

**MINUTES**  
**Faculty of Arts Council**  
Tuesday, September 24, 2019  
4:30 – 6:00 pm  
BAC 234

1. Call to Order

S. Maitzen, Chair, called the meeting to order noting that quorum had been met.  
Regrets: John Colton (rep. Prof. Studies); Kevin Whetter; Robert Seale; Donna Seamone

The Chair noted the presence of a guest—P. Ludlow, scheduled to address Council under item 5 of the agenda—and confirmed that there were no objections to the presence of this non-member at the meeting.

No other guests were present.

2. Approval of Agenda as circulated

Moved: G. Whitehall  
Seconded: J. MacDonald  
Motion carried

3. Approval of Minutes of March 26, 2019, as circulated

Moved: R. Brickner  
Seconded: S. Ahern  
Motion carried, with one abstention

4. Business Arising from Minutes

None

5. Visit from Manager, Research Grants and Programs (RGS)

Peter Ludlow, newly appointed Manager of Research Grants and Programs in the Office of Research and Graduate Studies, introduced himself, noting that he is a PhD in History; has published a university press book and scholarly articles; received a SSHRC Partnership Grant. He invited faculty to meet with him to discuss Tri-Council and other grant applications.

In response to questions, P. Ludlow confirmed that he will support faculty from across campus; will offer grant writing workshops for students; has an office in Horton Hall; hopes to hear from applicants early in the application process; can provide support with timelines, budgeting, general guidance of all kinds. He will check to see whether internal review of applications before submission can be supported as in the past.

The Dean welcomed Dr. Ludlow.

The Chair recognized Greg Lee, representative from the Faculty of Pure and Applied Science.

G. Lee reported that he had requested a report from the Dean of Science who offered:

- 6 new tenure-track faculty were appointed in Science this year
- Labs in David Huestis Innovation Pavilion are  $\frac{3}{4}$  full
- Huggins Science Seminar will feature Dr. Jessica Fanzo (see FPAS website for details)
- Acadia Deans of Science & Arts to co-host meeting of Atlantic Deans of Arts & Science

In response to questions, Lee explained that 1) the Huestis labs support collaborations with industry, and 2) he was unaware of concerns within Science of possible interest to Arts faculty.

Noting efficient progress through the agenda, the Chair invited a motion that Council members present introduce themselves.

Moved: A. Quéma

Seconded: G. Whitehall

Motion carried, with 2/3 majority

Council members introduced themselves.

## 6. Report from Dean of Arts

L. Robinson introduced herself and thanked everyone for warm and optimistic welcome to campus. She reported an easy transition and credits the hard work of C. MacDonald in the Dean's Office. She has detected a sense of excitement on campus.

The Dean gave a PowerPoint presentation (appended below) and highlighted the following:

- Re. "Lines of Communication": she has productive bi-weekly meetings with newly established Provost Council; bi-weekly one-on-one meetings with Provost; bi-weekly meetings with Heads & Coordinators; hopes for improved flow of communication
- Re. "Acadia Colleague Enhancement": she anticipates 18-25-month roll out of system that will enhance ability to track students and programs
- Re. "Program reviews underway": History & Classics review in progress; ESST site visit to be scheduled this term
- Re. "Ongoing discussions with Facilities re. BAC": she is talking with M. Falkenham about new furniture for area outside Dean's office; doors to Politics/Philosophy hall will receive accessibility buttons; is open to suggestions for sprucing things up

The Dean received concerns and questions about the BAC, including potential fire-safety issue with locked doors in office wing of 2nd floor; unhygienic/unusable state of sink in 325; intolerably high heat during summer, early fall; status of architectural renderings of potential renovations

*The Dean assured Council that any significant renovations will involve broad consultation.*

- Re. Dean's List Celebration: new event co-hosted with Dean of Science was success; suggestions for improvement welcome
- Re. (Some Potential) Goals for Faculty: Provost asked Deans to identify goals; she shared hers, is open to others
  - wants to encourage Indigenous faculty members and content
  - Interdisciplinary studies need home, sufficient administrative support
  - Meetings planned for representatives of NSCC, Acadia to discuss possible articulation agreements
  - Revisiting the arts core: upon request, the Dean noted her careful use of language—"revisit" not "revise" as change is possible not certain; enrolment numbers do not capture students who do not come because of requirements
- Re. Enrolment Update: graphs from Provost/VPA contain enrolment data (appended below); special concerns about retention; she receives and can make available weekly enrolment updates by Faculty, program

The Dean responded to questions:

Will the new Colleague management system have abilities beyond student management?  
*Yes, an HR component will be added later (2020-21)*

How is the university responding to retention concerns?  
*Newly appointed Vice-Provost attentive to this concern; special meeting planned; D. Currie working on numbers; 67% retention rate across campus is a concern.*

Might Colleague system provide essential data for better understanding retention issues?  
*Yes.*

Should queries about establishing student exchange programs be directed to Dean's Office?  
*Yes*

Should departments that submitted CRC applications expect a response from RGS?  
*Yes*

## 7. New Business

Item 1)

P. Abela reported that the Acadia Bookstore is failing to provide necessary textbooks for students because of a policy of underordering and this is resulting in students withdrawing from courses. He noted that the store is run by a for-profit company whose counterproductive business model maximizes shareholder profits at the expense of students and that this model should be rejected by academic institutions.

*The Dean said she had experienced similar problems at another institution, suggested the bookstore should have access to up-to-date enrolment numbers, and wondered if the library might help provide access to textbooks for students.*

P. Abela noted that the library avoids purchasing textbooks as they are often quickly superseded by newer editions. He highlighted the detrimental impact on already very small

department book budgets that reversing this policy would have and suggested the university resist problematic underbuying policies when the company's contract is up for renewal.

Item 2)

S. Ahern noted that faculty received email about the Maple League, that it was good to see signs of investment enabling the initiative to become more than a branding exercise, and that the message encouraged recipients to develop new courses. He reminded Council that curriculum developments must be received by faculty councils and then by Senate. He also noted that those who develop new courses might not end up teaching them because unless such courses form part of a full-time faculty member's onload schedule they would have to be advertised and filled under the terms of collective agreement's per course hiring article.

*The Dean replied that it was her understanding that if something is accepted at Acadia it could be accepted at other universities.*

#### 8. Visit from President & Vice-President, Academic

The Chair welcomed P. Ricketts and D. Keefe, noting that theirs was the first visit to Council by senior administration in his memory.

P. Ricketts thanked Council for the opportunity to speak, welcomed everyone back to campus, and welcomed the new Dean of Arts. (Council applauded the Dean.) He noted that all campus Deans are Acadia alumnae and then welcomed the new Provost/VPA. (Council applauded.) The strategic planning work has been underway for 18 months and the process is approaching its end after a recent hurricane-related delay. A draft plan will be released soon and will go to Senate and then to the Board of Governors. A previous planning document identified general directions which will be incorporated in the soon-to-be-released draft. These seven directions are:

1. Caring for students
2. Caring for employees
3. New academic programing to attract students, esp. in Humanities and Social Sciences, with focus on making it more attractive for students to enroll in liberal arts programs and tying these to demands in changing world, society
4. Support for research endeavors that engage with community, building on Coastal & Rural research plan, emphasis on undergraduate research, inclusion of niche and high-quality graduate programs
5. Contributions to the region, economic, social, and cultural; leveraging these for government support
6. Building the institution physically: by improving accessibility, renovating infrastructure to bring buildings up to standard as learning and working spaces—including the BAC which needs work, and the library which is separate
7. Sustainability in recruitment, retention, graduation rates: institution must grow in order to generate resources in face of government refusal to increase support beyond 1%

D. Keefe, Provost/VPA, introduced himself and expressed gratitude for helpful optimism of those he has met on campus. He asked that faculty send him invitations to events via email so he knows what is happening and can attend when possible. He noted that implementation of the strategic plan will require an action plan. He explained that the Vice-Provost will focus on the

strategic enrolment part of the strategic plan to ensure that: we attract the right students to our programs, there is honesty in communication with prospective students, we deliver on recruitment promises so that students will stay. He said he is focused on the academic mission of the institution. He noted there will be hard work and challenges ahead but that it is a privilege to work in the postsecondary sector.

The President & the Provost/VPA responded to comments and questions:

A faculty member, noting that she is in her second year at Acadia and that this was her first opportunity to meet the President, recalled his emphasis on undergraduate research and registered disappointment at his failure to respond to a letter from students who wrote to him requesting support for the upcoming Annual Atlantic Undergraduate English Conference that will be hosted at Acadia this year.

*The President apologized for having missed the letter and failing to respond. He will follow up.*

The Provost/VPA is responsible for recruitment and retention but is also the academic sector's most senior representative on campus and so is counted on to support faculty and protect the academic integrity of programs despite demands of recruitment and retention.

*The Provost/VPA said that he is focused on the institution's academic mission and believes that strategic recruitment means breaking down silos and attracting students.*

It is important to learn when retention problems began since loss of faculty complement might be connected given that students are attracted by variety and fewer faculty members equals less variety. Interdisciplinarity cannot be a solution to recruitment concerns if it is placed in opposition to "traditional" discipline-based programs. Interdisciplinary programs require financial support even when numbers of majors may be small.

*The President said that interdisciplinary programs support traditional disciplines. The Provost/VPA said that the problems facing the world need interdisciplinary solutions.*

Will the administration's strategic recruitment approach include meeting with individual departments and programs or entail only work at the macro level?

*The President said that departments and program must be engaged, perhaps thematically, in groups, or in interdisciplinary ways. The Provost/VPA said department concerns could be carried through Chairs, Directors, and Deans to the broader institution.*

## 9. Adjournment

Moved: G. Whitehall

Seconded: J.C. Rose

Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 6:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Jessica Slights

Secretary to Faculty of Arts Council