

Academic Council

Terms of Reference

UPDATED AS OF JANUARY 13, 2015

I ACADEMIC COUNCIL MANDATE

A robust method of collaborative leadership and participatory decision-making, Academic Council brings together students, faculty and administrators to exchange information and viewpoints on academic affairs. Academic Council fosters a mutually beneficial relationship between members of the NorQuest College community working together to achieve common goals by sharing responsibility, authority, and accountability for achieving results (Bandali, 2011).

The *Alberta Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA)*, s 46 (1) states: “for each public college and technical institute there is to be an academic council.” NorQuest College’s Academic Council operates in an open and transparent manner, which assures compliance with the *PSLA* and meets the Campus Alberta Quality Council recommendation for staff participation in academic decision-making (Council, 2011, p. 41).

II MEMBERSHIP

Academic Council’s membership composition complies with the *Alberta Post-Secondary Learning Act*, ss 46(1,2). Membership includes up to thirty members:

- The President/CEO shall act as Chair unless s/he delegates the Chair role, at which point a Chairperson shall be elected from the membership.
- Not more than four Senior Officials (*defined as members of the Executive and senior leadership team*) appointed by the President/CEO
- Not more than ten (and in no case less than 1/3 of the total number of members of Academic Council) Faculty Association Members elected by the Faculty Association.
- Not more than ten Students, elected by the Students’ Association.
- Not more than five additional members, appointed by the President/CEO

III THE DUTIES AND POWERS OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Duties

Academic Council reviews documents, listens to presentations, and engages in productive discussion on academic matters with members of the College community (e.g. committees, departments, divisions, faculty, students, administrators, and alumni).

Council takes appropriate action within the scope of its authority; appropriate action typically includes:

1. Proposing amendments, corrections, or additions.
2. Providing input around areas of concern or challenge.
3. Making recommendations.
4. Approving proposed major changes to current credit programs of study or courses.
5. Submitting reports.

Powers

Academic Council holds the power to issue approvals to major changes to current credit programs of study or courses, make recommendations, and submit reports to NorQuest College's President/CEO.

Recommendations

Academic Council makes recommendations and/or submits reports to the President/CEO, on the following:

1. **Academic policy and planning, including:**
 - a. Proposed credit programs of study to be offered by the College.
 - b. Suspension or cancellation of a credit program.
 - c. The Academic Plan.
 - d. Policy pertaining to students.
 - e. Policy related to the evaluation and continuous improvement of credit instructional delivery, courses and programs.
 - f. Standards and policy pertaining to academic awards.
2. **Professional policy.**
 - a. Matters of professional interest to faculty.
 - b. Policy pertaining to faculty.
3. Any matter that the President/CEO refers to Academic Council.
4. Any other matter the Council considers advisable.

Approval

Academic Council approves proposed **major changes** to current credit programs of study or courses and submits reports to the President/CEO and the Office of the Registrar. Credit program and course changes must align with the College's Strategic Plan which has been outlined in the Comprehensive Institutional Plan (CIP) and is complemented by the Five Areas of Focus.

Major (Credit) Course Change/Addition:

1. Adding or deleting course(s) within a program.
2. Change in the instructional hours required for a course.
3. Change in the credit weight of a course.
4. Course content change (objectives or learning outcomes) greater than 20% (note: substantive changes to course learning outcomes may require the creation of a new course)

Major (Credit) Program Change:

1. Program name change.
2. Change in program admission requirements.
3. Change in program graduation (credential) requirements.
4. Change in program progression requirements.
5. Brokered-out programs (NorQuest programs brokered to other institutions).

Governance

Recommendations, approvals, and/or reports must be submitted in writing to the President/CEO and, as appropriate, to the Board (through the President) for consideration at its next meeting.

Normally, items coming to Academic Council for recommendations do so as the final step before going on to their (final) approving body.

IV THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL MEMBERS

Academic Council members play a meaningful role in the governance of NorQuest College. Council consults with the College community, as appropriate, before making recommendations or approvals and members understand that it is their obligation to make decisions based on the best interests of the College.

In carrying out its duties, Academic Council is committed to:

Transparency and Timeliness:

Academic Council ensures that information about its operations is readily accessible to the College community via College web site(s).

Fairness and Confidentiality:

During *in camera* sessions, Council members have the opportunity to raise matters of proper concern to the College community without fear of disadvantage and in the knowledge that confidentiality will be appropriately respected.

V NORQUEST COLLEGE VALUES

Academic Council is further guided by NorQuest College's Values.

We value...	We...
people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • treat people with integrity and respect • empower and encourage risk taking • celebrate commitment, contribution and accomplishments • promote health and wellness
learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • foster creativity, innovation and critical thought • encourage growth, development and life-long learning • build on the diversity of our learners, employees and partners
our role in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • display leadership and responsibility for our outcomes • partner to achieve community goals
the quality of the processes we use in reaching our goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate a learner-centred approach • set clear expectations, measure results and demonstrate accountability • promote teamwork, cooperation and sharing throughout the College • follow fair process in accomplishing our objectives

VI PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A. ABSENTEES AND ALTERNATES

1. Council members will advise the Chair of an expected absence in advance of the meeting.
2. If a Council member is absent for three consecutive meetings, without informing the Chair or Secretary, that position shall be considered vacant.
3. Council members may arrange for an alternate, from the association they represent, to attend Council meetings when they are unable to do so. Alternates are to be selected in advance for an entire academic year and carry the authority, including voting, of the regular academic council member. Council members will advise the Chair of their alternate on or before the first of November.

B. VOTING

1. Academic Council meetings will be conducted with Robert's Rules of Order used as a guideline.
2. Only those members present may vote.
3. Quorum is 50% of membership including one from each of the following constituencies: student, faculty, and appointed.
4. Motions require a mover and a seconder, both of whom are voting members of the Council.
5. Motions are carried by a majority vote.
6. Voting is a show of hands unless, upon motion, a secret ballot is requested.

C. ELECTIONS

1. If the President/CEO has chosen to delegate the role of Chair, Council members shall elect a Chairperson from its membership, at the first regular meeting of Academic Council.
2. The term of Chairperson shall be for two years. The Chairperson shall hold their position for no more than two consecutive terms (four consecutive years). Council shall fill Chair vacancies, as required.
3. When more than one nomination is made and accepted, the election of officer shall be by secret ballot and shall be presided over by the Chairperson of the previous year's Council or by the President/CEO.
4. If, for any reason, an election cannot be held as prescribed, the officer of the previous year remain in office until an election is held.

D. MEETINGS AND SCHEDULING

1. Written notice of meetings, including an agenda, will be sent to council members seven days in advance.

2. Proposed agenda items will be submitted in writing to the Chair at least fourteen days prior to the regular Council meeting.
3. Meetings of Academic Council are open to the public.
4. As part of normal meeting procedure, Academic Council will use *in camera* sessions to discuss confidential matters. Subjects identified for *in camera* discussion are compliant with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Regulation, s 18(1)*:
 - a. the security of the property of the local public body,
 - b. personal information of an individual, including an employee of a public body,
 - c. a proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of property by or for a public body,
 - d. labour relations or employee negotiations,
 - e. a law enforcement matter, litigation or potential litigation, including matters before administrative tribunals affecting the local public body, or
 - f. the consideration of a request for access for information under the Act if the governing body or committee of the governing body is itself designated as the head of the local public body for the purposes of the Act

In Camera sessions may be used in the regular course of business or may be called on an impromptu basis should confidential items need to be discussed solely among Council members. Academic Council members are responsible to keep these matters confidential.

5. September through June, meetings will be held on a monthly basis with a total of ten meetings per academic year. At a minimum, Council will meet six times per academic year.
6. At the discretion of the Chair, extraordinary meetings may be called as needed.

E. TERM APPOINTMENTS

1. The term of office for faculty and student members of Council is two years or as determined by the President/CEO.
2. The President/CEO determines the term of office for appointed members of Council.
3. The President/CEO decides questions arising over Council membership or the election of Council members and that decision is final.

F. VACANCIES

1. Should a vacancy of a faculty or student member occur before the expiry of a term of office, the appropriate association may appoint or elect a member to hold office for the remainder of the term.
2. The President/CEO shall determine whether or not to appoint a new member to an appointed member vacancy.

VII SUBCOMMITTEES OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Academic Council may create both ad-hoc and standing committees to assist with the business of Council. Ad-hoc committees will be assigned a specific mandate and timelines, ceasing to exist once the mandate is discharged. Committees will observe such procedures as Council may determine.

A. SUMMER SUBCOMMITTEE

On May 20, 2014, the following was approved –

That:

- A “Summer Subcommittee” consisting of a minimum of 2 faculty members, 2 students and 1 of the leadership group (Vice-President, Registrar, Manager of Quality) be created to continue work over the summer period (June – September).
- The Academic Council delegate to the “Summer Subcommittee” the same authority as identified in the Terms of Reference.
- All members be invited to attend the meetings
- An evaluation of the effectiveness of the process and an update of all actions taken be provided to the Academic Council in the Fall.

VIII APPROVAL



January 14, 2015

Signature

Date

Dr. Jodi Abbott, President & CEO
NorQuest College

WORKS CITED

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