

## Kaffeeklatsch Discussion Notes: April 22, 2021

### “Changing Role of the Deans”

Participants: 76

Notes:

Why do we have 5 Deans when we used to have 2?

The answer has to do with when there were only two Deans, they spent a lot of their time doing administrative things and they were not able to do other things the Deans should be doing – collaborative efforts, strategic thinking, being outward looking.

Council of Deans – body for shared decision making, collaboration, move Faculties forward

Avoid Fiefdom’s

#### ***administrivia***

Question to Dean’s: How has it been since April 1<sup>st</sup>?

**Dean - Dr. Debbie Roberts: Dean of Engineering & Science** - *includes the three engineering programs, computer science, chemistry and biochemistry, mathematics and statistics and physics.*

Focusing on hiring Admin Coordinator, starting to do contracts, getting used to what the workload is, tons of ideas once we get organized.

**Dean - Dr. Kriston Rennie: Dean of Faculties of indigenous Studies, Social Sciences & Humanities** - *includes the departments of Anthropology, History, English, First Nations Studies, Political Science, and Global and International Studies, as well as the programs of Northern Studies, Women’s and Gender Studies, and Interdisciplinary Studies.*

It’s been a few weeks (an previous months of onboarding for some), learning about a new university, middle of a big transition, learning together and making mistakes together – important to acknowledge.

Planning for the next two semesters, thinking about aspirations for the new Faculties. Challenges of the past arduous year. A lot of change happening all at once.

**Dean - Dr. Ron Camp: Dean of Business & Economics**

Brand new to the University. Dealing with administrivia, learning about community. Operational duties – making sure students can graduate, admissions, etc. Also bigger strategic meetings. How do we do what we've been mandated to do for years – how do we provide value to the community and make use of our resources/connections/Faculty to make this special for everyone. Indigenous micro-credential program – portable & scalable to colleges and communities surrounding us. Tourism management. Asking community leaders what do they really need. All dedicated to make this a success. Community is encouraged and excited about this collaboration. There has been collaboration in the past but we can do this at a higher strategic level which brings budgetary support & opportunities for bigger collaborations. Organizational change authors: Dr John Kotter & Dr Amy Edmondson

**Commented [GU1]:** wondering what organization would be issuing this micro-credential. Would this be a new organization body composed of post-secondary institutions in the North, or an indigenous organization in collaboration with institutions?

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**(Interim Dean) - Dr. Peter Jackson: Faculty of Environment -**

**Dean - Dr. Shannon Wagner: Faculty of Human & Health Sciences -**

Question: Is there a plan to formalize psychological health and safety at UNBC and include it in policy and procedures? To make it more of a priority, and explicit.

A: There are a number of policies that Sarah Elliott would be happy to share.

I echo what my fellow Dean's said. It is very much a great thing to see us get to this point. In the process of this transition we also experienced a global pandemic and tumultuousness. Things are coming to a place where we will be able to get back to status quo and working with co-Deans to work on initiatives and opportunities. Noticed already as a smaller unit – conversations between Dean's & Chairs are working from a common approach – able to now discuss specific things in that small group – increase collaboration.

The council of Dean's is a new idea at UNBC – will hopefully bring some consistency to processes across Faculties.

Q: Who is chairing Dean's council? rotating Chair alphabetically, self organizing, not chaired by the Provost, different model

Support: Shauna Terai so far, but also

'Provost's Advisory Council' = Dean's & Director's council

Q: How is this different from the 5 faculties that UNBC used to have? Why was it changed to two?

Mark Dale: I do not know because I was not here when that switch was made.

Shannon Wagner: I believe that the reason to move from programs to 2 Faculties - to increase inter-disciplinarity – intention was good, but it made the faculties quite large and administratively heavy.

In the process of a short list search for Dean of Faculty of Environment.

Kriston: On behalf of the hiring committee for the University Librarian – three excellent candidates in the mix.

Q: What are the Dean's plans to increase diversity? In terms of faculty in your portfolios and support staff as well as students. This lack of diversity impacts the experience of staff, faculty and students. How do you plan to address that?

Deborah: Engineering is very aware of lack of diversity. The two pools include female candidates. Going to focus on recruiting candidates from the Indigenous population.

Shannon: This is a high priority for our institution and society. Take advantage of these learning opportunities. Open to any suggestion on how we can do this better. Need to think about every single thing that we do in terms of equity and diversity. Keep it front & center & question all of our assumptions, processes. Not just talk but action.

Kriston: Personal observation – the conversations are taking place but we are at a stage where participants are of a like mind - we need more participation in those conversations.

Ron: In regards to change management and cultural change- people downplay the value of the talk. Mindset change that has to happen. Need to embed this in our leadership, strategic plans for the university. Talk is the stories we tell – create an ongoing story that is inclusive and elevates people.

Kriston: Diversity of thought, experience, identity, and perspective are also extremely important in our conversation.

Comment: In addition to look for and provide opportunities, we also need to make sure that we are setting them up for success - so that we are taking a holistic perspective.

Comment: If we are serious about increasing indigenous participation in Engineering programs, we may need to consider a bridging program (not unlike the Northern Pathways to Medicine Bursary and Program) that meets them where they are at and supports them in positioning themselves to succeed in engineering programs. Students in many high schools in northern BC cannot access the full suite of courses in mathematics and physical science except through distance delivery.

Deborah: We have a lot of plans to get into communities and determine what the access gaps are and ways to remove those gaps.

Shannon MacKay: As the Indigenous Student Recruiter, I would like to be involved in these conversations please.

Comment: Something the Wellness Centre has noticed over the last couple years is a lack of clear process or understanding on how faculty can support students of concern/students who need additional support (e.g., extension requests, absenteeism, troubling behaviours, etc.). While there are procedures in the academic calendar, have the Deans started to think about consistent process/message across the board so faculty can better support student who may have mental health struggles? An example would be requesting a student to get a letter from a UNBC counsellor or doctor in order to grant an extension for an assignment in their course yet the student has never been into the centre. This can be challenging for students who do not want to access these services but are required to in order to get a letter that is not entirely necessary.