



TEMERTY FACULTY OF MEDICINE
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Faculty Council of the Temerty Faculty of Medicine
Minutes of the February 5, 2024 meeting
4:00 p.m.
Via Zoom Videoconference

Members Present: Luc De Nil (Speaker), Veronica Wadey, Todd Coomber, Brenda Mori, Meg Connell, Rita Kandel, Denis Bourguignon, Mary-Louise Greer, Lisa Robinson, Kyle Kirkham, Gordon Moe, Rick Penciner, Andrew Wilde, Alayne Kealey, Andrew Mazzanti, Robyn Loves, Sheila Riazzi, Chao Wang, Pier Bryden, Chen Wang, Erin Styles, Darlene Reid, Orly Taub, Viola Antao, Brenda Bui, Bob Bleakney, Patricia Houston, Christie Welch, Sophie Huang, Asaph Rolnitsky, Susan Poutanen, Hossein Afsharpour, Lisa Richardson, Arthur Mortha, Suzan Schneeweiss, Wendy Whittle, Blake Papsin, Beverley Orser, Nana Lee

1 Call to Order

2 Minutes of the previous meeting of Faculty Council – October 16, 2023

The minutes of the meeting of October 16, 2023 had been previously circulated. They were approved on a motion from E. Styles and seconded by S. Huang. There was no business arising.

3 Report from the Speaker

Dr. De Nil indicated that he had nothing to report at this time.

4 Report from the Dean's Office

Interim Dean Patricia Houston announced the appointment of Dr. Lisa Robinson as the new Dean and Vice Provost for Healthcare Institutions, effective July 1st. Dr. Robinson, currently the Vice Dean, Strategy & Operations, is currently on a six-month administrative leave during which she will be reducing her clinical commitments, and engaging with stakeholders to shape her vision and a new strategic plan for the faculty. Dean Houston noted that the previous strategic plan was for the period from 2018 to 2023 and has expired. In the interim, Dean Houston will continue serving as the acting Dean until the end of June and expressed gratitude for this opportunity.

The responsibilities of Dr. Robinson's current portfolio have been temporarily redistributed. Dr. Lisa Richardson is overseeing strategy portion, with Dean Houston and Dr. Lynn Wilson taking on the operational aspects

Dean Houston provided updates on recent appointments within various departments, including Medical Biophysics, Ophthalmology and Vision Sciences, Medical Imaging, Nutritional Sciences, Immunology, and Physical Therapy. She highlighted and interim appointments necessitated by ongoing searches.

Dr. Wilson is chairing searches for Chairs in Physical Therapy and Speech-Language Pathology. There is both a Chair search and an external review in Medicine which are being co-chaired by Dr. Robinson and Dean Houston, as well as a review of IMS led by Dr. Justin Nodwell. External reviews and reappointments are also ongoing in Nutritional Sciences, Pediatrics, Physiology, and Psychiatry.

5 Items for Approval

5.1 The Education Committee of Faculty Council recommends the approval of the following motion:

“THAT the proposal to close the Collaborative Specialization in Health Care, Technology, and Place be approved as submitted.”

Moved: V. Wadey, Seconded: S. Huang

Dr. De Nil indicated that no one associated with the collaborative specialization was able to attend the meeting. Dr. De Nil noted that the CIHR funding tied to the financial sustainability of the program ended in March 2015 and the participating departments suspended admissions and agreed that the program would be closed after the final student graduated. The final student successfully completed the collaborative specialization and convocated in November 2023. In the last few years, the University of Toronto has established degree granting programs that meet similar objectives to this collaborative specialization.

The motion carried.

6 Standing Committee Annual Reports

6.1 PGME Board of Examiners

Dr. Kyle Kirkham, Chair of the PGME Board of Examiners, noted that this year's data would represent only a portion of the year as the presentation typically takes place at the spring meeting but he will not be able to attend in April so the presentation was moved up.

The PGME Board of Examiners reviews cases of learners encountering difficulties within the postgraduate medical education program. These cases are typically brought to their attention by program directors or the Associate Dean of Postgraduate Medical Education. The Board's focus is on assisting residents and fellows overcome challenges and successfully progress through their programs.

Dr. Kirkham noted the collaborative nature of the Board by highlighting the close partnership with the Post Graduate Medical Education Office. The PGME office assists program directors with developing remedial plans for learners and Dr. Kirkham expressed gratitude to the PGME team for their invaluable support.

Dr. Kirkham highlighted that, while the number of new cases has remained fairly consistent over the last number of years, there has been an increase in the number of continuing open cases. He noted a trend of more complex cases requiring extended remediation programs which leads to a higher total number of cases managed compared to previous years.

The majority of cases result in successful remediation, with learners returning to their regular learning schedules. A small percentage of cases requiring further action, including potential program transfers or, in rare instances, dismissal of learners.

Dr. Kirkham indicated that there are ongoing efforts to identify learners in need of support earlier in their education with the PGME office again working closely with program directors in this regard. Despite these ongoing efforts to improve processes and support mechanisms, the trends have remained consistent.

Dr. Kirkham noted the importance and labor-intensive nature of the Board's work. He highlighted that efforts have been made to alignment with the Office of Learner Affairs to further support learners.

6.2 UME Board of Examiners

Dr. Bob Bleakney informed Council that the Board of Examiners for undergraduate medicine meets monthly to discuss the cases of students from the MD and BScPA who are in academic difficulty. He proceeded to discuss the number of students cases, noting an increase compared to previous years. In the past two years,

the number of students had been 44, but this year it rose to 67. The majority of students presented to the Board were from Clerkship. Dr. Bleakney speculated that the cohort's limited clinical experiences, exacerbated by the pandemic, may have contributed to a higher number of failures.

Dr. Bleakney noted that, due to the increased workload, the Board had to convene emergency meetings during the year, particularly around the deadlines for the Canadian Resident Matching Service (CaRMS), to allow students on remediation to complete their remediation before CaRMS.

Dr. Bleakney indicated there has been a shift in the types of cases brought before the Board, noting that while it's typically rare for students from the Foundations program to be presented to the Board, they had encountered a few such cases this year. Additionally, he mentioned an issue with professionalism among second-year students, which required ongoing remediation as they transitioned into clerkship. He also discussed changes in exam formats, such as the introduction of a new anesthesia exam, which resulted in a higher failure rate among students. Dr. Bleakney suggested that the unfamiliarity with the new exam format may have played a role in the increased failures.

Dr. Bleakney indicated that there has also been an increased need to rescind failures for students who had received accommodations after the failure. He noted that this has become more common in recent years due to more recognition of the importance of accommodating students' needs.

Dr. Bleakney expressed hope that the issues encountered during the year, such as the anesthesia exam, would be temporary, and efforts would be made to address them effectively in the future.

6.3 Appeals Committee

Dr. Blake Papsin commended the previous presenters for their diligent work which he noted resulted in a remarkably quiet period with very few cases to report. Dr. Papsin indicated that there has only been one appeal hearing since his last report to Council with the Appeals Committee and the decision of the Board of Examiners had been upheld.

Dr. Papsin acknowledged uncertainty about whether the lack of appeals signified good or bad news. He noted that the pandemic had been an atypically quiet period for appeals, but in general there is a hearing about every 18 months. He mentioned having one pending case that might come up for appeal, but overall, it had been a fairly quiet time. Dr. Papsin noted that have a pending case was not uncommon but most do not come forward for a hearing.

Dr. Papsin mentioned there are or will be vacancies on the Appeals Committee and invited interested individuals to contact Mr. Todd Coomber for more information.

Dr. Papsin noted his limited ability to provide details about the cases but noted that the Appeals Committee comparatively easy compared to the demanding work of the UME Board of Examiners which he Chaired for nearly a decade. He emphasized the rigorous process involved in handling appeals, praising the solid and meticulous nature of the process. Dr. Papsin thanked Mr. Coomber and the University's legal team for the substantial effort involved in preparing and executing the cases.

7 Faculty Council Forum

Deputy Speaker, Dr. Veronica Wadey, introduced the Forum titled Faculty Wellbeing/Wellness at TFOM: The Okanagan Charter and Beyond presented by Dr. Pier Bryden, Dr. Julie Maggi, and Dr. Heather Flett.

8 Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.