



**NORTHERN ALBERTA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Board of Governors**

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

**Monday, April 20, 2020
2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Via Teams Meeting**

MINUTES

MEMBERS 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 Arevalo	Sonja Wojdak	Karen Velasco	Emi Oke
Alexis Flinkert	Aleksandra Jaruga	Khevna Dave		

RESOURCES: Sandy Timmer (recorder)

GUESTS: Lauren McVeigh Ryan Young Alessandra Medeiros Jerilyn Kotelniski

REGRETS: Matt Rigby Gurtar Singh

1. OPENING

1.1 Call to Order and Approval of the Agenda

Dr. Ray Block welcomed everyone to the last Academic Council meeting for this academic year. Unfortunately we are not able to meet personally for our last meeting, but he was happy to have everyone join virtually.

No declarations of conflicts of interest were made by Council members for today's agenda.

Moved by Bob Ackroyd that the Agenda be approved as presented.

Carried

1.2 Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of March 30, 2020

Moved by Malcolm Haines that the Minutes of the meeting of March 30, 2020 be

approved as presented.

Carried

1.3 Business Arising from the Previous Meeting

1.3.1 Build Back Better Feedback

Dr. Sue Fitzsimmons advised that Build Back Better is part of the next phase of our Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) as we look to the continuity of operations. Sue had sent out questions to Council members after the last meeting for their consideration for what we see for NAIT's future based on our experience with COVID-19.

The questions asked were:

- What do you believe we've learned from our rapid deployment of teaching and learning at a distance that we might want to build on for the future?
- How could we use this learning to build an even stronger NAIT?
- What is your sense of how distance and face-to-face methods might be best used to educate future NAIT students?

Sue thanked members for their feedback to those questions. Some of the feedback was:

- how we shift our thinking from challenges to opportunities and how we work together
- celebrating our NAIT colleagues and students who overcame nerves and explored and found new ways of teaching and learning
- technology tools have encouraged collaboration and we should continue to build on that
- the importance of thinking about assessment differently
- continue building on active learning in virtual classrooms
- how do we think about some of our competitors who already had virtual classrooms as part of their programs
- the value of students helping each other through this new phase
- the importance of digital infrastructure and having a stronger focus on that for future
- what kind of skillsets do we need to teach at a distance to effectively engage students
- finding support using our own internal talent and how can we leverage that
- using external partnerships who can support our work
- ramp up our micro-credentials; diversifying our offerings
- finding a balance between online and face-to-face teaching

Sue is meeting with her academic leadership team and will bring forward these suggestions to her team for their consideration. We may even have to look at reducing some of our office space as more instructors work from home. Sue thanked everyone for sending their ideas and suggestions that will be reviewed and considered.

1.4 Health and Well-being Traffic Light Check In

Academic Council members responded.

2. UPDATE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dr. Block thanked everyone for all they are doing to work through this unprecedented time.

Dr. Block commented on the incredible work that our Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and our Emergency Response Communications Team (ERCT) has done over the past several weeks to manage NAIT's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. They have done an outstanding job to ensure the NAIT community had what we needed to know to remain healthy and safe during this extraordinary time.

It is essential that we all continue to practice our safe distancing and preventative measures so that this pandemic can be slowed.

These four key priorities for the EOC and ERTC were established to guide their decision-making:

- Health and safety of NAIT staff and students
- Supporting student success
- Enable continuity of services to industry, partners and stakeholders
- Clear and coordinated communication

As part of our emergency response procedures, we are now shifting to continuing operations as Sue noted earlier. They will focus on our critical operations and how we will operate going forward and resumption of our normal activities. The Continuity of Operations (COOP) has members from the Emergency Management and Business Continuity, Facilities Management, Health and Safety Services, Protective Services, ITS, Polytechnic Education and Student Success, and Marketing & Communications, among others as needed. They will help lead us as we plan for our next steps.

3. ADMINISTRATION

3.1 Program Changes

Dr. Fitzsimmons welcomed Stacy Oslund, Manager of Program, Pathway, and Enrolment Planning, to the meeting to speak to the changes on program termination and suspension recommendations, as well as a new program. The change requests came from government or industry requests/feedback. Academic Council's recommendations will then be put forward to the Board for their approval.

3.1.1 Termination of the Bachelor of Applied Business Administration – Accounting

Ms. Oslund advised that the Bachelor of Applied Business Administration-Accounting is currently in suspension as of July 1, 2017. With the unification of the CA, CGA and CMA programs, this shifted educational requirements and we have seen declining enrolment for the applied degree program which led to the suspension of the program. Applied degrees also do not ladder into graduate studies. Stacy noted that most other institutes who also provide an applied degree in this area are also cancelling their applied degree programs as there was confusion for employers with the applied degree.

All students have either completed the applied degree or have transferred to the BBA program. All staff have been notified and consulted as well of the program termination.

Moved by Dr. Sue Fitzsimmons that Academic Council recommends that the Board of Governors approves the termination of the Bachelor of Applied Business Administration-Accounting applied degree effective December 31, 2020.

Carried

3.1.2 Termination of Advanced Accounting Post-Diploma Certificate

Ms. Oslund informed Academic Council that this Advanced Accounting post-diploma certificate was developed initially to meet the requirements of the CPA Advanced Certificate in Accounting and Finance. NAIT and SAIT were both approved by the CPA to deliver this course starting in September 2019. However, in July 2019, CPA advised they were going to terminate this program. As this post-diploma certificate was never implemented and would not prepare students as a stand-alone program, the three students who had registered were transferred to the BBA program which does meet the educational requirements for CPA.

This program is being recommended to move directly to termination rather than suspension first as the program was never implemented.

Moved by Dr. Sue Fitzsimmons that Academic Council recommend that the Board of Governors approves the direct termination of the Advanced Accounting Post-Diploma Certificate as it was never implemented.

Carried

3.1.3 New Program Proposal for Dental Assisting Certificate

Ms. Oslund advised that NAIT is the only post-secondary institute offering the Dental Assisting Diploma and a certificate is the only credential needed to enter the practice in every province. We have been hearing from industry that there is a shortage of graduates in dental assisting and having the one-year certificate as opposed to the two-year diploma would increase graduates in this field. There will be an expected shortfall of 1500 dental assistants needed by 2025. Stacy noted that 71% of employer respondents to a survey indicated that they are having trouble filling these positions. Allowing a change to a one-year certificate will double the amount of NAIT dental assistant graduates.

A brief discussion ensued with Ms. Oslund on the process undertaken for the change to a certificate from diploma. Supporting material from employers was included in the meeting package.

Moved by Dr. Sue Fitzsimmons that Academic Council recommends that the Board of Governors approves the proposal for the Dental Assisting Certificate effective July 1, 2021.

Carried

3.1.4 Suspension of Dental Assisting Technology Diploma

Ms. Oslund informed Academic Council that students were notified in March that the program was under review and there is no impact to their studies. We are looking at a more efficient way to offer advanced practice skills for students with the shortened program. Students for the fall term will be contacted over the summer and informed of the diploma suspension and the new certificate so they choose which program they want to

complete. Stacy advised that we are seeking a one-year suspension to align with the transition to the certificate program.

The suspension would end June 30, 2022 and then move to termination. Students currently in the program will graduate before the suspension period ends.

In March, staff were also notified of the proposed suspension and change to a certificate.

Moved by Dr. Sue Fitzsimmons that Academic Council recommend the Board of Governors approves the suspension of the Dental Assisting Technology Diploma with the suspension to take effect July 1, 2021 and end June 30, 2022 to enable the transition to the Dental Assisting Certificate.

Carried

Dr. Fitzsimmons thanked Stacy for attending the meeting and providing the information for Academic Council. Ms. Oslund then departed.

3.2 Campus Closure – Successes from NAITSA’s Perspective

Ms. Karen Velasco, NAITSA President, provided a brief report on the campus closures from the students’ perspective on some of the comments and successes that have taken place since the COVID impact. Ms. Velasco indicated that most of NAITSA has transitioned to online and virtual and student concerns are being addressed. Many events have been transitioned to online as well while still keeping the student experience top of mind.

Karen thanked the EOC team for all that they did to ensure student and campus safety in a short response time. Karen then asked Aleksandra Jaruga to provide some additional comments.

Ms. Jaruga, VP External for NAITSA, thanked all instructors who made the quick shift to online learning and ensuring students were still able to meet all their educational requirements. Instructors were open and adapted to the change quickly. Students have greatly appreciated this.

Dr. Fitzsimmons commented that a student/staff survey will be issued shortly to give us some feedback and information on how to keep making improvements and continuing to do what we did right during the shift to online learning. We are committed to continuous improvement.

3.3 Convocation

Dr. Fitzsimmons updated the members that our student progression area is working to come up with a way to still celebrate students’ success even if we cannot do a formal Convocation ceremony due to the pandemic restrictions. As we work through logistics and details, more information will be shared with students and staff. We are still in the exploratory stages for what this could be and we are keeping our Promise to Students part of the considerations.

3.4 Work Integrated Learning Decision Frame

Dr. Fitzsimmons welcomed Dr. alison lewis, Lauren McVeigh and Ryan Young who will speak on Work Integrated Learning (WIL) and the risk matrix and decision tree for WIL.

Dr. Lewis advised that in response to COVID-19, we had to create tools to assess the risk of each student who was participating in a WIL experience. With student safety and student choice as the priorities, a risk matrix and decision tree were created to determine whether the experience should continue, be postponed/delayed or canceled. The risk matrix was modified for each school, based on context. We included the Associate Deans of Industry Engagement and Associate Deans Academic, Polytechnic Education and Student Success (PESS) members, legal services, and health and safety services members in the development of these tools.

Ms. McVeigh advised that there were 1,411 students enrolled in WIL courses in the winter term, and 751 students enrolled in WIL for spring/summer courses.

Mr. Young then reviewed the Decision Tree on how decisions were made for students to participate in WIL in these exceptional circumstances. It was noted that employers have checked with NAIT on remote work placements or delayed start dates due to the pandemic. NAIT's risk tolerance for student safety, and student choice, were also considered in these decisions. If government did not require WIL placements to end, we continued to determine if a regulatory and/or accreditation body required the placement; or, determining if the student completed a sufficient amount of work to receive credit. Decisions then flowed from there.

Mr. Young advised that risk assessments were made based on COVID restrictions, while maintaining safety at all times. Ryan reviewed what was learned from the risk assessments and what we would do differently if this type of situation came about in the future.

We are continuing our discussions on the spring/summer/fall terms for WIL placements. We are tracking WIL placements at the school level and results will be tabulated.

Academic Council discussed the decision tree and decision matrix with Ms. McVeigh and Mr. Young.

Dr. Fitzsimmons thanked Dr. Lewis, Ms. McVeigh and Mr. Young for their informative presentation, and they departed the meeting.

3.5 Planning for September

3.5.1 Recruitment

Dr. Fitzsimmons advised that the Registrar's Office is working on scenarios planning for recruitment. We are looking to ensure better connections with students. We know that we will see a decline in international students until the situation with COVID is resolved. We will also see a decline in our apprentices due to the pandemic restrictions and Alberta's economic slowdown.

Jen Crothers noted that the Registrar's Office is working closely with our internal supports as well such as Marketing, Communications, PESS, and programs, to think about the different kinds of engagement we can have with potential and our current students here and abroad.

We continue to look at online delivery of some programs where it can be done. This may be of benefit for international students who are not able to travel at this time.

3.5.2 Assumptions

Sue commented that one of our working assumptions is that campus will not be fully opened until January 2021. We recognize that we need to be flexible, with our ability to pivot as needed, due to the uncertainty with COVID. However, it's difficult to provide any assurances at this point for any opening in September and what could be open, depending on the status of COVID-19.

3.5.3 Instruction

Sue noted at this point in time, it is likely that all courses will continue to be provided online. No formal announcement has been made as we are still exploring all avenues. However, in order to ensure that we are ready for September, we have to assume that will be the case. As we know more going forward, communications to staff and students will be forthcoming.

We recognize that hands-on learning is NAIT's differentiator in teaching and we are keeping that in mind as well. We are ensuring technology needs for staff are addressed for any instructors who need it for remote teaching.

4. INFORMATION ITEMS

Dr. Block wished to thank all members of Academic Council for their engagement in the meetings this year. All comments have been appreciated and valued.

5. PRESENTATION: Sharing Best Practices Related to Educating at a Distance

Dr. Fitzsimmons introduced Ray Bilodeau, one of our Marketing instructors, to share best practices used for teaching remotely.

Mr. Bilodeau provided a presentation with insights he has found from teaching remotely and finding the best platforms to do so. Reducing barriers with technology is critical.

Remote teaching can also offer lower costs for students for purchasing books and material. Our library services can assist students with online materials.

Ray noted that even with the changes to how we are teaching, we should still keep our marketing current as our students have to be kept up to date as well.

One of the things that has been found is that micro-credentials fit in really well with this new form of teaching.

After Mr. Bilodeau's presentation, Academic Council briefly discussed some of these challenges with teaching at distance with Ray and he synchronous engagement is really important. It was noted not to be afraid of technology and to embrace all the opportunities technology can provide for teaching remotely. Mr. Bilodeau then departed the meeting.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

Dr. Blocked thanked members of Academic Council who are leaving NAIT and wished them well in their next endeavours.

- 7. NEXT MEETINGS** – Monday, September 14, 2020 at 2:00-4:00 p.m. for Orientation and Monday, September 21, 2020 for the first meeting of the academic year.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Dr. Sue Fitzsimmons that the meeting be adjourned at 3:51 p.m.

Carried