

# MOUNT ALLISON UNIVERSITY

## FACULTY COUNCIL MINUTES

Monday, Sept. 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020, 4:00-5:30  
Online via MS Teams

**Members Present:** J. Dryden (chair), G. Cruttwell (secretary), S. Baldwin, K. Bamford, K. Bell, M. Betti, A. Beverley, F. Black, C. Brett, G. Briand, A. Cockshutt, A. Ede, S. Fanning, M. Farina, N. Farooqi, D. Hamilton, K. Hele, J. Hennessy, A. Inkpen, K. Johnston, D. Keeping, L. Kern, H. Lane, R. Lapp, M. Lee, M. Levesque, C. Lovekin, C. MacDougall, D. E. Millar, G. Miller, A. Morash, K. Morse, V. Narayana, E. Naylor, L. Pearce, C. Pomare, T. Reiffenstein, B. Robertson, R. Schellenberg, L. Shumka, V. St. Pierre, E. Steuter, E. Stregger, B. Walters, L. Wasylikiw, A. Wilson.

**Observers:** L. Decker Hawthorne

**Regrets:** P. Berry

### 1. Land acknowledgement

### 2. Approval of the agenda

One small correction to the original agenda was noted: the minutes were for Aug. 17<sup>th</sup>, not April 17<sup>th</sup>.

### 3. Approval of the minutes

The minutes from the Aug. 17<sup>th</sup> meeting were approved.

### 4. Business arising

The chair noted the following based on the previous meeting:

- A Teams channel has been setup regarding a potential town hall with the board of regents
- Additional Teams channels can be setup as required/requested for "offline" discussions about issues of interest to faculty council members

### 5. Discussion about hiring and retaining Indigenous faculty members (est. 30-45 minutes)

- The Chair noted that Karl Hele was gracious enough to lead this conversation.
- Karl mentioned the following points:
  - Like many Indigenous faculty, his work is community focused; if universities are not seen as supporting Indigenous communities, students, staff, and faculty Indigenous faculty may/will leave
  - Another issue which may harm Indigenous faculty retention is a lack of support for their teaching and research; he himself has left universities over this, and

feels that a recent departure of Indigenous faculty at Mt. A was partly because of this

- He really believes we need more Indigenous faculty: one is not enough, and one Indigenous faculty member cannot be representative of the Indigenous student population at Mt A. or of the general Indigenous population of NB (NB has about 4% Indigenous population; the number at Mt. A in terms of faculty, students and staff is generally less than 1%)
- Support is key when Indigenous faculty are here: for example, protecting junior faculty from too many commitments, while also recognizing that Indigenous faculty may have non-traditional service commitments (eg., to local Indigenous communities)
- When hiring, universities have to go the extra mile, as Indigenous scholars may not often look on places like the CAUT website, or other 'standard' places to post; Karl suggested turning to Indigenous sites for postings
- He suggested that people need to be made to feel welcomed throughout the entire hiring process by faculty, staff, students, and throughout the process the community/University needs to show case itself as committed and engaged with Indigenization and as a welcoming environment
- He noted that it is important (a priority) to hire Indigenous scholars from the Maritime and Atlantic region BUT this priority should not stop the hiring process
- He noted that the university needs to consider allowing position searches to continue beyond one year. Fear of a failed search resulting in a lost position should not be part of a discussion when seeking to hire Indigenous candidates.
- The local Indigenous communities and Elders need to be engaged with the hiring process; similarly, need to help new Indigenous scholars make connections with local Indigenous communities (rather than leaving it entirely up to them), as community engagement is a key component of Indigenous teaching and research
- One has to be very careful about hiring Indigenous ABD scholars, as they often burn out and don't get tenure or their career trajectory lags behind their non-Indigenous peers. (Bridging funds and/or guidelines for such scholars were suggested as ways to try and mitigate this). Funds may also be required for Indigenous scholars who come from outside the province so that they can continue their work with their local communities
  
- Comments from the rest of faculty council on Karl's thoughts:
  - Much appreciation was expressed for Karl's honesty and willingness to share his experiences and thoughts
  - One member noted that we have lost a lot of connections with the local indigenous communities, especially with the closing of anthropology; Karl agreed with this – this was an example of the University not working with new hirers to establish their own connections with people already engaged with the university.
  - Another point was made that it's easy for non-Indigenous faculty to think "all that Indigenous stuff" is taken care of by the Indigenous faculty, but we should be asking: "How can we support you? What can we do to help"?
  - Another point raised was that we need to find what the specific issues (i.e. lateral violence as well as racism/discriminatory behaviours) are and these need to be addressed soon; in response Karl noted that he has more confidence going forward with the new provost

- A question was asked about what have been the issues regarding gatekeeping of the local Indigenous communities? Karl responded that he didn't want to get into negatives details, and felt it was being dealt with.
- Karl was asked: "How can we help?" One point he noted was to be aware of alternate service Indigenous faculty may be doing, and tell junior Indigenous faculty to note such commitments in tenure packages, etc.
- Karl also noted that if people who are thinking of coming get a sense of a problem, they will not come. He also noted that Mt. A was the first place he has not experienced racism on a daily or weekly basis. However, there are always difficult things to deal with, eg., students not wanting to read an author because they are Indigenous. Incidents like these make it hard to continue, and Indigenous faculty need to be supported when things like this happen
- The provost agreed that it was impossible to have only one Indigenous faculty, and in some ways this is worse than having none. Hiring Indigenous faculty needs to be a community priority, and this may have practical impact; eg., fewer hires in other areas. Or, alternative thinking about priorities and new ways of acquiring knowledge. It is not an either/or scenario.
- A member from Geography believes that previous Indigenous faculty in their department have been well-supported, but they left due to wanting to be closer to their family
- Karl agreed, but noted that other forms of stress will make a faculty member leave regardless of other circumstances
- Finally, Karl asked that if you know of an Indigenous Knowledge keeper, please invite them to campus, but also be sure to pay them appropriately for their time.

## **6. Discussion of proposed new program and degree structure, a Bachelor of Arts and Science in Foundations of Health (est. 30-40 minutes)**

- The chair noted that some concerns with the proposal have already been expressed, and are available in collated form on a Teams channel dedicated to this topic
- The chair also noted that this is just an initial draft, and the idea is to encourage early drafts like this to come to Faculty Council (before Planning Committee, Academic matters, Senate, etc.)
- The Program development officer, Lacey Decker Hawthorne, made initial comments, re-iterating that this is very much an initial draft, and at this point they are looking for high-level feedback on the overall idea
- A concern was raised about the lack of statistics courses in the proposal: many Master's degrees in Health now require statistics courses, and so without such courses we may be setting students up to fail (this concern was also later echoed by another member). Concern was also expressed about the overall program given that this aspect was not taken into consideration
- The program development officer noted that there was concern from the other side on this (that is, that the draft proposal included too much of the quantitative side of the subject)
- The Dean of science noted that a former Mt. A grad who does epidemiology was consulted in drafting the courses; in response it was noted that such a grad may not realize what the newer programs in Health studies require

- Another concern raised was about the lack of arts and humanities representation in the draft; another member agreed with this and wondered about additional options for language courses
- Another concern (raised by several members) was about resources: if we don't have resources to staff our current programs, how can we justify resources for a new program?
- The provost noted that he was pleased with the overall direction of the proposal, and believes it is better than others he has seen. On the question of resources, he notes that this is always an issue, and is also a values judgement: where do we want to put our resources?
- It was noted that faculty resources for this program would be cross-appointed, and not teach all the courses in the new program, so this would provide new resources for the departments those faculty members join
- Another concern raised was with the inclusion of courses with prerequisites (without those prerequisites themselves being part of the program requirements)
- A question was asked: aren't we already doing this with what we have? Why are we formalizing a separate tangent that's part of the fabric of what we already have?
- Another question was about existing programs: how does an existing program become part of a BASc? Should some of our existing programs fit under this designation (Eg., Math/Econ, CS/Econ crossovers)?
- The Dean of science mentioned that recruiters believe we are missing students by not having a program like this, and could see existing programs fitting under this degree designation
- A general question was raised: what is a BSc? What is a BA? Having more students take courses from not their discipline would be good. The provost agreed, and would like to have this general conversation at some point
- A final note was that there are a number of Indigenous scholars working on determinants of health and environment, and it would be good to have a course or two in this area be part of the new program.
- Lacey thanked everyone for their questions and concerns and noted that these will be taken back to the committee working on the proposal.

## **7. Adjournment**

- Occurred at 5:31pm