

Academic Advisory Meeting

Meeting Minutes

April 20, 2021

Present: Andrew Hakin (Chair) and Lynne Delorey (Recording Secretary)
Andrew Beckett, Dan Belliveau (via Teams), Karen Brebner, Tara Buksaitis, Gord Cunningham, Tim Hynes, Richard Isnor, Sandy Iverson, Murray Kyte, MJ MacLellan, Jeff Orr, Gina Sampson, Larissa Strong, and Kevin Wamsley

Regrets: Janice Landry, Kerry Prosper, Elizabeth Yeo

A. Hakin opened the meeting at 9:00 am and welcomed Advisory Committee members. He expressed his thanks and appreciation to all for a successful second semester and for their work throughout the academic year.

The minutes of March 23, 2021 meeting and agenda for April 20, 2021 were approved as circulated.

K. Wamsley provided an Academic update and asked his direct reports to provide updates from their respective areas:

- Second semester exams will be complete tomorrow. Convocation preparations are ongoing.
- Enrollment confirmations for the 2021-22 academic year continue to increase.
- Meetings are underway for Academic strategic planning.

R. Isnor, Associate VP Research reported:

- Summer research students will begin, in person, in May.
- A record number of summer student research awards (56) have been approved.
- With new funding received, implementing \$400,000 EDI grant will be a focus.
- Potential graduate study opportunities are being reviewed, i.e., Master of Public Health, as well as a new Masters in Nutrition (dietetics).

G. Sampson, Manager, Academic Projects & Planning reported:

- Work is underway on the Academic plan with participation from faculty. A first set of recommendations related to how the process will take place has been presented to Academic Priorities and Planning. A first phase consultation process will be scheduled in May/June 2021.

J. Orr, Dean of Education reported:

- With increasing enrollment, the department is currently reviewing its staff complement and office space allotment.

T. Hynes, Dean of Business reported:

- Calls have been made to Schwartz scholarship recipients for the 2021-22 academic year.
- Enrollment confirmations are up 23% in Business for the 2021-22 academic year.
- We are reviewing a joint proposal between BMIG & Schwartz School of Business for a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate program in Public-Sector Leadership. It is anticipated that this proposal, for a 12-month certificate (non-diploma) to bring together business and public policy, will be presented at Senate in the Fall of 2021.
- A challenge we face relates to increasing diversity within the Schwartz School, primarily within the student body. While we have a higher percentage of international students relative to

Academic Advisory Meeting

Meeting Minutes

April 20, 2021

other undergraduate programs/faculties, our student body lacks diversity overall. Our faculty is much more diverse.

D. Belliveau, Dean of Science reported:

- There is an increased interest in our graduate programs. The Master of Computer Science continues to be the most popular.
- Most Master of Applied Computer Science students are from India. Due to the pandemic, it has been challenging for Indian students to receive necessary paperwork, etc. which makes enrollment difficult to confirm.
- Computing Science has received a one-time investment from the Province. One of the proposals, to diversify interest in Computer Science through outreach to nontraditional students, will be submitted to the Academic Vice President for review. The initiatives of this proposal would be funded through the Province of NS's investment in StFX to enhance our computer science program.
- Faculty hires in multiple departments are underway.
- BSc enrollment confirmations are on par with or above last year. We are also investigating a potential master's in human nutrition degree, as well as working with Dean of Arts office, for a Bachelor Arts in Human Nutrition.

K. Brebner, Dean of Arts reported:

- A proposal that would allow Human Nutrition courses to be available for non-Human Nutrition students is expected to be submitted to the Dean of Arts and the Dean of Science for consideration.
- There is significant demand for the Forensic program with several first year StFX students indicating interest in transferring into the program. This demand for the direct entry option does not appear to have a negative impact on the demand for the Bachelor of Arts degree.
- It is anticipated, due to the pandemic, that there will be many academic penalty appeals.

T. Buksaitis, Registrar and Director of Enrollment Planning reported:

- The Registrar's Office is currently experiencing a high volume of processing due to the end of term processing and preparations for Convocation.
- Preparations are underway for the release of the degree parchment written in Mi'kmaq language for Spring Convocation as approved by Senate.
- The Registrar's Office is using electronic timetable software to recreate past timetables, using a centralized scheduling approach, to provide the ability to compare both schedules.

G. Cunningham, Director, Coady Institute reported:

- Virtual remote programming has been going very well.
- Due to increased demand, a third run of a course (Building on Abundance in Indigenous Communities) may be added.
- Many of our Pathy Foundation Fellowship recipients will be here in person to begin their work on projects which foster sustainable positive social change within their communities.
- At present, an in-person leadership program for Mi'kmaq women is being considered for the fall of 2021. Virtual options will also be considered.
- Due to the increasing uncertainty with COVID-19, some international project work and programs are on hold for India.

Academic Advisory Meeting

Meeting Minutes

April 20, 2021

- Both the summer student employment program (grant funded) and the Wallace Family Internships are on schedule for this summer.
- Discussions continue regarding academic department collaboration with Coady.
- One idea in particular has been brought forward for collaboration between Coady and the Brian Mulroney Institute of Government! the StFX Education Department and the Delmore Buddy Daye Learning Institute around an Afrocentricity in the education system in Nova Scotia.
- A local annual giving campaign has been launched with the goal for \$200,000 per year for five years for scholarships. The current focus of the campaign is with the business/medical communities.

S. Iverson, University Librarian reported:

- It has been a quiet year in the Library with a lower number of patrons using the library and borrowing books.
- There has been an increase in consultations with librarians and student participation in online workshops is up.
- The Library has received a Young Canada Works grant to hire an Indigenous student to undertake a research project to identify barriers that Indigenous students experience in accessing library services, spaces and resources. Molly Burke has been hired.
- A second student will be hired for the summer through the Edge program.
- Interviews have been completed for new data librarian position.
- Work on a strategic plan for the Library is underway.
- Margaret Vail has been hired as the new Systems and Data Services Librarian.

L. Strong, Director of Internationalization reported:

- Students are still arriving. There are challenges with travel, VISA processing, etc.
- In anticipation of the 2021-22 academic year, supports and systems at the provincial level for international students arriving in September are being explored.
- Enrollment confirmations are on par with 2020. Staff are working on an update of admissions criteria.
- Participation in online recruitment events continues. Dynamic content for better engagement is being developed.
- Funding has been received through Universities Canada to develop risk management processes for education abroad activities. Second proposals are due next month which promote nontraditional destinations for education abroad opportunities. Maple League universities are collaborating on these projects.

M. Kyte provided an Advancement update:

Alumni Relations:

- Planning is underway for a virtual Spring Convocation 2021.
- Virtual format events have created opportunities to reach more alumni and increase our contact information base.
- A formal mentorship program through Student Services and the Alumni Association will soon be available for recent graduates.

Academic Advisory Meeting

Meeting Minutes

April 20, 2021

- Planning for the Fall is well underway. If needed, the Neighbors Helping Neighbors program will be implemented again.
- An in-person Homecoming event will not be scheduled for 2021.
- Celebrations for the Class of 2020 will be moved forward to the summer of 2023.

Development & Campaign

- It has been a challenging year, but the outlook is promising.
- Year-over-year increases in funds raised for the University.
- The Day of Giving is scheduled for May 11 and the support of our Leadership Council is important to the Day's success and messaging for our donors.
- The President's Gala will be held virtually.
- The Xaverian Fund is almost at its goal of 50 million. *(J. Orr suggested that a presentation featuring the Jeannie Deveau fund be made to faculty as many faculty contribute to this and it is important to show the impact the fund has on students).*
- The Extraordinary Lives series will resume in the Fall of 2021.

K. Wamsley suggested sharing campaign update information with the Deans. Many departments have requested additional funds for project works, etc. so it would be helpful if the Deans were able to pass along information on the status of funding requests, etc.

Communications & Marketing:

- The Visual Identity Guide will be available shortly. The StFX crest will be featured in our branding elements. The X-Ring swoosh is no longer to be used and will be eliminated around campus in due course.
- An update of our web platform (Drupal) means our department sites and StFX.ca will be migrated over. Department sites will be migrated this summer, while the StFX.ca site is being completely rebuilt.

A. Beckett provided a Finance and Administration update:

- Two new policies that will be effective May 1 include the Harassment and Discrimination policy and the Conflict of Interest policy. Both HR and IT are planning a review of all policies.
- A reminder that masks are mandatory on campus (inside and outside) as students complete exams and move out.
- Facilities Management is working with Town of Antigonish on an electrification project for the heating plant. The project is contingent on government funding.
- Lane Hall demolition begins on Friday and will continue over a 10-day period.
- Plans are worked on for new Centre for Health building.
- Saputo Centre Fitness Centre upgrades will be scheduled shortly. Xavier Hall will receive window updates in the Spring of 2022.
- The 2020-21 fiscal year is complete with an anticipated surplus of ~ \$2 million which will be used against our deficit.
- IT is working on security and planning for required training.
- Work is being done to upgrade our business solutions with the creation of a multi-year business plan which will be presented in next few months.

Academic Advisory Meeting

Meeting Minutes

April 20, 2021

As E. Yeo is not present, a Student Services update will be circulated following the meeting.

Wrap up:

A. Hakin reported that:

- Post-secondary infrastructure was not included in the federal budget; however, pre-budget – building initiatives announced maybe be applicable for projects such as the Bauer Theatre or the Saputo Centre. The artificial intelligence strategy announced may be helpful to our researchers. An overview of the federal budget prepared by Universities Canada will circulated following the meeting.
- Time has been spent meeting and connecting with donors. These efforts are worthwhile as they serve to establish and build relationships.
- Calls to our Major Scholarship recipients were made and the conversations were very uplifting.
- Congratulations to all on their fiscal responsibility which led to the balanced budget. Funding from the province for COVID related expenses was a game changer. Continuing to be conservative over next year is a must as well as any efforts made to maximize our revenues will help to decrease the anticipated deficit.
- The incoming class of 2021 will require unique attention and support as the structure of their high school learning and social environments has been very different from other incoming classes.
- Thank you for all your work!

The meeting adjourned 10:41 am