NORTHERN ALBERTA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Board of Governors

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Monday, February 3, 2020
2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Governor's Boardroom T811

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Dr. Ray Block (Chair)	Dr. Sue Fitzsimmons	Sandra Marocco	Malcolm Haines	Jen Crothers
Jamie Corfield	Garry Wilson	Dong Ye	Robert Ackroyd	Steve Chattargoon
Norman Hill	Max Varela	Sonja Wojdak	Matt Rigby	Karen Velasco
Emi Oke	Alexis Flinkert	Aleksandra Jaruga	Gurtar Singh	Khevna Dave

RESOURCES:	Sandy Timmer (recorder)
GUESTS:	Sonia Jevne
REGRETS:	

1. OPENING

1.1 Call to Order and Approval of the Agenda

Dr. Ray Block welcomed everyone to the first Academic Council meeting of 2020 and called it to order at 2:00 p.m. Dr. Block is the new Chair of Academic Council. He asked if any member had a conflict of interest with today's agenda and none were declared.

Moved by Garry Wilson that the Agenda be approved as presented.

Carried

1.2 Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of November 18, 2019

Moved by Garry Wilson that the Minutes of the meeting of November 18, 2019 be approved as presented.

Carried

1.3   Business Arising from the Previous Meeting

Dr. Sue Fitzsimmons addressed the Business Arising item regarding the Faculty Emeritus nominees. She was pleased to report that the Board of Governors approved the three nominees at the Board of Governors meeting on December 10th. The winners will be honoured at the Long Service and Employee Recognition event on February 25th.

Sue thanked Garry Wilson and the Faculty Emeritus Sub-Committee for their work to present these deserving nominees.

2.   UPDATE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dr. Block commented on his first two months as the President and CEO, after Dr. Feltham's retirement. He noted that this is a particularly busy time for him and for NAIT. NAIT is at a crossroads – the Government has reduced funding to post-secondaries significantly, we are continually challenged to keep up with technology advancements, and student and industry expectations continually change. We have to adapt to meet those changes and demands.

As everyone has heard, NAIT has been working on transformational and financial changes since last spring. However, the Government's Budget 2019 greatly accelerated those plans. Our leaders have been working hard to contain our expenses while still providing exceptional learning experiences for our students and a positive work environment for our staff.

But we have to learn to do more with less. NAIT's future is still exceptionally bright and while we have to look for ways to cut our costs, this will open up new opportunities for us too. Ensuring NAIT's financial sustainability well into the future is management's primary focus.

Dr. Block advised that the presidential search has progressed very well, and the candidates interviewed were very strong. NAIT's reputation is extremely well-regarded in post-secondary and this was reflected in the calibre of candidates. The goal continues to be having a new president in place by July 1, 2020.

It was noted that our Communications team are assisting our Executive and leaders to send out communications to staff to provide them with as much information as is known. We want to ensure that fact-based information is being sent out. As well, consultations with all various stakeholder groups is being undertaken.

We are also keeping the Government and our Board informed as we move towards our transformation plans.

This concluded Dr. Block's report and no questions were raised.

3.   ADMINISTRATION

3.1   Program Suspension – Medical Transcription (certificate)

Dr. Fitzsimmons invited Sonia Jevne to speak to the suspension of the Medical Transcription (certificate) program.

Ms. Jevne advised that this program is being recommended for suspension as enrolment has been decreasing continually over the past several years and demand for graduates by employers is decreasing. Ms. Jevne also noted that Health Services is no longer employing transcriptionists.

Students and faculty are aware that this program is being recommended for suspension. Sonia also advised that the Chair of the program will be retiring next year and there is one contractor instructor. No new students are registered. The suspension period will run until June 30, 2021.

A brief discussion ensued and Academic Council agreed with this recommendation.

Moved by Dr. Sue Fitzsimmons that Academic Council recommend that the Board of Governors approve the suspension of the Medical Transcription (certificate) program effective July 1, 2020.

Carried

3.2   Transformation Feedback

Dr. Fitzsimmons lead this discussion and commented that this is a both a difficult but exciting time for NAIT. Sue reviewed past blogs from Executive since the Budget 2019 was announced in October. Communications to staff were top of mind for Executive to ensure staff be kept apprised as much as possible with the information available.

Sue briefly touched on the small external group of experts who have also been working with Executive to help them navigate through this transformation. Their assistance has been critical in the development of the transformation plan.

Sue then had a feedback activity and a breakout group activity for Academic Council members on questions relating to transition readiness. Groups answered the following questions in the breakout group activity:

1) What should NAIT start doing as we transform?
2) What should NAIT stop doing as we transform?
3) What should NAIT continue to do as transform?

She will tabulate these results and comments and provide them to Executive Committee for their information. (Responses are attached to these minutes.)

Dr. Fitzsimmons advised that consultations have taken place with NASA and NAITSA stakeholders on the transformation plans. There are items being considered such as program mix leadership, micro-credentials and our approach to student progression.

A brief discussion ensued. Communications to staff will continue as we know more.

3.3   Honorary Degree Nominees

Dr. Fitzsimmons spoke to this item noting that the list of recommended names for Honorary Degree consideration were included in the meeting package. Sue thanked Max Varela and the Honorary Degree Sub-Committee for their diligent work on the list of nominees.

Discussion turned to the prestige of Honorary Degrees and the number of Honorary Degrees to be awarded. After discussion, it was agreed that there should be four Honorary Degrees awarded – one for each of our four pillars.

The four nominees selected to receive Honorary Degrees who represent each of the four pillars are:

- Daryl McIntyre, retired CTV news anchor – Bachelor of Technology (BTech) (SAST)
- Dr. Raymond Rajotte, Doctor and researcher – Bachelor of Technology (BTech) (SHLS)
- Linda Hughes, past publisher, Edmonton Journal – Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) (JRSSB)
- Shane Chartrand, Chef – Bachelor of Technology (BTech) (SST)

Moved by Dr. Sue Fitzsimmons that Academic Council supports the recommended nominee(s) for Honorary Degree(s), subject to their availability, and recommends approval by the Board of Governors.

Carried

It was suggested that the criteria for honorary degrees be reviewed for next year.

4. INFORMATION ITEMS

There were no information items to come before Council.

5. PRESENTATION: Optimizing Student Progression at NAIT

Dr. Fitzsimmons invited Jen Crothers to give her presentation on optimizing student progression.

Jen advised that her presentation is an update on one she did for Academic Council last year and this is to inform Academic Council on the progression measures that are now in place. Ms. Crothers noted that her portfolio has expanded to include teams such as Institutional Research, Student Recruitment, and Funding and Financial Aid, which better supports student progression and data. Her portfolio's mandate will be providing an institutional approach to student completion for both credit and professional non-credit students and working with the data requirements of the academic portfolio.

To achieve this mandate, a better understanding of student progression was needed. Student progression has been defined as those activities and factors tied to students persisting to the completion of their academic goals. These can be academic or non-academic in nature. In order to optimize progression, we need to understand what our students are doing. Currently, two measures are being explored in credit programming: Fall to Fall retention and Fall to Winter retention.

Ms. Crothers reviewed the percentages of student behaviours for the Fall 2018 to Fall 2019 term of 11,000+ students including Continuation in same program (49%), Graduation from their program (35%), Transferring to another program in NAIT (1%) and Leaving NAIT altogether

(15%). For the Fall 2018 to Winter 2019 term, 84% of students continued in their same program to Winter 2020, 7% graduated NAIT, and 9% left NAIT. She noted that these percentages are also consistent with what has happened historically.

Students who did not continue in Winter 2019 were surveyed to understand their intention:

➢ 53% responded that they were returning to NAIT
➢ 18% transferred from another institution (the top two institutions to transfer from were MacEwan University and the University of Alberta)
➢ 29% responded that they had no plans to return to NAIT

It was noted that financial reasons and program/career fit were the two top reasons for not returning to NAIT. We also have an opportunity to actively manage the relationships with "leavers" who say they will be coming back.

Now that we have this information, it will help to identify areas of opportunity to optimize student progression. We will also highlight NAIT graduates' high employment rate.

Dr. Fitzsimmons thanked Ms. Crothers for her presentation and noted that having this data will help to inform how we are working with our students from start to graduation.

6. **OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business to come before Academic Council.

7. **NEXT MEETING – Monday, March 30, 2020 at 2:00-4:00 p.m. in Governor's Boardroom, T811**

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Garry Wilson that the meeting be adjourned at 3:59 pm.

Carried