along with many student groups and USW. A number of other major North American universities have divested themselves from reliance on fossil fuels already.

• **College Review** – the Provost has mandated a review of the role of Colleges. Discussion has already started. The review will be guided by a Steering Committee and supported by five working groups: (1) Reviews, Academic Planning and Academic Change; (2) Student Experience; (3) Recruitment, Admissions and Enrolment Planning; (4) Residences; and (5) Resources. Each committee will meet 5-6 times. PAG assembled a six-page document outlining issues under each category, which has been shared with other College Principals. The relationship between the Colleges and resource distribution needs to be considered.

**Report of the Chief Administrative Officer**

R. Vander Kraats reported the following:

• **William Doo Auditorium** – Suppliers are missing scheduled delivery dates. There are no penalties for suppliers, so we have little recourse. We are considering opening the facility before it is completely finished. The large partition is missing, but it is hoped the rest of the major deliveries will be received in February. We hope to open by the end of February. The NCSC offices, the new lounge, the bodywork studio, the barrier-free bathroom and the Second Cup outlet will be ready by the end of February.

• **CUPE** – CUPE has made an application to represent IFP non-credit course instructors. The instructors voted in favour. There will be a hearing at the Ontario Labour Relations board to determine which employees will be part of the bargaining unit. The outcome won’t be known until February.

• **Wilson Lounge Renovation** – Student contributed $250,000 to the renovation project. The Provost gave an additional $250,000. The College received another OTO “donation” of $650,000, and the Dean agreed that this can be applied to our capital projects. As a result, we will have $1.15 million for the Wilson Lounge renovation project.

**Report from the Registrar’s Office**

K. Huffman reported the following:

• **June Convocation**
  January 31 is the deadline for students to request June 2020 graduation. Currently, over 800 students have requested graduation.

• **Program Selection**
  First-year students can start registering in Programs as of March 1, 2020.

• **Welcome Event**
  There will be only one welcome event this summer for incoming students and it will be held on June 6, 2020.
Report from the Office of Residence and Student Life

L. McCormack-Smith reported the following:

- **2020-2021 Hiring**
  The hiring carousel for dons and RAPs was held last week. There were 145 applications received; approximately half were invited in for the carousel, and 50 will be invited for final interviews. Peer leader applications close tomorrow, and hiring will be next week.

- **Orientation**
  Orientation Coordinators will be announced in the next week.

Report from the Office of Advancement

C. Argiropoulos reported the following:

- The Alumni Office is launching the speaker series. Next Tuesday, three leaders are coming to talk about food insecurity, including research happening across Canada and what’s happening at the community and city level. The speakers include Leslie Campbell, Director of Programs at FoodShare Toronto; Leticia Deawuo, Director of Black Creek Community Farm; and Valerie Tarasuk, Professor in the Department of Nutritional Sciences and principal investigator at PROOF Food Insecurity Policy Research. Future topics include a discussion on the art and science of wine-making and the industrialization of wine-making; and mindfulness and meditation.

- Have started looking at priorities for the next fundraising campaign. This is an 18 month process. Will first look at larger visionary questions and then drill down into the priorities.

Report from the Communications Office

N. Cahill reported the following:

- 15 proposals were received in response to the Request for Proposals for the New College website and visual identity design. 3 vendors have been shortlisted and will be invited to make a presentation and participate in a Q&A with College stakeholders during the 2nd week in February. The vendor will be selected in late February/early March.

Report from the Vice Principal

J. Larkin reported the following:

- Timetabling – the Summer 2020 timetable is complete and we have begun the 2020-2021 timetabling process.
- SDF Speaker Series – Program Directors will be contacted regarding the schedule for the Speaker Series.
- Calendar – everything presented at the Curriculum Committee meetings has been approved. We will not be pursuing the Equity Studies program name change until next year.
• Mental Health – a workshop was held in December for faculty. Another will be held for students this term.
• BPMH Program Review – T. Toneatto has prepared the final draft report for review. The site visit will be in April.
• African Studies Program Review – the review is underway. The list of proposed reviewers has been submitted, and the self-study is in progress.
• Caribbean Studies Program Review – the external reviewers have submitted a draft report, which was returned with minor suggestions. We are pleased with what the external reviewers were able to see and the kinds of strategies they recommended.

Other Business

S. Mojab advised that Equity Studies will be holding the Program's 20th anniversary celebrations at New College even if the William Doo Auditorium isn't ready. The event is planned for April 1. On April 2, there will be a large celebration of J. Larkin’s work.

S. Mojab informed Council that Equity Studies students are meeting on February 10 in order to discuss the proposed name change to the Program. In addition to this in-person consultation, there will be an electronic survey.

Adjournment

On a motion by B. Russell, seconded by R. Vander Kraats, the meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m. CARRIED