SENATE RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
Friday 8 December 2023 10:00-11:30 a.m. via Zoom

Attendance: Wendy Norman (Chair), Guy Faulkner (Vice-Chair), Brenna Bhandar, Andre Ivanov, Greg Martyn, James Olson, Mitchell Prost

Guests: Rob Kozak, Moura Quayle, Silvia Tomášková

Regrets: Meigan Aronson, Emily Jenkins, Gail Murphy, Chris Overall, Siddharth Rout, Amy Wang

Senate Staff: Michael Jud

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Senate Research and Scholarship Committee (the “Committee”) was called to order at 10:04 a.m. on 8 December 2023 by W. Norman, Chair.

ITEM 1: ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The Committee agreed to amend the agenda by inverting the order of Item 3 and Item 5. The amended agenda was adopted by general consent.

ITEM 2: ADOPTION OF LAST MEETING’S MINUTES

The meeting minutes of 8 December 2023 were adopted by general consent.

ITEM 3: DRAFT POLICY J-305: EXTERNAL REVIEWS OF ACADEMIC UNITS

Draft policy J-305 was introduced by Moura Quayle, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President Academic Affairs.

The Committee heard that Policy J-305 responds to a 2018 Quality Assurance Process Audit of the UBC Vancouver campuses conducted under the auspices of the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills & Training (as it was then known). The audit recommended that UBC review and modernize its policies dealing with external reviews of academic units. In the case of the Vancouver campus, the relevant policy has not been updated since 1983.

Policy J-305 is intended as a joint policy of the Vancouver and Okanagan Senates, with a distinct set of Guidelines for each campus. The policy is still pending review for equity, diversity and inclusion as well as Indigenous considerations. It is expected to proceed to the Academic Policy Committees of the two Senates for review and potentially approval early in 2024.
The Committee recommended a number of revisions to the policy and its Guidelines:

- On page 8 of the Guidelines for the Vancouver campus it is stated that “Where the review of a graduate program is only completed as part of a faculty review, liaising with the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies is advised.” It was suggested that this language be strengthened by replacing “is advised” with “is required” or something to similar effect.

- In at least once instance (e.g. “Applicability” section, page 3 of the policy) the policy refers to institutes but not centres. Institutes and centres should generally be referenced together given that the “Definitions” section of the policy defines the term “Academic Unit” to include both institutes and centres.

- The policy and procedures make reference to various units that will support the external review process (e.g. the Planning and Institutional Research Office, the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, etc.). The documents should make clear, where appropriate, that external reviews of units on the Okanagan campus will be supported by the Okanagan equivalents of these units, for example the College of Graduate Studies instead of the Faculty of G+PS.

- Regarding the self-study report discussed in Section 2 of the Procedures and elsewhere, it may be helpful to establish a template document so that units can direct their efforts towards a clear and consistent end product.

The Committee’s feedback was accepted and it was indicated that the policy and related documents would be revised accordingly.

**ITEM 4: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ACADEMIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON A UBC INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY**

This item was addressed by the Co-Chairs of the Academic Advisory Committee on a UBC Institute for Advanced Study: Rob Kozak, Dean of Forestry (Vancouver), and Silvia Tomášková, Dean of Arts and Social Sciences (Okanagan).

The Committee heard that the recently concluded reconfiguration of the Wall Endowment has necessitated a decision on the future of the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies (PWIAS), as the endowment which had been the primary funding source of the PWIAS is no longer available for that purpose.

The Academic Advisory Committee is proposing that the PWIAS be disestablished and that a new transdisciplinary institute eventually take its place. The Committee reached a consensus that UBC should aim to “go big or go home” in this respect, ideally by fundraising a substantial endowment for the new institute. The proposal is still largely conceptual, with the precise details to be worked out once the idea is approved in principle.

There was considerable discussion around the appropriate process for bringing the matter before the Senate for consideration. It was asked whether it would be desirable for the Senate to first endorse the concept in principle and then subsequently engage the senior administration to work on implementation, or alternatively to first flesh out the concept and bring it to the Senate as a more mature proposal. It was noted that the disestablishment of the PWIAS and the motion to endorse a new institute will constitute two separate procedural items, though there is good reason to bring them forward at the same time.
It was suggested and agreed to by the proponents that it would be wise for them to take the issue back to the Provost, to consult with other key individuals such as the President, and to develop a strategy for bringing the issue to Senate. It is anticipated that the issue will be brought back to the Committee for further discussion in due time.

ITEM 5: COMMITTEE ENGAGEMENT WITH INDIGENOUS STRATEGIC PLAN

The Committee was reminded that the Senate Nominating Committee has asked all standing committees of the Vancouver Senate to consider how best to engage with the Indigenous Strategic Plan and report back with a brief summary by January. It was noted that the Committee’s mandate appears to be most obviously engaged by Goal 3 of the ISP, which sets out actions pertaining to research. Much of this work is already happening within the faculties, with the support of organizations like the VP Research and Innovation portfolio and the Office of Indigenous Strategic Initiatives (OISI).

The following courses of action were proposed:

- That an opportunity be found for the Committee to learn from the staff in the OISI about activities pertaining to Goal 3 of the ISP.
- That the Committee continue its work with the understanding that business items will be reviewed with an ISP lens where appropriate.
- That the Committee review the ISP performance management framework at the January meeting and consider how it might be used to evaluate the success of efforts in this area.
- That Committee members work through the ISP self-assessment tool in a group at either the February or March meeting.

It was noted that the Committee’s report to the Nominating Committee will be prepared by Senate staff on the Committee’s behalf.

ITEM 6: COMMITTEE WORKPLAN FOR THE 2023-26 TRIENNIUM

This item was briefly addressed and then deferred to the Committee’s January meeting due to lack of time.

ITEM 7: FUTURE PRESENTATION ON HOUSING ACTION PLAN AND CAMPUS VISION 2050

This item was deferred to the Committee’s January meeting due to lack of time.

ITEM 8: NEXT MEETING

The Committee’s next meeting will be held on Friday 19 January 2024 from 10:00-11:30am.

ITEM 9: MEETING FORMAT PREFERENCE FOR JANUARY

This item will be addressed via email due to lack of time.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.