

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SENATE

FEBRUARY 14, 2020

The meeting was held at 1:30 p.m. in Room 1R40, Arts and Humanities Building.

SENATORS: 65

A. Baxter	L. Ghattas	M. Milde
G. Belfry	K. Gibbons	L. Miller
L. Beres	A. Grzyb	K. Miller
A. Borchert	C. Harasym	S. Mumm
L. Bot	M. Heath	N. Nuimat
H. Boyi	L. Henderson	K. Olson
L. Briens	H. Hill	I. Paul
D. Brou	A. Holm	P. Peddle
S. Burke	A. Hrymak	S. Pitel
E. Chamberlain	D. Jeffrey	S. Prichard
A. Chant	L. Jiang	A. Rozovsky
D. Cheng	K. Kirkwood	V. Smye
M. Cleveland	J. Kitz	C. Steeves
K. Coley	G. Koehn	S. Taylor
J. Compton	M. Koschinsky	P. Thomlinson
J. Corrigan	L. Logan	G. Tigert
J. Cuciurean	C. Ma	J. Toswell
M. Davison	D. Macpherson	S. Trosow
J. Finegan	D. Mallory	G. West
R. Flemming	C. McLeod	K. Yeung
L. Frederking	L. Melnyk Gribble	B. Younker
B. Garcia	K. Mequanint	

Observers: T. Belton, R. Bgeginski, K. Campbell, R. Chelladurai, J. Ciriello, J. Doerksen, L. Gribbon, B. Jalayer, J. Kum, D. Laird, J. Massey, M. Ruddock, J. Weese.

Land Acknowledgement

C. McLeod read a Land Acknowledgement.

S.20-20

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of January 17, 2020 were approved as circulated.

S.20-21

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

C. Steeves (Vice-Provost and Chief Librarian) addressed a request for information relating to the Western Libraries Annual Report 2018/19 [S.20-15] and the meetings of the Weldon User Advisory group. She indicated that she could not find a specific reason for why the committee had ceased meeting.

A Senator noted, when asked for clarification, that having been a member of the Weldon User Advisory Group, it was his impression that the Committee meetings ceased because leadership within the Committee felt there was a discrepancy between the intended terms of the Committee and the discussions that were being brought forward for action. As a previous Weldon User Advisory group member, he reiterated the importance of such a group and felt that the Committee should be reconstituted.

S.20-22

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT [Exhibit I]

The report of the President, distributed with the agenda, contained: an update on the Anti-Racism Working Group, We Speak faculty and staff survey 2020, Schulich Leaders Scholarship Program, United Way campaign achievements, and an update on the progress of the selection committees on Western leadership.

M. Milde read a note on behalf of the President, advising that he was participating in an international conference in Melbourne, Australia representing Western. The trip would be an opportunity to meet with alumni and build strong ongoing relationships with university partners from around the world.

S.20-23

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGENDA [Exhibit II]

It was moved by P. Peddle, seconded by E. Chamberlain,

That the 2 items listed in the Unanimous Consent Agenda (Exhibit II) be approved or received for information by Senate by unanimous consent.

CARRIED

REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE [Exhibit III]

S.20-24

Operations/Agenda Committee (OAC)

R. Kennedy (Undergraduate) was acclaimed to the Operations/Agenda Committee (OAC) for a term to June 30, 2020.

S.20-25

Senate Review Board Academic (SRBA)

A. Pyati (FIMS) was acclaimed to the Senate Review Board Academic (SRBA) for a term to June 30, 2020.

REPORT OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON UNIVERSITY PLANNING [EXHIBIT IV]

S.20-26 **2020 Entrance Standards for Undergraduate First-Year Admissions**

It was moved by L. Briens, seconded by G. Tigert,

That Senate approve the targets and processes for first-year, first-entry undergraduate enrolment for the Constituent University and Affiliated University Colleges as outlined in Exhibit IV, Appendix 1.

CARRIED

S.20-27 **Five-Year Enrolment Projections**

It was moved by V. Smye, seconded by L. Miller,

That the five-year enrolment projections/plans presented in Exhibit IV, Appendix 2 be used for University budget planning purposes.

CARRIED

S.20-28 **Provost's Update on Planning Process**

A. Hrymak, Provost & Vice-President (Academic) provided a report to Senate outlining the budget planning process for the upcoming fiscal period. The presentation is provided as [Appendix 1](#).

A Senator requested clarification on when the budget documents would be provided to Senators. He requested that the timing of the budget presentation to Senators provide members with adequate time to review the information. A. Hrymak, Provost & Vice-President (Academic) advised that the budget documents would be provided to Senators with as much time as possible, given that there were other committees which needed to review the materials.

S.20-29 **Undergraduate International Enrolments**

A discussion document on undergraduate international enrolments as one element of Western's internationalization is provided in Exhibit IV, Appendix 4.

A. Hrymak, Provost & Vice-President (Academic) discussed the proposed plan with Senators, noting that student diversity in country of origin and program of interest were key elements in the decision to consider an international college with an articulation agreement model at Western. Concerns relating to the potential impact that the COVID-19 virus could have on potential recruitment efforts at the university level, as well as the potential benefits for future risk mitigation if the pool of candidates for international students was more diverse, are key strategic factors supporting the proposal of a future agreement with Navitas. Alternative models to expand Western's footprint internationally have been considered and weighed against the option of having an international college at Western.

Senators provided questions in advance of the meeting with respect to the discussion document on undergraduate international enrolments. A. Hrymak provided comments at the Senate meeting. The responses to the questions are provided in S.20-32.

A Senator proposed that Senate consider alternatives to the Navitas model. She noted that it was not clear how the students enrolled in the Navitas pathway model would determine which Western programs the students would enter following their preparatory year. A. Hrymak advised that at this time, the University was not entertaining alternative models.

S.20-30 **Information Items Reported by the Senate Committee on University Planning**

Report of the Senate Committee on University Planning, contained the following item that was received for information by unanimous consent:

- Report on Year One Class and Entering Averages

S.20-31 **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS** [Exhibit V]

Exhibit V, Announcements and Communications was received for information. The report from the Board of Governors (January 23, 2020) was included in the report.

S.20-32 **DISCUSSIONS AND QUESTION PERIOD**

Q1 S. Pitel, Senator

Two questions relating to the report “Undergraduate International Enrollments” and the details (starting on page 5) about “a proposed partnership with Navitas (if there is one)” and how it would operate:

1. None of the Canadian, Australian or British universities that have partnerships with Navitas would be considered leading or elite universities within their own country or internationally. What does Western assess the impact on its national and international reputation will be if it chooses to partner with Navitas?
2. In a possible partnership with Navitas, what consideration has Western given to structuring the partnership so that the instructors are employees of Western and thus covered by the Faculty Collective Agreement or to otherwise structuring it so the instructors have the same protection and working conditions as Western instructors?

A. Hrymak, Provost & Vice-President (Academic) noted that he did not see a direct correlation between a partnership with Navitas and QS World University Rankings, and that the QS rankings for the universities partnered with Navitas were similar to Western. He acknowledged that, if students are recruited into the Navitas program that are not prepared for university studies, this may impact the university because the reputation of the university is based on graduate data. The benefit of working with Navitas would be an increased number of prospective international students considering Western as a destination institution. Navitas has an extended recruitment network, increasing Western’s exposure to a larger number of prospective candidates. This could be a positive move for Western, increasing Western’s engagement. With respect to the question relating to whether the Navitas instructors would be employees of Western and covered by the Faculty Collective Agreement, the Provost noted that the employment of Navitas instructors would require further discussion.

Q2 A. Borchert, Senator

At UBC, Vantage College plays a role that is in some respects similar to the colleges run by Navitas. But a crucial distinction is that Vantage College is not outsourced but rather is part of UBC. The work is performed by employees of UBC. Its website indicates “UBC Vantage College is the only international college of its kind at a top-tier university in Canada. The program is taught by UBC faculty, courses are full UBC courses approved by Senate. Our students are UBC students who receive an undifferentiated transcript.” What steps has Western taken to explore a similar initiative at Western?

In light of Western’s considerable success over the past decade at increasing its levels of international undergraduate students, what evidence supports Western’s position that it does not have and could not develop the internal resources to improve its own recruiting, achieving greater diversity of home countries and programs of study over the coming decade?

A. Hrymak, Provost & Vice-President (Academic) advised that UBC has their own international college but does have a much higher international student enrolment rate. Western could consider a similar model, but this approach would not address the concerns or mitigate the risks associated with the need to diversify country of origin and program of study for international student recruitment. The concern with the approach used at UBC would be the duration of time required to set up the same infrastructure at Western. The benefit of the Navitas model, is that the university would benefit from leveraging their recruitment network, while internal resources continue to focus on increasing other enrolment efforts.

A Senator requested clarification on what would happen to services such as Western English Language Centre (WELC), if the Navitas model was implemented. A. Hrymak noted that, WELC services would continue to be supported though the university and that if an international student college program was developed, WELC would remain the provider of English as a second language services on campus.

Q3 J. Toswell, Senator

In the Senate presentation in favour of renewing the University of Manitoba agreement with Navitas, Dr. Collins (the senior administrator making the presentation) states that from December 2007 to December 2015 Navitas had admitted a total of 1720 students, of whom 1610 graduated to become registered students at Manitoba, and of whom, in February 2017, 505 students had graduated with University of Manitoba degrees. This suggests very low retention and graduation rates once Navitas students join the university cohort, and for me is a major issue of quality.

Does the senior administration at Western have data that would refute this material, presented both at Senate and at Board of Governors at University of Manitoba in April 2017?

A. Hrymak, Provost & Vice-President (Academic) noted that in reviewing the cohorts outlined in the presentation from the University of Manitoba, it wasn't until the 6th cohort of international students recruited into the Navitas program, that the university had a substantial number of students who were eligible to graduate. During the review period, many of students would have been in their second, third or fourth year of university studies, impacting the resulting data referred to in the minutes.

Q4 S. Trosow, Senator

Recognizing that Western needs to step-up its recruitment efforts in order to diversify both the country of origin of international students and the range of their intended majors, my question deals with the decoupling of contracting for recruitment assistance from actual content delivery. There is a very strong and viable market for stand-alone recruitment services, and Western has the option of engaging with these services without taking the further step of engaging a contractor for actual content-delivery.

Four related questions:

- 1) Has Western given any consideration to using private recruiters to find international undergraduate students, rather than having the actual content delivery contracted out to a private third-party?
- 2) Other than Navitas, has Western considered or consulted with any other organizations or entities about increasing its international undergraduate enrollment?
- 3) If the central concern, and demonstrated need, is the increased recruitment of international students in a diversified manner, why must this function be coupled with the contracting- for course delivery?
- 4) Is there a separate and independent reason why Western needs to contract -out course delivery other than the need for recruitment assistance? Is there some deficiency or inability for existing programs to successfully deliver first year content to international students?

A. Hrymak, Provost & Vice-President (Academic) indicated that Western has not considered private recruitment firms or other organizations for a number of reasons. The specific interest in working with Navitas centered around the organization's experience with international student recruitment and preparatory support of first-year international students. Furthermore, Navitas has over a decade of experience in Canada. While, the university could partner with another organization or attempt to recreate this model independently, the benefit of working with Navitas includes a continuity of information for recruits and their families as well as the benefits of a seasoned program designed to care for the students. He noted that it was important for Senators to remember that there are two levels of oversight within this process: the first, for students to get into the international college; and, a second, to apply to Western for admittance into their second year of studies. The benefit of a program like Navitas, is that the program has been developed from years of working with international student recruits, with knowledge of the resources needed to adequately support non-native English speakers, as well as an in-depth understanding of the cultural, educational and training differences that impact the success of these students.

Q5 D. Brou and M. Cleveland, Senators

See [Appendix 2](#) for the list of questions submitted.

A. Hrymak, Provost & Vice-President (Academic) advised that there was a general awareness of other programs that are available relating to international student recruitment and support, but that the Navitas model stood out due to its global recruitment strategy, the partnership model, their student experience, and specific experience within Canada. The international college model would mirror systems that the University already has in place, namely that the tuition and grade averages would be similar to those at Western. With respect to concerns relating to financial supports for international students, he advised that the University had considered a number of models.

With respect to concerns relating to the decision-making processes, A. Hrymak advised that the processes to approve academic content would mirror those used for an articulation agreement. The Navitas agreement would be presented to Senate for academic oversight, while the financial elements would proceed to the Board of Governors for approval. The program administered by Navitas shadows first-year programs provided at Western. Core curriculum work is assigned from the faculty or program instructor, in those departments and programs that are interested in participating in the Pathways program. As the recruitment for Navitas increases, the number of pathways offered at Western could increase.

If a Navitas college is approved, Navitas would collect tuition on behalf of the admitted international student recruits and each party would provide services as outlined in the Affiliation Agreement. Navitas would use the Western brand to recruit international students into the Pathways program. The structure of flow through funding would need to be addressed. Faculties that participate in the Pathways program would also benefit from the flow through funding and from royalties.

In relation to equity, A. Hrymak indicated that the Navitas students he met during the visits, appeared to have had a positive experience in the pathway that supported their progression to university. Students can apply either to the Pathway program or directly to the University.

The Provost commented that in relation to whether there was an urgency to enter an agreement, he noted that there is an ideal window of opportunity, which means a decision should be taken as to whether to pursue the opportunity or not. If the University is to attain an international enrollment of 20%, with diversification of home country and program of choice, an international college would support attaining these goals more quickly.

A Senator requested clarification on whether there would be an impact on Western International admissions staff. Furthermore, would the staff hired for the provision of services via Navitas be employees of the University? A. Hrymak advised that, in the case of Navitas staff and faculty within Canada, they would be staff of the international college and not of Western.

Responding to concerns relating to academic autonomy within the parameters of an agreement between the University and Navitas, A. Hrymak advised Senators that the course materials provided by Navitas

instructors would be materials vetted by the participating faculties on campus. The University would evaluate the college materials, using processes similar to the current processes in place for the affiliate campuses.

Q6 A. Chant, Senator

In the fall, Western offered an incentive to staff whose combined age plus years of service was at least 85. Several staff have accepted the incentive and will retire in just over two months, on April 30, 2020. Staff play a critical role in the research and teaching missions of the University, and the Associate Vice-President (Human Resources) shared a similar sentiment on the importance of staff at the December meeting of Senate, indicating that a higher threshold to qualify for the retirement incentive was selected for staff relative to faculty (where the threshold was 75) to avoid the consequences of losing so many staff at one time. To that end, replacement of retiring staff will be essential to the success of the University. Unfortunately, I am receiving reports that approval for replacing positions and posting of job ads is progressing slowly, with some units failing to make any progress despite the looming April 30th deadline. Consequently, I have a handful of questions associated with efforts to replace staff:

1. How many staff have accepted the retirement incentive? Of these, how many are being replaced in the same capacity (e.g. continuing, full-time, etc.)?
2. Will these positions be filled before the April 30th retirement date, in order to allow for training of new staff by departing staff in order to retain the vast institutional knowledge these staff possess? Failing that, will they be filled by the April 30th deadline?
3. In the event that positions are not filled until after the retirement deadline passes, necessitating temporary coverage of newly vacant roles by existing staff, will the University commit to appropriately compensating staff who are forced to take on additional tasks to maintain smooth operations within the University?

J. O'Brien, Associate Vice-President (Human Resources) advised members that 116 staff have accepted the retirement incentive packages. Many of the vacancies will be filled, in consultation with the various campus units, in keeping with their budget plans. She noted that currently, 60 positions were in the process of being filled, with some vacancies being prior to April 2020. Some of the vacancies are sessional, and these roles would be filled in the forthcoming months.

S.20-33

NEW BUSINESS

A Senator provided the Vice-Chair of Senate with a notice of motion to be considered by the Operations/Agenda Committee at its next meeting.

The Notice of Motion read as follows:

Whereas, in response to negotiations between The University of Western Ontario and Navitas, a for-profit recruiter and educator of international students, to establish a 10-year contract for services; and

Whereas, Section 29 of the University of Western Ontario Act (the "Act") provides "The Senate is responsible for the academic policy of the University."

Senate notes that the potential partnership with Navitas involves the academic work of the University, which explicitly falls under the remit of Senate in the UWO Act; and therefore the articulation agreement/partnership/credit transfer/affiliation agreement/contract to engage in the academic work of Western must come to Senate for approval.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:48 p.m.

A. Shepard
Chair

K. Kwan
Secretary