Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:15 p.m.

Memorial Resolution respecting:
Professor Andres del Junco, Department of Mathematics
Professor Arthur Sherk, Department of Mathematics

1. Approval of the minutes of the November 4, 2015 Arts & Science Council meeting

Approved
2. Business Arising

Professor Paul Gries provided an update on the Course Syllabus /Online information. This was an agenda item brought forward from the November 4, 2015 meeting.

Professor Gries reported that a university-wide initiative is underway and is being led by Prof. Susan McCahan, Vice-Provost, Innovations in Undergraduate Education, to investigate online courses and how students access courses.

The project map that is being discussed is as follows: 1. Identify key courses info categories 2. Develop common definitions for info 3. Create/Modify existing data systems 4. Create a user friendly interface.

3. Report from the Dean

Dean Cameron reported that he attended the convocation ceremony in Hong Kong, which takes place every 2nd year. Approximately 150 students graduate from various Asian countries, allowing family and friends unable to come to Canada to enjoy the ceremony. It was also the occasion to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the presence of the UofT and its foundation office in Hong Kong.

4. Undergraduate Enrolment 2015

Ms. Nicola Woods, Associate Faculty Registrar presented on the 1st year enrolment by stream, the admissions process and students populations. The percentage of students in the 1st year fulltime is 6163, with 25% being international students. The 6163 students are dispersed in the following manner: 27% fall into the math/physical sciences category; 20% are in the social sciences; 18% in the life sciences; 18% in Rotman Commerce. 84 countries are represented in the student body. The largest percentage of students are Ontario domestic with 58%; Ontario International account for 8%; 14% of students are out of province.

5. Report from the Provostial Advisor on Undergraduate Humanities Education

Professor Donald Ainslie presented on undergraduate humanities education. Asked to be advisor for the Humanities by Prof. Cheryl Regehr, Prof. Ainslie is working on one of the President’s priorities: re-imagining of the undergraduate education. The humanities has seen a decrease in interest in high school students with the perception that a degree in the humanities will not lead to a career.

Prof. Ainslie presented three interrelated themes:
1. Communication
2. Recruitment
3. English Language Learners in the Humanities due to the increase of the international student body

1. The University is not doing a good job in telling the story of the Humanities research strength and how a degree in the humanities can prepare a student for the job market. The University needs to reach parents, high school teachers and guidance counsellors to help show students that the Humanities are worth investing in.
2. When recruiting, the University needs to signal to High School students and their parents what the University’s Humanities values are. We can provide targeted entrance scholarships for the top humanities students.
3. An increase in enrollment has seen an increase in courses in the sciences, but not in the humanities. Humanities courses are seen as difficult for international students and they stay away. The University needs to do a better job making these courses accessible to these students.

6. Graduate Enrolment 2015

Professor Joshua Barker, Vice Dean, Graduate Education and Program Reviews presented on graduate enrolment, funding and student morale. Graduate enrolment has started to see a decline as applications to graduate schools are facing a decline in many fields. Universities domestically and internationally are competing over a small pool of applicants. Prof. Barker stated that we need to not only look at the numbers but at the quality of the students we enroll.

Prof. Barker also discussed the graduate data workbook created for each unit by two members of the Dean’s Office: Mr. George Taylor and Ms. Debbie Buehler. The workbook helps units to better understand their graduate funding position.

7. Other Business and Adjournment of Meeting

No further business. Meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.