



CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE

## MINUTES

UNIVERSITY / POST-SECONDARY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 12:00 p.m.

Via Video/Teleconference

## MINUTES

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Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 12:00 p.m.

The following Committee members were in attendance:

Chair: Councilor J. Morse,  
Mayor R. Alty,  
D. Connelly,  
F. Schmiegelow,  
J. Farmer,  
J.G. Frechette,  
J. Pitt,  
K. Wrightson,  
L. Giovanetto,  
P. Turner,  
R. Warburton,  
S. Erasmus, and  
Y. Adam.

The following members of Administration were in attendance:

K. Penney,  
J. Mutford, and  
A. Colasuonno.

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### **Call to Order**

1. The Chair called the meeting to order at 12:04 p.m.

### **Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest**

2. There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

### **Approval of the Agenda**

3. Committee approved the Agenda as presented.



### **Discussion and feedback re: Aurora College and Polytechnic University Governance**

4. Administration presented a summary of the Governance and Areas of Specialization Discussion papers from the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT).

Administration encouraged the Committee members to send individual submission to the GNWT to strengthen the Committee's resolve.

Committee noted that the Bicameral Governance model is unclear as to how the Board of Governors and the Senate would coordinate with one another. Details on what management and control is as it relates to the Board of Governors were lacking from the documentation. Concerns were raised that the Senate model could result in too many levels of governance for the size of the institution.

Committee noted the importance of giving the Board the flexibility to appoint ex-officio members. The intent is to ensure that partner institutions, such as the City of Yellowknife or other groups who have an interest in providing input to the Board, are able to do so.

Committee noted the similarities between the currently proposed governance structure and Yukon University's governance structure consisting of both Board of Governors and a Senate. It was noted that the indigenous representation component for the Yukon University is open to non-residents in recognition that there may be expertise outside of the Yukon Territory. The current proposed representative governance reads that indigenous representation would be exclusive to Northwest Territories (NWT) residents.

Committee recommended ensuring that Board members are comprised of individuals that represent different influences and principles. Members noted that employment with the GNWT should constitute an individual ineligible to serve as a member of the Board due to conflict of interest.

Committee discussed that indigenous representation should be expanded to include individuals outside of the NWT and made the following suggestions:

- a) Provide details of the term appointment for the indigenous representation including instances that could result to the removal of a member and create safeguards against it;
- b) Create more indigenous representation;
- c) Create a specific Elder representation on the Board; and
- d) Provide details for regional representation.

### **Discussion and feedback re: NWT Polytechnic University Initial Areas of Teaching and Research Specialization**

5. Committee noted that the Polytechnic University should offer social sciences such as politics, sociology and social work to attract more students. Such programming would establish a solid reputation for the University. As Yellowknife has a large population of public servants and understanding politics is essential.

Attraction of international students to add a revenue dimension to the University is imperative. International students make up a large component of the Canadian student body and bring diversity and skills to the university. Committee also noted that the nursing program at Aurora College was



created as a retention strategy to develop local nurses and that this sentiment is transferable to other programs.

Committee noted that there was a lot of focus on Trade Skills and minimal focus on Technology.

Committee noted that a Polytechnic University should focus on fewer areas of teaching as it would not be sustainable to have eight or nine specialties as reflected on the current documentation.

The Chair noted that the City of Yellowknife's Feasibility study showed that it was imperative to attract international students and students from the south to maintain a student body that would allow an institution to be certified as a university. The academic programming must be chosen based on what would attract students rather than based on the local employment vacancies. The Chair also noted that the university was intended to operate at arms-length from the GNWT. However, since the governing structure, areas of teaching and research specialization is presented by the GNWT this is in direct opposition of the intent. Clarification that the University is a separate entity from the Aurora College is necessary.

Committee noted that GNWT is driving the academic programming with what they have viewed as the labour market needs for the next 15 years rather than building on the strengths of the North and attracting students.

Members emphasized that there is a need to establish a post-secondary system. One that would create pathways for students wanting to access courses from different institutions such as Dechinta and Collège Nordique.

The Chair noted that the City of Yellowknife's Feasibility study recommended a federated model for the post-secondary institutions and this should be recommended to the GNWT.

### **Adjournment**

6. The meeting was adjourned at 1:09 p.m.

Prepared: September 9, 2020/AC