

**University of Windsor
Senate**

5.3: Report of the Academic Colleague

Report of the Academic Colleague –Meeting October 9, 2014

The Academic Colleagues and Executive Heads met at the Council of Ontario Universities in Toronto

COU Update provided to Academic Colleagues:

Funding Review

The current funding framework for postsecondary education has been in place for about 50 years, with bolt on additions made. The basic structure has been static.

Now that the first SMA process is completed the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (MTCU) intends to embark upon a review of the funding framework for postsecondary education. Four objectives have been identified by MTCU:

- a) Align the funding framework with the MTCU agenda of differentiation.
- b) Identify incentives that are not tied to enrolment growth
- c) Allocate a small but meaningful proportion tied to performance.
 - a. Current Key Performance Indicators (KPI) are 1% and Multi Year Accountability Agreements (MYAA) are about 4%.
- d) Fix “anomalies” in the funding formula.
 - a. This could be related to differential BIU funding, stranded tuition rates or allocations to certain program areas (fine arts for example).

There will likely be a Executive Lead appointed to carry this out.

There is a need for stability, so the Executive Heads (Presidents of Universities) seem to be expecting gradual change that promotes financial sustainability.

Pension Plans

Through the encouragement of the Ministry of Finance and MTCU, faculty and administrative representatives are meeting to develop a model for a potential Jointly Sponsored Pension Plan (JSPP). No one has committed to participating in such a multi-employer pension plan, but a working model is important to begin the discussion. Amongst other things, corporate structure, features of the plan, benefits, governance and asset transfer plans are required. There is a technical group working on the problem of unfunded liabilities. One significant benefit of JSPPs is that risk is shared over a larger group, making them more sustainable in the long run. In part this is due to the pooled investment from multiple institutions having greater earning power.

Tuition

OSAP data will be made available to the COU on student tuition in a granular manner. This will enable COU to understand the net-tuition paid by students. Analysis of the data may provide other interesting information.

Quality Council

COU has worked hard to build in an expedited review process to enable faster reviews of new programs in areas mandated by each institutions SMA. The MTCU has agreed to some customer service standards, and has made a commitment that there will be five dates by which proposals must be submitted. Within 30 days, notification will be given whether an expedited process or deeper review will be performed. The expedited process is currently

estimated at four months. In addition to program details, tuition rates will also be confirmed, using a process that compares tuition for a new program to similar programs in other institutions, and also internal program tuition comparisons.

On-Line

New course and modules call has been made. The concept of modules (parts of courses) is new for MTCU. Proposals that involve inter-institutional collaboration will be favoured. Statements of Interest are due October 20th. Two goals of the MTCU in this area include a) helping the Universities save money and b) supporting credit transfer and credit recognition.

The new consortium is nearly up and running. Mandated purpose has been circulated to Executive Heads and agreed upon. The next steps include legal processes defining bylaws, the board, membership, and statement of purpose. There is a balance with Colleges and Universities and an Executive Head will need to be a cochair.

Academic Colleagues discussions and presentation to the Executive Heads:

Two topics were discussed with the Executive Heads in the meeting of the full council.

Increasing the effectiveness of Council meetings and the engagement of Council members.

We reviewed the process of interaction of the Academic Colleagues with the Executive Heads that was initiated last year. It was generally agreed that the new model is working well. The new process of bringing timely opinions on matters of current importance from the academic side of the council were identified as being important to the Executive Heads. There was some discussion of the importance of the Working Papers, that we are no longer carrying out (workload and timeliness of the reports were issues of importance), and we did give consideration to more in depth reports supported by COU research staff when a need is identified.

The identification of future topics of discussion by the Academic Colleagues with the Executive Heads will be carried out by suggestion of both groups. Colleagues felt more opportunity for discussion of topics, rather than straight presentations would allow better understanding of topics of interest by the colleagues and thus better information flowing to Senates, as is the mandate of the Academic Colleagues. The Executive Heads concurred that more time should be allocated to discussion of topics.

Strategic Mandate Agreements

In relation to the SMA process we discussed the current situation and in light of our plans for initiating discussion with the heads colleagues brought four concerns to the attention of the Executive Heads.

- a) Understanding the alignment between the funding formula revision (the current funding formula is already being referred to as the "old" funding formula) and the targets identified in the SMA are an area of concern to Academic Colleagues.
- b) The internal processes of the Universities and the role of Senates in future rounds of the SMA process were considered.
- c) We need an understanding of the impact of the prioritization process
- d) What areas to the Executive Heads need direct input from Colleagues on these matters.

It is clear SMA is here to stay and that MTCU wants collective decisions about what programs will be developed and funded. The unbundling and re-bundling that will occur in alterations to the funding formula must not be allowed to coral funding too tightly. Envelope funding for specific programs needs to be avoided. It is recognized that direct link of SMA to Funding Formula is dangerous. In my opinion these ideas identified the "small but meaningful allocation tied to performance" as the link of the SMA to the funding formula. Discussion with the Ministry in this

area is barely beginning as the dust is still settling from the election. Internal changes in the public service need to occur before new processes really get rolling. Older processes initiated by the previous government move forward as they were already given impetus. There was some difference of opinion as to whether the MTCU was aware that the SMA call intentionally avoided Senate participation, or whether they are actually oblivious to the governance structure of the Universities. One Executive Head identified specific timelines in moving toward the next SMA. It is recognized that the template for the next process is not available, but plans can be in place to be responsive to a template that is dropped onto the process at the last minute by MTCU.

In the area of future input from Academic Colleagues the Executive Heads deferred to provide input later. This was well accepted by colleagues given the fact that we had succeeded in establishing a discussion framework, and that the Heads were not really prepared to provide this specific information. Discussion will continue.

Final Note:

The Council of Ontario Universities honoured Roberta L. Jamieson with the David C. Smith Award. She was recognized for outstanding advocacy for Aboriginal learners, improving access to higher education. She is President and CEO of Indspire, Canada's premier Indigenous-led charity and the largest non-government funder of Indigenous education. Funding in 2013-2014 amounted to \$10 million. Indspire also launched an unprecedented \$20 million fundraising campaign in 2013 to support the Building Brighter Futures – Bursaries and Scholarship Awards program.