

## Higher Education Quality Council

### BOARD MEETING MINUTES

December 6, 2013

12:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.

#### Present

##### Council Members:

Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Chair  
Richard Dicerni  
Cindy Hazell  
Michael Hill  
Mark Stabile  
Chris Monahan

##### President and Secretary to the Board:

Harvey P. Weingarten

##### Staff supporting the Council:

Diana Macri, Chief Administrative Officer  
Susan Bloch-Nevitte, Executive Director, Communications  
Fiona Deller, Executive Director, Policy & Partnerships  
Richard Wiggers, Executive Director, Research & Programs  
Martin Hicks, Executive Director, Data & Statistics  
Ellen Permato, Executive Assistant and Recording Secretary

#### 1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. and established that a quorum of Council members was present.

She announced that Richard Dicerni and Cindy Hazell have been reappointed to the Board for three years.

## **2. Approval of Agenda**

### **Motion:**

1. That the Board approve the meeting agenda.

Moved by Richard Dicerni/seconded by Michael Hill  
Passed unanimously.  
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## **3. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

### **Motion:**

1. That the Board approve the Minutes of the Board Meeting of September 10, 2013

Moved by Michael Hill/seconded by Cindy Hazell  
Passed unanimously.  
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## **4.1 Chair's Update**

The Chair commended the staff for their input on the meeting's agenda. H. Weingarten has been updating her on the Council's work. She communicates regularly with the Deputy Minister.

## **4.2 President's Update**

H. Weingarten reported the release of several significant research projects and summary (@ Issue) papers. He highlighted those that are relevant to current policy discussions and decisions and noted the attention they have received:

- Two papers providing data on the university and college sectors relevant to the design of a more differentiated Ontario postsecondary system
- A pan-Canadian summary of the impact of government investments to expand graduate studies

- An analysis of how online learning affects productivity, cost and quality of postsecondary education
- An analysis of literacy levels in Ontario colleges and universities

In the immediate future, he expects the following anticipated publications to garner the most attention:

- Publication of the results of a two-year engagement with Ontario college and university faculty identifying critical learning outcomes in life and health sciences, physical sciences and social sciences
- An analysis of the workloads of Ontario university faculty and implications for productivity and differentiation

Based on participant evaluations, HEQCO's annual conference in November, *Rethinking Higher Ed: Beyond {the buzzwords}*, was highly successful. The keynote speakers were especially well received and the conference served to expose attendees to a range of speakers and ideas they had not encountered before. It is expected that the 2014 conference will focus on issues and innovations in apprenticeship, vocational and professional training and education.

During November and December, HEQCO was engaged in extensive consultations with stakeholders (institutions, government, students and other groups) to help inform and shape the specific research projects and activities of the 2014 Research/Work Plan. A summary of key messages and suggestions from these consultations will be provided to the Board and this thinking will be reflected in the Research/Work Plan.

HEQCO's annual data symposium has been confirmed for March 17 & 18, 2014, in Ottawa. This meeting brings together higher education data mavens from across Canada to collaborate on doable data collection projects that in the opinion of those participating do the most to advance research, understanding and planning for postsecondary education in Canada. This is one example of the convening role HEQCO plays in higher education circles in Canada.

The government has released a draft paper: *Differentiation Policy Framework*. This document covers funding strategies, system evaluation, accountability and stimulus for

reform. A topic long pursued by HEQCO, the Council has contributed to the discussion by publishing three reports on differentiation beginning in 2010.

### **Impact of HEQCO Research**

F. Deller and S. Bloch-Nevidte traced the impact of HEQCO's activities from 2011 to 2013.

- Presentations: Working on a diverse range of research projects with multiple stakeholders. There were 43 published research reports from January 1, 2013 to November 2013.
- Publish blogs on important issues
- Dissemination of research: 80 presentations; 9 events
- Increase in attendance at HEQCO events and increased partnerships
- Increase in internship applications
- Increase in stakeholder mailing list by 1,000% in three years
- Gradual but sustained growth in web usage over the last two years
- Website hits outside of Canada have increased significantly
- Top reports for 2013 according to website viewers:
  1. *Quality: Shifting the Focus. A Report from the Expert Panel to Assess the Strategic Mandate Agreement Submissions*
  2. *Performance Indicators: A Report on Where We are and Where We Are Going*
  3. *The Peer Helper Program at the University of Guelph: Analysis of Skills Objectives*
  4. *The Diversity of Ontario's Universities: A Data Set to Inform the Differentiation Discussion*
  5. *College-to-University Transfer Arrangements and Undergraduate Education: Ontario in a National and International Context*
- Top 5 content pages of 2013 according to website viewers:
  1. Strategic Mandate Agreements webpage
  2. Rethinking higher ed: Beyond {the buzzwords}, November 2013 conference
  3. *Performance Indicators: A Report on Where We Are and Where We Are Going*

4. Learning outcomes webpage
5. Quick Stats webpage

HEQCO published three reports on differentiation: in October 2010, July 2013 and September 2013.

On the topic of learning outcomes, HEQCO has accomplished the following:

- May 2011: Hosted a conference titled *Measuring the Value of a Postsecondary Education*
- November 2011: Launched the Tuning project
- January 2012: The Collegiate Learning Assessment Feasibility Study began. MTCU asked HEQCO to manage the AHELO Feasibility Study.
- April 2012: Co-sponsored *Symposium on Learning Outcomes Assessment: A Practical Guide*
- March 2013: Published *Measuring the Value of a Postsecondary Education*. Launched the Learning Outcomes Assessment Consortium.
- April 2013: Published *Quality: Shifting the Focus. A Report from the SMA Expert Panel*. Co-hosted follow-up Symposium on Learning Outcomes Assessment.
- May 2013: MCTU/HEQCO/OISE Policy Research Symposium featuring learning outcomes
- September 2013: Talk on the Collegiate Learning Assessment by Dr. Roger Benjamin, President of the New York-based Council for Aid to Education (CAE)

In the Board discussion following on the impact presentation, it was noted that HEQCO will introduce a research impact statement as part of external research contracts as well as a survey of the HEQCO stakeholder community members to better ascertain how research is utilized. The Board discussed other metrics and initiatives to consider in assessing its impact, acknowledging HEQCO's critical role in shaping the conversation on key issues in Ontario higher education. Board members noted that they would like to receive information about HEQCO-sponsored events as far in advance as possible. It would also be helpful if some events dovetailed with Board meetings.

### **Update from the Ministry**

Chris Monahan presented the Deputy Minister's update. The highlights covered:

- PSE transformation
  - Differentiation
  - Online learning
  - Productivity and Innovation Fund
  - Major capacity expansion
  - Credit transfer
- HEQCO's role in PSE transformation

#### **5.1 Audit Committee Report**

Michael Hill reported that the Audit Committee held a meeting that morning. HEQCO is audited both externally and internally. An internal (government) audit will take place in January 2014. The auditors are interested in internal accounting processes, accountability, expense claims and internal issues that affect accounting.

The external auditors require that the Board approve the quarterly financial statements.

#### **5.2 First and Second Quarter Financial Statements**

Motion:

1. That the Board approve the first and second quarter financial statements.

Moved by Michael Hill/seconded by Cindy Hazell

Passed unanimously.

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#### **6.1 Strategic Plan and Gap Analysis**

The Board commented on goals and strategies of the Strategic Plan 2013-2016 and discussed with HEQCO staff members how project decisions are made. H. Weingarten responded that informal, internal discussions are held, during which the research directors come up with suggested projects and share them with the research team and Ministry contacts for further input analysis. There is no formal panel. Senior management

meets weekly and makes the decision to select which projects to undertake and presents these to the Board.

Also, as previously noted, HEQCO is consulting with and reaching out to colleges, universities, student groups and major stakeholders on postsecondary issues.

**Motion:**

That the Board approve the substance of the Strategic Plan.

Moved by Richard Dicerni/seconded by Cindy Hazell

Passed unanimously.

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**6.2 Multi-Year Business Plan 2014-2015 to 2016-2017**

Under the Memorandum of Understanding, the Council is required to submit four documents to the Minister/Ministry:

1. An updated risk assessment in October
2. The Multi-Year Business Plan in December, which reviews HEQCO's results and outlines future activities in HEQCO's three mandated areas of access, quality and accountability. The Plan feeds into the government budget estimates process and Results-based Planning (RbP).
3. The Research Plan must be approved by the Minister by the end of March. It is a description of HEQCO's ongoing and future research activities. It reflects the strategic directions in the Multi-Year Business Plan.
4. The Annual Report in July. It is a report of what HEQCO has accomplished in the past year. This is tabled in the Legislature.

**Motion:**

1. That the Board approve the Multi-Year Business Plan 2014-2015 to 2016-2017
2. The Board authorizes the Chair to submit the Plan as amended by the Board to the Minister.

Moved by Mark Stabile/seconded by Cindy Hazell

Passed unanimously.

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The Board discussed revising HEQCO's existing research plan format to include operational activities, goals and indicators of success – presented in a streamlined manner that reflects HEQCO's mandate and four research priorities (learning outcomes, labour market alignment, system design and access). The 2014 Research/Work Plan will be presented to the Board at its February meeting.

## **7.1 HEQCO Fellows Program**

### **Motion:**

1. That the Board approve the appointment of Phil Wood as a HEQCO Fellow from October 1, 2013 to June 20, 2014
2. That the Board approve the appointment of Peter MacKinnon as a HEQCO Fellow from January 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015
3. From here on, the appointment of HEQCO Fellows does not require Board approval.

Moved by Mark Stabile/seconded by Michael Hill

Passed unanimously.

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## **8. Executive Session (In-camera)**

## **9. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.