New College Council

Meeting of Thursday, March 4, 2021, 12:10 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

AGENDA:

1. Introduction and Welcome to New Members

2. Minutes of the Meeting of January 18, 2021 (attached)

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

   i) Motion to amend bylaws to replace the assignment of the “College Librarian” with “a New College Librarian” in the sections outlining committee composition. (10 minutes)

   i) Report on last meeting

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

7. Report from Standing Committees

8. Report of the Principal – B. McElhinny


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

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

13. Report from the Writing Centre – L. Newbery

14. Report from the Advancement Office – C. Argiropoulos
   i) Spring campaign, virtual alumni engagement (5 minutes)

15. Report from the Communications Office – N. Cahill
   i) Identity/website project update (10 minutes)
16. Other Business

17. Adjournment
New College Council

Meeting of Monday, January 18, 2021, 12:10 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.


Regrets: A. Bruce, K. Edmonds, S. Snedikar

New members: J. Kim, B. Hambly, L. McCready

Approval of Agenda
A. Guerson motioned to approve the agenda, seconded by M. Levin. Approved unanimously.

Introduction and Welcome to New Members
J. Kim, B. Hambly, L. McCready

Business Arising from the Minutes
No comment or corrections. Minutes passed. No business arising from minutes.

Report of the Striking Committee
K. Huffman reported the following:

- Report is done, committees have been populated. Wrapped up and ready to move forward.

Report from Student Councils

- NCSC – currently working on last steps of internal appointment for vacant positions from the fall elections. Have received applications and will be going over them.
  Recently opened bi-annual grants applications for student groups and individuals looking for financial support for events or personal projects. Encourage anyone working on something benefiting the New College community to apply.
  Members have a lot of great events and initiative ideas to look forward to.
- NCRC – nobody present.
- Course Unions – nobody present.

Report from the Communications Office
N. Cahill reported the following:

- Update on communications project: 150 members either filled out survey or participated in a focus group.
• People are saying they feel connected to the College, proud and excited to be part of the NC community and feel welcomed.

• As for the organizational identity, we heard that it was old fashioned and conservative, not reflective of the kind of work happening here, not reflecting the vibrancy and creative life of the college. The way we need to focus on showcasing the New College identity is to focus on telling the stories of the people who make up New College. We need to make sure that we’re telling those stories in a way that’s representative. Students really want to make sure that they’re seeing themselves reflected in our identity.

• The feedback on the colours and crest is that it feels dated, but people responded positively to the New College green and appreciate diversification from U of T blue.

• A challenge for this project will be creating an organizational identity that works for both college students and college programs. A big part of New College’s identity is social justice work, and the potential impact of the work that is happening at New College, but the way students and alumni relate to the college identity is more practical, more functional, related to campus life, to a community and to a welcoming space within the larger U of T community. Finding ways to pull together the idea of a place for everybody and a community for all, we can visualize that into an identity that both communities can connect to and feel proud of.

• The feedback on our social media has been mostly positive, there are lots of opportunities for engagement, and people felt that this was the place where they were seeing a more accurate reflection of our community.

• The feedback for the website is that it is out of date and lacking in functionality, and needs an overhaul. There is difficulty in navigation and there are accessibility issues. This will be a high priority going forward.

• The Google Analytics show that for the current website, the most used pages and the ones that get the most traffic all relate to functional student needs. Making more direct paths to this kind of information is going to be a priority. Students are the primary users of the website. We need to think about how we align our homepage and our navigation to meet the needs of these primary users. There are too many clicks to get into content, the language and tone doesn’t embrace universal accessibility, which is especially important as many of our students don’t have English as their first language, and the imagery needs to better convey the New College experience.

• Only 10% of the total traffic is going to the homepage, and only 18% of overall users are coming through the homepage. This means that 80% of people who visit the website are coming through other pages. As we create pages, search engine optimization is important so that people can find the information they’re looking for. We need to think about some kind of banner system or global messaging so that if a department has information that they want to make sure students are getting, we have to make sure that it’s appearing on all of the department pages, so that no matter where they land they’re going to get exposed to that information. All of this is about creating a user focused site.

• On track for soft launch in summer 2021, with a full launch in fall of 2021.

Report from Standing Committees
No reports today.

Report of the Principal
B. McElhinny reported the following:

• B. McElhinny acknowledged that this is a difficult time, noted that we are here to support members of the college. The family care office is currently running some seminars on forms of self-care for families. We are here for students. We are prepared to continue supporting everyone doing online teaching.

• We will remain online this term, largely online this summer, and have not had any word about what the fall will bring.

• One thing we are asking everyone to do is to get word out to students about the MySSP APP, where they can access support if they need it, if they’re feeling depressed, lonely, isolated. There are different languages available, and they can communicate through text as well. This past summer when black students asked where they could get support for thinking through questions of intergenerational trauma, and where they could they get support from black mental health and wellness workers, this was one of the things we could
direct them to.

- NSSC has set up a series of events on student mental health. B. McElhinny gave thanks.
- Update on work on calls for accountability: the needs assessment for training sessions closed last week. B. McElhinny is meeting with ARCD to set up a training schedule that will be adapted to faculty, staff, and students. B. McElhinny reminded everyone that the training is never enough, it's a place to start, there must be increasing attention to supports offered to black faculty and students.
- Black and allied students asked for more food selections in the new college dining hall that reflected cuisines that made people feel at home and the African diaspora. The chef and kitchen staff are developing some additional food items and building a discussion about ways in which food can be used as an opportunity to think through education during Black History Month. This is about the request of black and allied students, making sure that the cuisines make people feel at home create a sense of belonging, and in conjunction with them developing appropriate and other ongoing conversations.
- Carolina Almonte, the newly hired director of talent management in her work for the department of HR and Equity, thinks about proactive recruitment, retention, and support for staff members in particular who are underrepresented in the university. We undertook what was the first audit, or the first unit in the university to do this. C. Almonte prepared a report for new college on staff hiring, and their team. There are four key moments where we make decisions about who will be hired: Who we recruit. There are two decisions made by the Faculty of Arts and Science in the HR division - who is seen as meeting the job criteria and then who is long listed. The long list is sent to us, with professional managers and academic administrators who are doing hiring. We decide on a shortlist and then we decide who to hire. Often the way that people deflect the under representation of black and indigenous staff is to say that we haven't recruited enough. C. Almonte has reported that that's not the case and has noted that this close look at our own practices could be used as a model for other sites.

B. McElhinny thanked the professional managers, as well as T. Goldstein for sitting in on the training sessions and thinking about the work that the college needs to do going forward.

S. Mojab noted not hearing about MySSP, and that it is important to get the communication out, especially to our sessional instructors and faculty members. B. McElhinny committed to getting the information out.

Report of the Vice-Principal
T. Goldstein reported the following:

- Thanks to all during first six months as Vice-Principal.
- Program Director Searches
  - Critical Studies in Equity and Solidarity: S. Mojab is coming to the end of her term, has done extraordinary work with the instructors to create a new program called Critical Studies in Equity and Solidarity.
  - NEW Research at Noon, a new initiative from the Vice-Principal's office, where TA's and Senior Doctoral Fellows have been invited to come together to talk about their research to undergrad students. One of the most popular features of these interviews is asking the TA's and doctoral fellows a little bit about their own journey, how they got into the academy, how they went from being an undergrad to a PhD candidate. There are two more sessions coming up this semester, in February and in March.
- UTQAP Program Reviews:
  - The last Caribbean Studies program review was accepted. Recommendations discussed are now being instituted.
  - Buddhism, Psychology and Mental Health: interim director Michel Ferrari is taking the lead on the review and a site visit is expected soon.
  - African Studies is the third program going under review. M. Lo is working hard on getting a strong draft of the support documents.
Project 1 Renovations at 45 Willcocks:
(William Doo Auditorium)

- The main entrance down in the basement was moved to the main level.
- There will be an accessible lift. It was decided to include that in the design for someone in a mobility device, so that they'll have the choice of whether to watch an event from the upper level or the lower level.
- From student council offices north to Willcocks, there is a new hallway with a canopy.
- There is a Second Cup in the atrium.
- In the auditorium, standing from the main entrance at the upper level looking down, it is a much brighter space, and all the architectural features, all of the paneling have acoustic treatment. There is a new high resolution, 4k projector, and a sound system programmed for the space that uses digital signal processing techniques which should greatly improve the acoustics. With accessibility in mind, there is an audio assistance system in place - wireless headphones that automatically tie into the audio-visual system should someone need assistance with audio.
- There is a portable stage, which business services or caretaking services can set up, and there will be several standard configurations for event planners.
- There will be an accessible ramp.
- There will be two podiums, because we are able to divide the space into two, there is a wireless microphone system, and podiums have a confidence monitor.
- There is a cabinet, which contains a movable partition. It requires two operators (using two buttons) to move a partition across the room, which then allows for two separate event spaces.
- We have two spaces in this new construction that are set up specifically for smudging, designed with the university standards in mind for fire protection and ventilation.
- On the lower level, in the facility to the main entrance, the old moveable seats have been replaced.
- There is plenty of power for both audiences and student use.
- There is a new balcony, a good study space for students.
- The canopy is acoustically treated.
- Occupancy - in the full assembly, where the partition is tucked away in the cabinet, there is an occupancy of around 250. With chairs on the main floor, it is 120. And the fixed seating will accommodate about 100 to 130.
- The fixed steps will be hangout steps for student, an extension of the atrium. The steps by their very nature are not accessible. Anyone in a mobility device could participate in social activities on the lower level, which is accessible.
- For every bookable space there are booking displays, so that students will know when there’s an event or when they can use it as a lounge.
- There are five student spaces that are being updated through these two projects. Project one, there is the new Gnu lounge, the NCSC offices renovated, a third music room created by subdividing one of them and a new mezzanine level lounge, which will be shared when the work is completed.
- For the lower level transformed into the lounge, the bathrooms were renovated, and a third gender neutral universal bathroom was created.
- One of the two new spaces for students, the multipurpose room, has a monitor, range of furniture, etc. This is our second, fully approved smudging space.
- There is also a second space, the lower-level Bodyworks studio, formerly an exercise room with equipment. For yoga, zumba, there is an audio system.
- Student council facilities have a kitchenette area, proper AV system, the benches have storage, and the walls have storage.

J. Kim asked if any of these spaces will be bookable by outside groups.
R. Vander Kraats stated his initial belief would be that the multipurpose room, as well as the Bodyworks
studio would be exclusively for our students. For the William Doo, we have a practice of renting it out to non-New College university clients, as well as external. The expectation is that these facilities will be very heavily blocked by New College students.

M. Levin asked about the ventilation protocols in place now for things like viruses, and if there is a code that we are adhering to
R. Vander Kraats advised that a review of all ventilation systems was done and we have assurances that all of our facilities have appropriate filters in place. Our facilities and services group was very proactive with respect to that.

Report from the Registrar’s Office
K. Huffman reported the following:

- Annual Fund Grant – Award Proposal: New award, a bursary fund opened for NC students, available on the basis of financial need.
  C. Argiropoulos expanded on award - part of the campaign annually for New College is letters and emails sent out to encourage annual donations from a variety of donors and variety of giving levels. The intention of this award is to have a separate fund created where these donations are funneled into, and then can be given out as they come in.

K. Huffman explained that students submit a grant application through their registrar’s office, an advisor meets with the student to review the application, then the committee reviews the application and provides financial assistance to students through this award.

K. Huffman reviewed – this will be called the Annual Fund award. Annual donations come through the annual fund, residing at New College, and the amount will be variable. This will be awarded to New College students who are registered either full-time or part-time, on the basis of financial need.

K. Huffman moved that NCC approve the award.
A. Guerson seconded the motion.
The floor was opened for discussion.
There were no objections to the motion.
The motion was passed.

- With the start of classes pushed back a week, there was an extension for late withdrawals and credit/no credit deadlines. This was a provision that was brought in through the Dean’s office to provide some flexibility, recognizing that we’re in a very different teaching and learning environment, and as a way for students to have an opportunity to see their mark before making that decision
- In the first two weeks of Jan. 2021 there were 180 one-on-one appointments. Regarding advising emails, 500 emails were completed. This does not include front line. Last year for 2020, frontline email came in just under 18,000 emails. Previous year was 8,500.
- Ask an Advisor session overview – T. Patel has been spearheading this. Sessions started last fall in October. Drop-in sessions were held over Zoom, on alternating Tuesdays at 9am. This time was chosen to best accommodate students in varying time zones. Info about the sessions is sent to students via our College Registrar’s Office Quercus Page
- K. Huffman reiterated that we did receive an additional bump of funds to be offered for a bursary program, recognizing some of the changes in people’s financial situations due to COVID. K. Huffman asked to direct students that way if student’s have concerns about their financial situation this year.

Report from the Office of Residence and Student Life
L. McCormack-Smith reported the following:
Between the Campus One site and New College, 300 students were housed over the winter break, with no major issues. L. McCormack-Smith noted that she thought the students felt supported and the programming was well attended. L. McCormack-Smith thanked D. Rodricks, K. Nitiema, N. Butler and E. Shaha who worked over the break to make sure that everyone’s questions were answered, and people were safe and had all the help that they needed.

Able to secure mental health support almost every day of the break outside of what students, staff and professional residence staff could provide, both through Health and Wellness and through Morneau Chapelle, to have counselors available on demand for students during the day.

In the beginning of fall planning in terms of residence and what will be happening next year, waiting for information from U of T Simcoe Hall regarding what the three possible scenarios look like so that we can start to plan what residents and orientation might look like.

Report from the Writing Centre
L. Newbery reported the following:

- There are a wide array of writing studies curricula for students to help with writing.
- L. Newbery reiterated invitation to course instructors to meet to talk about ways of integrating writing into courses or workshop assignments.
- At the moment the Writing Centre is running between 5-10 different programs.
- Added a significant amount of teaching time in April of 2020 and in December of 2020. Anticipate adding more teaching time in April of 2021.
- Roz Spafford has won the 2020 Margaret Proctor teaching award for excellence in writing instruction.
- It is the 25th anniversary of the Writing Centre. L. Newbery and S. Stewart will work on how to mark this occasion. May bring in one of the translingual or anti-racism speakers within writing studies.

Report from the Advancement Office
C. Argiropoulos reported the following:

- Campaign planning update – all feedback accumulated and brought together. Launch in the fall of 2021.
- Have heard from many donors over the past years that it had been challenging to make online donations with the existing system, so this December there was a move to a new site. It is much easier for donors to select where they might want to give and to move through the donation process. They can give to New College and also to a faculty or department that they've been connected to. It gives donors a lot of options.
- From the Alumni Development office with B. Registe, there is the launch of the first virtual speaker series event tomorrow night with Mark Lukasiewicz, a New College alumnus and award-winning live TV news producer before assuming a role at Hofstra University. He is presenting on issues in live journalism.
- On February 9, there will be a comfort food cooking event with Canadian culinary personality, Bonnie Stern. This virtual event includes a live cooking demonstration and opportunity to participate with Bonnie Stern virtually from her kitchen.
- Also from B. Registe’s office is the New College Career Mentorship program, launching virtually in the weeks ahead. Received 65 student applications and will be going through the interview process to see who the students are and how we can match them with our mentors.

Other Business

M. Lo asked when new course submissions are due this term, for next year.

N. Crawley advised, for timetabling, the timetable tool opens February 11th. Closes end of March.

M. Lo also mentioned receiving a call from a department for a course review on African languages, conflicting with
our program.
M. Lo will forward this request to T. Goldstein.

No other business.

Adjournment

On a motion by B. Russell, seconded by M. Levin, the meeting was adjourned at 1:55pm. CARRIED.