



NORTHERN ALBERTA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Board of Governors

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Tuesday, December 15, 2015
11:15 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.
O102P Governors' Boardroom

MINUTES

PRESENT:	Dr. Glenn Feltham	Dr. Neil Fassina	Keith Meagher
	George Andrews	Dr. Alexander Ondrus	Alicia Christianson
	Allannah Wrobel	Anna Foshay	Arlana Moskalyk
	Coleten Leblanc	Darrell Cruz	Jeff Mason
	Justin Nand	Malcolm Haines	Nicolas Brown
	Norm Hill	Yang Yu	
RESOURCES:	Dr. Ray Block	Sandy Timmer (recorder)	
GUESTS:	None		
REGRETS:	Chris Redford	Kim Watamaniuk	
	Max Arevalo	Michael MacComb	

1. Opening

1.1 Call to order and approval of the Agenda

Glenn welcomed all and called the meeting to order at 11:15 a.m.

Moved by Nicolas Brown that the agenda be approved as amended.

Carried

1.2 President's Update

Glenn wished to thank everyone on Academic Council for their hard work this year. He spoke of the key areas he was working on to strengthen our academic mission. He touched on his role as Chair of Polytechnics Canada. He has been advocating for funding to polytechnics including for applied research and infrastructure. As Chair of the Council of Post-secondary Presidents of Alberta (COPPOA), he noted it has been an excellent opportunity to work with the other 25 presidents to form a cohesive voice to government.

Glenn thanked everyone on Council who worked on the Academic's Council submission to the Board on the administrative changes to the academic portfolio.

1.3 Review of the Minutes of October 20, 2015

Glenn advised that he received a request from Kim Watamaniuk that the minutes of October 20th with respect to item 4.1 (Administrative Changes to the Academic Portfolio) include the following:

“A proposal to defer the preparation of the Academic Council report to the Board pending Academic Council’s review of reports submitted from the other groups was offered for Neil’s further consideration.”

It was also noted that the HVACR name change is for the certificate program, not the apprenticeship program.

Moved by Nicolas Brown that the minutes of October 20, 2015 be accepted with the changes noted.

Carried

It was requested that comments that were provided for the first draft of the Submission at the Council’s brainstorming meeting on November 16, 2015 be included in our minutes. They are as follows:

General Comments from meeting on November 16 included:

- It was noted that the three writing volunteers had solicited feedback from their respective stakeholders on opportunities, concerns, and solutions.
- Face-to-face meetings were held among the authors.
- Comments were grouped into themes and then broken out into specifics.
- It was advised that the final document should be balanced and should state how it relates to the academic mission.
- A comment was raised that this draft should include the Promise to students and industry.
- It was acknowledged that more student-affected information be included in the next draft.
- It was suggested that this draft is more operational and not academic.
- It was suggested that input on specifics for all levels be forwarded to the writers.
- Quotes supporting the points should be included.
- It was suggested to use “Leadership Changes” for clarity.
- Explain how the changes support the Promises.
- Perspectives from all levels should be included.
- Be balanced and unbiased – a general perspective acknowledging the changes.
- Add in comments on changes that have taken place at NAIT over the years.
- Ensure the document reads as coming from Academic Council not from any other group; include the positives that will come from the restructure.
- Include role clarity.
- Note that staying status quo won’t bring us to NAIT 2021.

Glenn concluded with thanking everyone for their valued feedback and comments. The group of three will incorporate what has been suggested today for the final draft.

1.4 Business Arising

There was no business arising from the previous meeting.

2. Information Items

2.1 Credit Framework Procedure

The credit framework procedure and quality assurance documentation was presented for a final round of feedback before their formal approval. The initial mapping in 2011 through 2014 of programs to a “Carnegie Unit” or credit hours fundamentally shifted how NAIT programs were organized as compared to past practice.

As part of continuous improvement, NAIT has adapted the Carnegie Unit for polytechnics learning in the latest credit framework to reduce variances in the number of credits assigned to NAIT certificates and diplomas.

The new credit framework was piloted in the curriculum review and renewal (CRR) initiated in spring 2015. Following final refinements stemming from feedback during the pilot, the credit framework is set to roll-out in 2016.

Prior to Academic Council, the framework had been reviewed by the Academic Policy Committee. Discussion ensued on the credit framework procedure document. It was also noted NAIT would be looking to review and renew programs over a five year cycle resulting in approximately 20% of programs being reviewed each year.

It was asked if supported learning includes someone other than the course instructor – i.e. a teaching assistant, or lab assistant – coming in to teach the course, and if those are included in the official classroom hours and/or hours outside the scheduled classroom hours. Neil indicated that in combination, direct teaching and supported learning are included in the scheduled hours. This may include teaching or lab assistants but would be in alignment with the collective agreement.

It is important to recognize that the program has to be purposeful, while not overloading the learner, so the programs are achievable.

2.1(a) Quality Assurance Guide

2.1(b) Annual Reflection Templates

2.1(c) Comprehensive Review Templates

Neil advised that these documents are being brought to Academic Council for their review and feedback. They have been developed in response to both external and internal forces pressuring NAIT to review its quality assurance processes.

The quality assurance materials serve part of those elements necessary for a self-regulated quality assurance process.

The Annual Reflection and Comprehensive Review Templates are sub-documents of the Quality Assurance Guide.

These three documents have been vetted and will be used this spring in a pilot program. From there, this will roll out as part of the quality assurance process.

3. Administration

3.1 Administrative Changes to the Academic Portfolio

Glenn discussed the role of Academic Council and the Board. Glenn also noted that an important role as Chair of this Council is to ensure that we act consistent with our governance model. He addressed the governance issues raised by the questions in 4.1(a) and 4.1(b) (original agenda numbers).

Glenn advised that he was asked if Academic Council can make nominations to the Board. He indicated that Academic Council does not have a formal role in putting forward nominations for a Board member. He noted, however, that members of Academic Council can still have an impact. Any Council member can encourage someone to apply for a position on the Board as it is a fully public process. There is a defined nominations process set out by the Government of Alberta that has to be followed, but Glenn is happy to have a discussion with anyone who would be interested in applying to serve on the Board of Governors. The selection decision ultimately rests with the Government of Alberta.

In discussing our governance model, Glenn presented the comments made by the Board's Chair, Brent Hesje, at the Board of Governors' meeting on December 7th. Glenn observed that Academic Council's role relates to the academic mission of NAIT. It was also noted that the PSLA speaks to the role of Academic Councils of institutions.

Two further questions were raised at the last Academic Council meeting related to administrative changes to the academic portfolio: whether the report of Academic Council requested by the Board should be made public; and whether there is a further role for Academic Council with respect to the changes?

3.1(a) Academic Council's Report to the Board (e.g. should it be public?)

Should the Academic Council submission be made public? Glenn noted that he had briefly discussed this with the Chair of the Governance Committee. Two issues need to be addressed: can we release the document; and is so, should we release the document?

Glenn suggested that these questions be referred to the Governance Committee of the Board.

3.2(b) Given its Mandate, does Academic Council have a further role?

Discussion ensued. It was also recommended that this question be brought to Governance Committee of the Board for advice.

Glenn noted that he would raise these two questions with the Governance Committee of the Board, and report back to Academic Council.

4. Presentation

4.1 Update – Institutional Student Survey on Instruction (ISSI)

Sue Fitzsimmons provided a presentation on ISSI. She noted that several years ago, NAIT suspended student feedback but now, this is being reviewed again.

She pointed out several reasons why NAIT should have feedback from students and its value for instructors and students. The survey is currently scheduled in the second half of the term, although this is being reviewed. Instructors would see their own results after the final marks are posted. The Program Chair sees the combined results of their program, NAIT sees the combined results of all programs but no individuals are identified.

The questions are evidence-based and while this is the only tool used for physical feedback, instructors are still expected to check with their classes on feedback. Currently this survey is strictly on instruction but it's possible to consider doing a survey on the program.

5. Open Questions to the Chair

No questions were raised for the Chair.

6. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for **February 9, 2016** from **11:15 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.** in the Governor's Boardroom.

7. Adjournment

Moved by Nicolas Brown that the meeting be adjourned at 1:15 pm.

Carried