



Innis College

Innis College Council

334th Meeting

Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 10:30am

Events Room, Innis Residence

Minutes

Present: Shayla Anderson, Jason Brennan (assessor), Randy Boyagoda (guest), James Cahill, Aaron Chan, Anson Chan, Jannie Chien, Juliana Concini, Lydia Ghernaout, Elijah Gyansa, Eva-Lynn Jagoe (assessor), Kate Johnson (assessor), Charlie Keil, Anya Liu, Suzanne Macintyre (assessor), Megan McDonald (assessor), Michael Mejia (designate of Kelly Curran), Kyle Newcombe, Tony Pi, Dryden Rainbow, Noel Simpson, Raven Stoddart, Sophia Wang, Ben Weststrate (ICC secretary), Jamie Yi, Daina Zweig

Regrets: Yona Anderson, Donald Boere (assessor), Jocelin Chang, Corinn Columpar, Kelly Curran, Osarumen Ekhaton, Max Hazen, Vedant Iyer, Andy Lee, Cindy Lei, Yiming Ma, Aditi Mehta, Cynthia Messenger, Kathy Nolan-Garner, Maahi Patel, Jake Pereira, David Roberts, Joanne Uyede, Andrea Williams, Kieran Yan, Lina Yan, Carol Ye

1. Welcoming remarks

Chien, ICC speaker, chaired the meeting.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

A motion to approve [the minutes of the December 12, 2023, meeting](#) was moved (Ghernaout), seconded (Uyede), and carried.

3. Business arising from the minutes

None reported

4. Guest speaker: Professor Randy Boyagoda

Keil introduced **Randy Boyagoda**, a professor in the Department of English, vice-dean – undergraduate at A&S, well-known pundit and essayist, and—most recently—provostial advisor on civil discourse.

Boyagoda summarized the impetus for, and mandate of, his new provostial appointment. He remarked that our society has lost a willingness and capacity to “think out loud together” and, consequently, to recognize disagreement as something positive that can lead toward better understandings. Etiquette has been lost from civil discourse.

Operating on the premise that universities are essential environments for healthy disagreement, Boyagoda described his mission as seeking to identify how our university can promote a greater culture of civil discourse, beyond university-wide statements. Over his 18-month appointment, he will lead a working group to examine how disagreement plays out within and outside of the classroom.

Keil asked what is expected to happen after working group outcomes have been established and a collective agreement over civil discourse has been fostered—how will our reactions to future crises be different? Boyagoda clarified that this work isn’t a cure-all for all forms of disagreement; protests can and should continue to arise. His hope is that we will better position ourselves to react less quickly and strongly when disagreements do arise. He likened his mandate to creating a culture of forest safety, not putting out fires that are burning.

Rainbow inquired about what else is planned during the 18-month period. Boyagoda identified three categories: public engagement (e.g., media appearances); conversations with members and partners of the University (e.g., hospital CEOs) to help them think through responses to crises; and collective efforts to identify programming at all divisions that get students more involved in healthy civil discourse. Boyagoda emphasized that the desired outcomes are not glossy reports that are driven by optics, but a lived, cultural response.

Jagoe described the value of infusing this work into classroom instruction. Boyagoda concurred and pointed to his upcoming engagement at a teaching conference.

Brennan inquired about the intersection of this provostial mandate and new students. Boyagoda noted that first-year students will be a target population for the working group.

On behalf of ICC, Chien thanked Boyagoda for his time.

5. Principal’s report

A. Staffing updates

Keil reported the following staff and faculty changes at the College and CSI.

Teaching staff:

- There is one new sessional instructor at the CSI this term, **Erin Nunoda**, who previously taught in Fall 2022. Cahill added that Nunoda will begin a tenure-track lecturer role at the University of Glasgow in the fall.

Administrative staff:

- On February 5, **Michael Mejia** returned to the Office of Student Life. Michael was the College’s transition programs assistant last summer.

- **Sean Rogers** returned to his AV coordinator position on February 20, after having been seconded to Rotman on February 20. **Jordan Grace**, who has been covering Sean’s absence transitioned to an events coordinator role at the same time.
- On February 26, **Dylon Mclean** began as the now-permanent residence life coordinator, a role that he held as a contract position since November 2021.
- **Ben Weststrate** began in the new role of senior communications officer on February 21. The position will lead a small communications team, including two communications coordinators, whose hiring was just finalized: **Madeline Keizer**, a Cinema Studies and Writing & Rhetoric Program alumna, and former employee of the Innis College Library; and **Gheyana Purbodiningrat**, who comes to us from Rotman. Their start date is March 11.

B. Achievements

Keil congratulated the following faculty, alumni, and students.

- **Brett Story**, CSI assistant professor, was awarded the US Documentary Special Jury Award for the Art of Change at the Sundance Film Festival in January for her new documentary, *Union*, which she co-directed.
- The exceptional volunteerism of five Innis alumni and friends was recognized at the Arbor Awards ceremony on January 16, 2024: alumni **Webnesh Haile**, **John Ota**, **Noel Simpson**, and **Jim Sugiyama**; and former LLL President **Mike Orr**.
- Nine graduating Innis students have been recognized with U of T Student Leadership Awards: **Yona Anderson**, **Kimlin Chin**, **Catherine Dumé**, **Matthew Edghill**, **Lydia Ghernaout**, **Neruka Joseph**, **Raven Stoddart**, **Jiaqi Sun**, and **Lina Yan**.
- Congratulations to the recently elected 2024/25 ICSS executive: President **Jamie Yi**, Vice-President Executive **Juliana Concini**, Vice-President Internal **Elsie Zhu**, and Vice-President Finance **Stephanie Saab**.

C. Renewal and Expansion update

- On-campus site visits were conducted with Innis students to select furniture for student spaces on February 8 and 9 and March 1.
- Winter-term construction site activity has primarily involved ground stabilization and foundation work for the crane, which will be erected in March and is the precondition for most construction efforts.

D. Innis Alumni & Friends

- The eighth edition of the College’s annual alumni magazine was published in January. It is available [online](#) and in print.
- There are ~125 names and faces on the pages, including ICC members **Shayla Anderson**, **James Cahill**, **Jannie Chien**, **Juliana Concini**, **Megan McDonald**, **Kyle Newcombe**, **Kathy Nolan-Garner**, **David Roberts**, **Raven Stoddart**, and **Joanne Uyede**.

6. Board reports

A. College Affairs

Concini, recently elected board moderator, reported the following highlights of [the December 13, 2023, meeting](#).

- Budgets were completed and presented to the University CFO with no issues raised.
- Several IT-related upgrades were completed across the College and residence (e.g., security cameras).
- Town Hall-hosted events have returned to pre-pandemic levels.
- Summer 2023 residence demand also returned to pre-pandemic levels. The residence is currently running at 100% capacity.
- Furnishing upgrades in the residence are underway.

B. Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee

Weststrate reported the following highlights of [the January 19, 2024, meeting](#).

- Student **Teni Awoleye** was elected moderator.
- The committee previewed college-led plans to celebrate Black History Month.
- Extensive discussion around the future of the Black Student Experience Working Group occurred, resulting in a renewed commitment to continue the work with a more sustainable group configuration/focus.
 - Weststrate added that Keil and Brennan subsequently met with four members on February 6. One outcome of the meeting is that the Black Student Experience Working Group has chosen to rename itself the “Black Student Network.”
- The committee discussed accessibility and wayfinding priorities at the College, as part of the Student Services Committee’s (SSC) largely unspent \$10,000 commitment.

7. Other business

A. SSC proposal deadline

Weststrate reminded council members of the March 1, 2024, deadline to submit proposals for funding from the Student Services Committee via [this online form](#).

8. Executive Committee

No report

9. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was moved (Johnson) and carried. The meeting adjourned at 11:20am.