

Executive Committee – Report to Senate

Addendum to its Report to Senate 25 February 2021

FOR INFORMATION

2. Monitoring the Pandemic Disruption

Fall 2021: Discussion with Senate on Program Delivery Planning

As noted in Executive's first report to Senate this month, Principles to guide course planning during the continuation of the pandemic were established for the summer and fall terms of 2020 and summer 2021. The course of the pandemic remains uncertain and it is anticipated that the University will not be able to resume full in-person/on-campus operations in fall 2021. However, with the roll out of vaccines, there is reason for some optimism that with careful planning a gradual and partial return to our campuses will be possible starting in September. A move to that direction requires revisions to the existing set of principles that have guided course planning during the disruption thus far.

All planning must be guided first and foremost by the University's continued commitment to protect the health and safety of students, staff, faculty, instructors and any visitors to our campuses. Contemplating and preparing for a gradual return to campus must also weigh the fatigue and strain that community members are experiencing after the past year, as well as growing concerns about mental health, the ability of students to progress towards degree completion, and the need to enhance student experience and sense of connection to peers and to the University. It is recognized that there are some who will need to continue in an online/remote manner this fall given travel restrictions and/or health concerns. Equally recognized is the desire of faculty members, instructors, staff and students to return to in-person academic and co-/non-curricular activities. The University's approach to risk mitigation to date has been effective in keeping those on campus safe, and this experience will be invaluable in informing planning for a gradual return to campus.

At the Senate meeting this week, the Provost will speak to the planning assumptions and implications and present the key elements being imagined for the new set of *Principles to Guide Course Planning for the Fall 2021 term*. Necessarily, the planning assumptions are tied to the public health context, and the implications they carry for the University's return to campuses. This is a complex terrain and there are critical implementation details that will necessarily need to follow once the *Principles* are finalized. A separate implementation guide will be prepared in consultation with Faculties, units and decanal offices.

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The summary presentation by Senator Philipps at the meeting will set the stage for a constructive dialogue with Senators about fall term course delivery and planning for the resumption of in-person academic activities as circumstances allow. Input and advice will aid decision-making and preparations to ensure that the needs of our diverse constituencies are being met.

Alison Macpherson Chair

Mario Roy, Vice-Chair