

OISE COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF OISE COUNCIL, held on December 9, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom

Present:

Prof. Glen Jones, Dean
Prof. Katharine Janzen, Chair
Prof. Kathy Broad, Vice-Chair

Ms. Rushain Abbasi
Ms. Maha Babeker
Ms. Vesna Bajic
Prof. Abigail Bakan
Ms. Diana Barrero
Ms. Asmita Bhutani Vij
Prof. Megan Boler
Prof. Clare Brett
Prof. Cassie Brownell

1. Acknowledgement of Traditional Land

In the opening statement, the Chair of Council, Professor Katharine Janzen acknowledged the traditional land on which the University of Toronto operates.

2. Opening Remarks

Prior to proceeding with the agenda, the Chair welcomed members and guests to the second meeting of OISE Council in 2020-2021, and provided an overview of the Participation Guidelines highlighting speaking and voting procedures for the online format.

3. Review and Approval of Agenda

The Agenda for the meeting was approved.

4. Review and Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Minutes of the October 28, 2020 meeting of OISE Council were approved with a minor amendment on page 76 Research Committee Report regarding the introduction of Research Committee Vice-Chair, Henrjeta Mece, by the Committee Chair, Professor Gaztambide-Fernández.

5.

The Dean began his report by reminding members that the University will be closed for the holiday break from December 23rd 2020 until January 4th 2021, and that the OISE building will be closed during this period. While the teacher education programs will resume classes on January 4th, most of other graduate r tqi tco u0'ercuugu'lp the winter term of 2021 will start on January 11th.

Turning to faculty renewal, the Dean informed members that eight approved searches were underway and that search committees were established and keen on engaging in this important process.

Related to space planning, the earlier announced fifth-floor roof-top patio redesign project is in the early stages of university governance including the establishment of a committee that will advise on the project, and the initial review of financial arrangements for the project. Following the feasibility study that was completed last year, the next milestone will be the creation of a high-level architectural design for the project, which will include a student lounge, outdoor community garden and the Indigenous Education Network social and cultural practice space.

Two recently held virtual community events were highlighted: the virtual graduation celebration held on November 26, 2020; and the annual R.W.B. Jackson Lecture held on December 8, 2020 that featured alumna and literary giant, Dionne Brand, in conversation with renowned Black studies scholar, Professor Rinaldo Walcott. The Dean highlighted that over 1000 community members were in attendance and acknowledged staff members who have contributed to the success of these important events.

In closing, the Dean thanked members of the OISE community including students, staff, faculty, as well as academic and administrative leadership for their hard work and contributions over the course of the fall term of 2020, and wished everyone happy holidays and a relaxing break.

A question was raised regarding OISE students completing in-person placements amid the pandemic and whether OISE leadership consulted infectious disease and public health experts within the University regarding this. It was explained that the University has an expert advisory committee that advises the leadership regarding these issues. OISE teacher education programs are working closely with their partner

7. OISE Review 2020-2021

The Dean reminded members that, in 2020-2021, an external review of OISE was commissioned by the Provost. This process involves a preparation of a self-study document that provides an overview of OISE over the past five years. In consultation with the departmental and unit leadership, the Office is preparing this document based on centrally collected data. The self-study will be completed and shared with the community for feedback before the holiday break. Given the Provostial oversight over the review process, the self-study draft will also be shared with the Office for their review and input.

As a measure of its importance, the review report, as well as the administrative response to the review will be taken forward to University governance. The review represents an excellent opportunity for OISE to demonstrate its commitment to academic excellence, reflect on opportunities and challenges facing the Institute, and receive expert advice from leaders in the field on key strategic directions.

The Dean provided an overview of the terms of reference for the review, as well as the review timeline, highlighting that the completed self-study and that the virtual site visit is scheduled to take place from March 22 to 26, 2021. The three-member external review team includes: Professor Robert Floden, Dean, College of Education, Michigan State University; Professor Christopher Morphew, Dean, School of Education, Johns Hopkins University; and Professor Jennifer Tupper, Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta.

Following the presentation, there was a brief discussion regarding challenges and opportunities facing OISE over the next five years, as well as possible emerging directions for the Institute. Among challenges, diminishing provincial funding was highlighted, as well as the impact of the pandemic on education. Regarding possible future directions, several suggestions were heard ranging from the need to continually monitor the success of our students, and focus on faculty renewal, to the need to continue to grow Equity, Diversity and Inclusion initiatives within OISE.

A question was raised whether the new performance-based funding of Universities has any implications for the review process and for the future of various programs. It was explained that metrics associated with the performance-based funding measures are relatively complicated but do not suggest major funding changes and will be rolled out over a period of time. Related to this, increases in government funding are also not anticipated, which highlights the broader challenge associated with increasing costs and OISE's need to carefully manage budgets over the next five years.

Related to supporting student success, student representative, Diana Barerro, noted that she and two other student representatives on OISE Council were hoping to present the survey results on services available to students during the pandemic; however, this item was not included on the agenda for the meeting because of a missed deadline. She raised a question regarding measures the OISE administration will put in place for the winter term to support students based on experiences gained over the summer and fall terms. The Faculty, including department Chairs, is always interested in meeting with student groups and departmental student associations to discuss issues and hear student suggestions on various matters. Professor Normand Labrie, Associate Dean, Programs, chairs the Student Success Committee that meets regularly. Professor Labrie is also meeting regularly with members of the Faculty. Further noted that, while faculty, staff and leadership are fully committed to supporting students and are doing the best they can, not all of the student concerns have been resolved and the work on supporting student needs continues during these most challenging times through various mechanisms including community and financial support.

Another question was raised regarding the specific mechanisms to ensure input from diverse student groups into the review process. The Dean noted that, despite the very busy academic term, steep review timelines and challenges associated with working remotely, he and his team have been trying to make the process as open and transparent as possible. Given these circumstances, regular meetings including OISE Council, Student Experience Committee, Deans and Chairs, OISE Leadership Team, and departmental meetings are being utilized to facilitate consultations. Another mechanism is making the draft self-study broadly available, and making it relatively easy for community members to provide feedback. The Dean invited members to contact him directly with comments, questions or suggestions regarding the review.

8. OISE Sustainability and Climate Action Plan

The Dean reminded members that the OISE Climate Action Summit, which was held on January 31, 2020, and plans for this initiative were discussed at the December 11, 2019 meeting of OISE Council. Following the Summit, there was a number of activities ranging from the community survey, a number of interviews, literature review, and a number of meetings with the OISE Sustainability and Climate Action Advisory Committee (CAAC). Tasked with developing a Climate Action plan by the winter term of 2021, the CAAC developed a vision statement on sustainability and climate action for OISE, and determined the structure, as well as the main branches of the plan including: governance and institutional supports; facilities and services; curriculum and teaching; research; and community engagement and outreach. In addition to the process for the development of the plan, key actions for each of the branches of the plan, and next steps, were presented by Professor David Montemurro, and Dr. Hilary Inwood who are leading the initiative in collaboration with the Dean.

Related to the 2020-2021 external review of OISE, Dr. Inwood noted that sustainability and climate action could be one of OISE's future directions over the next five years. It was agreed that OISE is well positioned to take the leadership role within the University in this critical area. The process and key elements of the Sustainability and Climate Action Plan presented at the meeting represent just an overview, and more specific details will be available in the winter term. In addition to the Plan that is expected to be completed and released by February 2021, a number of other initiatives are also being explored.