Innis College

Innis College Council
323rd Meeting
Friday, April 16, 2021 at 3 pm

Minutes

Present: Catherine Amara (guest), Srijita Banerjee, Donald Boere (assessor), James Cahill, Jannie Chien, Lucas Granger, Elijah Gyansa, Henry Hill (designate of Nancy Green), Tony Hu, Sana Imran (guest), Kate Johnson, Paul Kaita, Charlie Keil, Binseong Kim, Claudia Li Tang, Breanna Lima Martinez, Annie Liu, Ella Ma, Suzanne Macintyre (assessor), Steve Masse (assessor), Michelle Nurse, Mukti Patel, Emma Paulus, Tony Pi, Amisha Punja, Ceta Ramkhalawansingh, David Roberts, Nicole Rodriguez, Noel Simpson, Rolla Tahir, Bart Testa, Joanne Uyede, Njoki Wane (guest), Ben Weststrate, Andrea Williams, Carol Ye, Michelle Zhang

Regrets: Yona Anderson, Ennis Blentic (assessor), Lauren Cramer, Sharon English, Madi Frost, Nancy Green, Josie Meza-Silva, Miriam Moren, Tony Niu, Kenny Trinh, Lina Yan

1. Speaker's remarks

Lima Martinez chaired the meeting.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

A motion to approve the March 5, 2021 meeting minutes was moved (Lima Martinez), seconded (Punja), and carried.

3. Business arising from the minutes

- Ramkhalawansingh, Community Affairs Board member and Harold Innis Foundation chair, confirmed that David Miller will deliver the 2021 Harold Innis Lecture.

4. Principal's report

A. U of T Anti-Black Racism Task Force

Keil introduced two guests who spoke to the recently published (March 31) report of the U of T Anti-Black Racism Task Force: **Catherine Amara**, associate professor, teaching stream and director, undergraduate studies at the Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education; and **Njoki Wane**, professor and chair, Social Justice Education, OISE.

Read the University's response to the report here (April 14).

Amara, co-chair of the Students & Curricula Working Group of the Task Force, described its aim "to address existing barriers and enhance the University experience for current and future Black students." The Working Group was tasked with developing actionable recommendations and accountability practices and considered all stages of the student life cycle—from access and recruitment to graduation preparation and alumni experience.

Ramkhalawansingh thanked Amara, Wane, and the Task Force for this important work. She inquired about recommendations regarding funding student experience, beyond recruitment and access. Amara noted that conversations about funding occurred, some of which are published in the report's appendix. Certain recommendations do account for funding student research—i.e., calls for data to identify Black students for the purpose of setting up funding opportunities; for better tracking of Black alumni, in part, to fundraise for student awards; and for attention to current medical students.

Keil inquired how the Task Force distinguished between merit- and identity-based awards, noting the difficulty of addressing a problem that one can't yet see (i.e., due to lack of data). Did anecdotal evidence emerge to suggest that more funding was important? Amara said the Task Force's strong assumption was that more is indeed better, and that new data will be more helpful in tracking progress on new initiatives, versus serving as a starting point (i.e., let's not let data needs inhibit our starting). Other recommendations to celebrate Black student excellence appear in the report (e.g., Black student research day). Wane, a Task Force co-chair, added that funding was regarded holistically. The starting position was more money must be made available to support Black students across their life cycle.

Regarding curriculum, Wane reported that course content tied to Black populations and, specifically, to pre-colonial knowledge appears only sporadically. Divisions across the university are encouraged to review their curricula and take efforts to add such content. Amara added that discussions took place regarding compulsory content for every student related to Black history. Integration of anti-racist pedagogies was recommended, and instructor support should be provided to enable this teaching.

Williams inquired about balancing anti-Black racism with other anti-oppressive pedagogies (e.g., Indigeneity and gender). Amara observed that anti-Black racism has been under-addressed when lumped under a broader equity, diversity, and inclusion umbrella. The Task Force found an acutely felt need to specifically name it. Amara acknowledged the importance of intersectionality with other marginalized identities too, but not at the exclusion of specifically anti-Black racism. Wane added that the Blackness has gotten lost in the study of other anti-oppressive education.

Hu thanked Amara and Wane for the report and their presentation. He inquired how the recommendations create space for students to take action (i.e., What can students do?). Amara stated that everyone is involved in this cultural change, and ample opportunity exists for students to be involved in implementation across divisions. Students drove the development of the recommendations and likewise need to be included in its implementation. In the context of classes, asking questions and bringing in outside learning will go a long way. Students need to be made to

feel that their voices are critical to this process. Wane acknowledged that mistrust felt by Black students toward the University is a barrier that can be overcome through actions of Black student ambassadors connecting with and speaking to fellow and prospective Black students.

Gyansa expressed appreciation for the report's comprehensive structure, which takes the onus off the individual Black student to effect change. He inquired about recommendations that address the inability of students, who must work to fund their education, to participate in student volunteerism and become eligible for leadership awards. Amara reported that the Task Force discussed this issue seriously.

Keil and Lima Martinez, on behalf of the College and the student body, thanked Amara and Wane for their time and work on the report. They pointed to the College's recent response to a local Black Student Experience Working Group report, which seeks to align with the Task Force report.

B. Innis College's Response to the Final Report of the Black Student Experience (BSE) Working Group

Keil acknowledged the work of the BSE Working Group and the subsequent Implementation Committee. He specifically thanked each Working Group member:

- Ceta Ramkhalawansingh and Jaren Kerr, co-chairs
- Lauren Cramer, associate professor, Cinema Studies Institute
- Makanaka Goredema, Muplangan Hirse, Aluong Jongkuch, Nana Koomson, Kassia Neckles, Michelle Nurse, students
- Zakerie Farah, alumnus

Keil also thanked Steve Masse, dean of students, for his efforts in chairing the Implementation Committee and compiling the College's response to the Working Group's 24 recommendations (click here).

Masse presented an overview of the Implementation Committee composition, process, and response document.

Ramkhalawansingh added that the WG reviewed a draft response on April 12 with Masse and Keil and plans to meet again in one month. Ramkhalawansingh was particularly impressed by the Implementation Committee's process and the inclusion of so many people, which helps ensure it is a "lived" document.

As per the Response (see "Accountability and Reporting," p. 11), Masse proposed striking an Equity, Inclusion, Diversity, and Accessibility (EDIA) Committee, according to the following terms of reference:

The Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee shall consist of at least 12 members, including:

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- ex officio: four members defined in By-Law II.D.3 (Principal, ICSS President, speakers of council)
- the Dean of Students and Assistant Principal and Registrar, or their designates
- A Principal's Appointee
- A member of the Teaching Staff, appointed by the Principal
- At least two student members of the Innis College Black Student Experience (BSE) Working Group
- At least two additional student members of Council

The Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee shall:
- advise the Principal and Council on priorities and policies pertaining to equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA) at Innis College
- receive regular reports on EDIA-related policies and actions from the Principal or the appropriate College officer, including the College's response to the recommendations of the BSE Working Group

A motion to strike the special committee, as defined above, was moved (Ramkhalawansingh), seconded (Hu), and carried.

C. Staffing changes and accolades

Keil acknowledge several staffing changes at the College and two awards received by college staff.
- **Suzanne Macintyre** began as CAO on March 15, coming from Hart House.
- **Sana Imran** began the new role of assistant dean, Community Wellness (ADCW) on March 22.
- **Shpresa Bace** began in the new role of finance and payroll assistant on March 29.
- **Dianthi Fernando** began in the new role of student life coordinator on April 5. Dianthi was formerly the lead residence don and is a college alumna.
- **Steve Masse**, dean of student, is the recipient of a 2021 Jill Matus Excellence in Student Services Award.
- **Shawn Micallef**, Innis One instructor, is the recipient of a 2021 Superior Teaching Award from A&S.

Keil noted that equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) staffing has expanded at the faculty level. A&S has signalled interest in integrating its support services with the colleges.

D. Academic planning for September 2021

Planning for the Fall term is proceeding with an intent to return to partial in-person instruction, conditions allowing. Communication will come directly from the A&S dean on a regular basis.

5. Board reports

A. Academic Affairs

Board moderator Zhang reported the following highlights from a March 22, 2021, meeting:

- The three programs are all working on Fall return planning. Summer courses are set. Faculty hiring is underway in a few cases.
- Writing Centre operations have been smooth, though the board discussed factors that are contributing no-shows and cancellations.
- A series of library-led initiatives for students are on offer (e.g., "Shut Up and Write!").
- The First-year Foundations program is going into its third year as a "pilot." We are looking to re-work the title.
- The Writing & Rhetoric Program is developing a student union.

B. College Affairs
Board moderator Kaita reported the following from a March 24, 2021, meeting:
- SARG budget was approved by Governing Council.
- Summer admissions and facilities improvements are underway, including the conversion of suites to full accessibility.
- The annual budget for the College was approved.
- The College website project is in the design and development phase and looking to launch in the summer.

C. Community Affairs
Board moderator Hu reported the following from an April 1, 2021, meeting:
- Magazine planning is underway under theme of "Reimagining."
- Alumni events are being completely held online. The transition from in-person has been smooth and attendance records are higher than ever.
- $3.5 million has been raised toward our $10 million target for the Renewal and Expansion Campaign.
- The Lesra Martin Student Changemaker Award fund and Innis Admission Scholarship for Indigenous Peoples fund have reached the minimum fundraising threshold and are now endowed (i.e., invested by the University to generate annual revenue; no longer expendable).
- Art Committee has met and plans to put out the call for submissions in the fall.

D. Student Affairs
Board moderator Ma reported the following from an April 15, 2021, meeting:
- ICSS general elections are complete. The executive team is full, though vacancies exist among the director positions. The plan is to fill them over the summer.
- IRC reported hosting many successful events; all proposed amendments to the constitution were approved in the Winter term; and executive leadership for 2021/22 is finalized and transition is underway.
- OSL previewed its summer programming for incoming students and discussed extending summer e-mentorship across the academic year.
- RAAC reported that 75% of the College's first-year admission quota had been offered.

- SSC approved funding for three initiatives: Anti-Résumé, an online community dashboard, and student space refurbishments and future furnishings.

6. Executive Committee

A. Election of council secretary

In accordance with ICC Constitution section 8.A, Lima Martinez called for nominations for council secretary for the 2021/22 governance session. Granger nominated Weststrate, who accepted. There were no other nominations.

A motion to acclaim Weststrate as 2021/22 secretary was moved (Granger), seconded (Punja), and carried.

7. Other business

A. Summer adjudication authority for student awards

A motion to extend temporary (i.e., summer session) authority to the Registrar to adjudicate awards until the Recruitment, Admissions, and Awards Committee reconvenes was moved (Lima Martinez), seconded (Uyede), and carried.

B. Innis leadership award applications

Lima Martinez reminded students of the April 19, 2021 application deadline for Innis College leadership awards.

C. Thank you

Keil thanked both council speakers and the six graduating student members of council: Granger, Kaita, Lima Martinez, Niu, Trinh, and Zhang.

8. Adjournment

Lima Martinez wished students good luck on their exams and thanked everyone for a successful year of governance.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was moved (Lima Martinez), and carried. The meeting adjourned at 4:52 pm.