

MOUNT ALLISON UNIVERSITY

Faculty Council Minutes

Monday, March 1st, 2021

4 pm, on Teams

Attendees: J. Dryden (chair), G. Cruttwell (secretary), E. Austen, L. Beck, K. Bell, A. Beverley, F. Black, J.-P. Boudreau, G. Briand, A. Cockshutt, A. Ede, M. Farina, N. Farooqi, C. Forstall, O. Gould, O. Griffiths, M. Hamilton, J. Hennessy, A. Inkpen, C. Ionescu, B. Jewett, K. Johnston, D. Keeping, L. Kern, R. Lapp, M. Lee, A. LePage, M. Litvak, C. Lovekin, C. MacDougall, D. Mawhinney, M.E. Messinger, L. Michaelis, E. Millar, A. Morash, R. Moser, J. Mullen, V. Narayana, E. Naylor, A. Nurse, J. Ollerhead, C. O'Neal, L. Pearse, T. Reiffenstein, L. Ricker, T. Roberts, R. Schellenberg, L. Shumka, V. St. Pierre, E. Steuter, E. Stregger, D. Thomas, J. Tomes, B. Walters, L. Waskylkiw, B. White, A. Wilson, L. Yang

Observers: L. Decker-Hawthorne

Regrets: H. Lane, B. Robertson, M. Levesque, F. Turner

1. Land acknowledgment.
2. Approval of the agenda
 - Moved by O. Griffiths and seconded by Nauman Farooqi
3. Approval of the minutes of January 26 (attached).
 - Moved by O. Griffiths, seconded by T. Roberts
4. Business arising.
 - Update about discussion of summer staff layoffs: there were comments on this matter in the teams channel: at this point, the request from the staff union is to support any initiatives they take rather than have faculty take action themselves
 - The status and future of the PCTC will be discussed at a future FC meeting
 - The provost congratulated A. Dodson who was given tenure and promoted to associate professor, and K. Hele, R. Majithia, and R. Schellenberg, who were all promoted to full professor; this was followed by a round of applause
5. "What do we want to look like post-pandemic" preliminary discussion, presented by President Jean-Paul Boudreau (attached) [*estimate: 20 minutes*]
 - The president gave a brief introduction, thanking everyone for their flexibility and resiliency. At this point, he'd like to get the ball rolling on a consideration of how we may or may not want to change post-pandemic; this will be part of a larger strategic discussion
 - A number of comments focused on the importance of maintaining and strengthening in-person learning: for example, we can't compete with larger

schools if we try to make everything online. Concern was also expressed about the potential for increased workload if there is an expectation from students that more material may be online.

- Other comments focused on some of the advantages of online activities: greater flexibility for students, can be very nimble and responsive, can help with flipped classrooms, easier for summer courses, allows for a wider range of students to attend open houses, for some students online is more accessible
- Another concern raised was about support: if we have more online teaching, we'll need greater computing services support, PCTC support, etc.
- Another point raised was about faculty meetings: online allows us to attend more than previously, but are we missing something if all our meetings are online?
- Another member commented that teaching online has forced them to rethink how they handle student assessment
- The president thanked everyone for their comments and noted they are planning future events to discuss these ideas further

6. Proposal about splitting Academic Matters Committee into two committees [estimate: 10 minutes]

- The provost introduced a plan to split the Academic Matters (AM) committee into two committees: one focused on academic regulations, the other on curriculum and academic programs
- He acknowledges that we do have many committees already; however, we don't really have a place for academic regulation discussions; the current academic matters committee's time is already full dealing with curriculum changes
- One member of the AM committee agreed that they don't really have time right now in the AM committee for addressing broader issues such as assessments, etc.
- Question: By what process would things be brought to this committee? A: Anyone can bring items to this committee
- Question: Can people serve on both committees? A: Yes. In addition, some people commented that this would be useful so that the two committees can remain in contact
- One member commented that they would like to see explicit terms of reference for each committee
- Question: Could this just be a temporary concern (with the issues around allowing P/CP grades), and we may not need such a split long-term? A: The provost believes the new committee (on regulations) will be very useful as a means to deal with many other issues such as grading practices, take-home exams, etc.; it isn't just a response to recent issues
- A member of the committee on committees noted that this question had been brought to them, but they thought it better to discuss at faculty council first
- Some concern was expressed about keeping a balance between the two committees, keeping a good balance between ex-officio and non ex-officio

members on each committee, and ensuring that the two committees communicate to one another

- The provost thanked everyone for their comments and noted that further comments on this matter can go to him and/or the committee on committees.

7. Discussion of the shape of the academic year for future years at Mount Allison
[*estimate: 30 minutes*]

- A number of ideas were proposed by various members in relation to timing of the academic year:
- Can we start later in January as we did this year? It helped to have a bit more preparation before the second term of the academic year begins
- Can we align reading week with March break (especially for childcare purposes)?
- Can we have a longer study period between the end of classes and the beginning of exams?
- Can we schedule certain classes (eg., experiential) outside of the standard terms?
- Can we re-think the spring/summer sessions, and for example, allow faculty to have some of their normal course load during those sessions?
- Can we go to a longer term? The current term feels very rushed for many classes.
- The provost mentioned that they are currently preparing a new academic plan, and many of the issues raised above are things they would like to explore further; they may make a separate working group for further discussion of these issues

8. Discussion about Chaplaincy [*estimate: 15-20 minutes*]

- Fiona Black began the discussion, as she has been chairing a working group to help determine what the chaplaincy position should look like in the future
- Last summer they hired a student to look at different chaplaincy models at other universities, and found that such positions would perform a variety of duties, including leading interfaith events, helping with chapel life, counselling, fostering of community, spiritual wellness conversations, EDI, support of international students, recruitment and retention, etc.
- They are about to send out a survey to students about their spiritual interests and requirements, but also about mental health, etc.
- In the department of religious studies, they would like to decenter the position away from Christianity, but recognize that this can be challenging with the University's history, prominent chapel, and large group of students who identify as Christian
- One member suggested a Unitarian minister, as they are Christian-based but have an interfaith focus
- Another member mentioned that as a member of the queer community, the existence of a chaplain can be problematic. In response, another member who identified as part of the queer community mentioned that they have had

positive faith leaders. The potential is there to have someone fill this role in an inclusive way, but it is tricky

- I. Okello would like to see the chaplain position have a closer alignment with EDI work
- Another concern raised was about the name: perhaps the name of the position itself is problematic? In response, it was noted that one has to be careful around this: at another university, the chaplain role became an administrative position, and over time lost its pastoral care focus
- It was also noted that we have to be careful about the potential for burn-out for someone in this position, as there can be a temptation to try and have this person do too much
- Fiona mentioned that she would like to hear comments from everyone (including those opposed to a position like this), and is hoping to have further venues for communication on this issue soon

9. Adjournment.

- Occurred at 5:33