



MEMORANDUM

To: Barbara H. Eccles, Secretary of Senate
From: Dr. Douglas Ivison – COU Academic Colleague
Senate Meeting Date: 20 April 2020
Subject: COU Academic Colleague Report

The Academic Colleagues were scheduled to meet at York University on April 1 & 2, and join with the Executive Heads in the twice-year meeting of the full Council of Ontario Universities on April 2. Unfortunately, however, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the meetings were cancelled. At those meetings, the Colleagues had planned to discuss the role of Academic Colleagues within COU and their home institutions and to engage with Executive Heads on the topic of student mental health. Hopefully, the Colleagues will return to those topics at future meetings.

At the moment, however, the focus of the COU and Academic Colleagues has shifted to responding to the dramatic changes resulting from the measures imposed to limit the spread of COVID-19. Like most workplaces, COU has shifted to a work-from-home model, and COU continues to be fully operational. As a member of the COU Budget and Audit Committee, I received an update on the implications for the COU and its operations, including the Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC), and can report that there has been relatively little impact on COU finances to date, and thus no impact on its ability to continue to fulfil its mandate.

The Academic Colleagues have been having discussions via email about university responses to the pandemic, in particular on the degree to which institutional governance and decision-making has been affected by the pandemic and on how universities will respond to the pandemic in terms of their operations in 2020-21. There will be a Zoom meeting of the Colleagues on Thursday, April 23.

Academic Colleagues were also recently informed that in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities has deferred the deadline for signing SMA3 agreements until the province "has moved past the current COVID-19 outbreak." The memo from the MCU reiterated that it "fully committed to the SMA3 process."

Other matters of ongoing discussion for Academic Colleagues include the role of Colleagues in their institution's committees and Senate, and the implications of 'cluster hiring' of Indigenous faculty members as a means of Indigenizing institutions.

Finally, the search process for the replacement for retiring COU CEO and President David Lindsay is underway, and one Academic Colleague is serving on the Search Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Douglas Ivison
COU Academic Colleague