

- Graduate Studies should look at continuing virtual thesis defenses.
- Need spaces on-campus for students to take online course alongside in-person.

Work and Learning Environment

- How we develop community in classrooms and beyond as we move back to on-campus.
- Need to be mindful of post-pandemic anxiety for students, faculty and staff and be prepared to accommodate. Need to consider wellness through an EDI lens as well.
- Need to assess the social and emotional damage first, before jumping into anything big. Moving forward to become a “compassionate university”.
- The University needs to be clear and consistent in its communications regarding the return to on-campus.
- Use of technology for meetings has worked quite well and consideration should be given to continuing to use it for some meetings.
- The UM should rethink its current bricks and mortar model – what will the future workforce look like? Staff may advocate for a more flexible work environment (with allowances to work from home) and it would be best to have a university-wide policy in place, as opposed to multiple unit-level policies.
- Anti-racism policies, procedures, supports to protect students, faculty, and staff who are experiencing increased harassment due to the anonymity allowed online.

Faculty and Research

- Regarding the restarting of research and the restarting of careers – working on tenure and promotion policies to address people whose career progressions have been impacted.
- Supports needed to support research-based graduate students and researchers whose research has fallen behind.

What opportunities and challenges do you see for the University of Manitoba specifically, and universities generally over the next few years?

Opportunities

General

- The UM should take the opportunity to step back and reflect over the experiences and lessons learned over the past year.
- The UM should look at opportunities for ‘*exnovation*’ (the opposite of innovation) to review and revise policies and procedures that may no longer make sense or may no longer be needed based on the experiences of the last year.
- The UM will need to come up with a very strong recovery plan, not only assessing damage, but what we can do to prepare for any future reoccurrences? Re-imagine how we look at risk, risk-registry, and business continuity moving forward.
- Look at the creative solutions that units have developed, particular to the disciplines, but would not like the UM to kick back into “status quo” on what we used to do but discuss what we have learned during this forced move to virtual. Think about what works well remotely – we’ve had some good successes; can we keep aspects of that?
- Can be more flexible overall and be open to doing things differently.

- Will have to deliver value or define what the value is of ourselves as an institution.

Teaching and Learning

- We need to make a candid assessment of the successes and the failures of the online delivery model – there is a convenience factor for students but there are some clear failures as well that we need to be conscious of going forward – recording of classes is not ideal because it is left to the student to do the things that they should be doing but no way to force them to do – how do you adjudicate exams properly and ensure the integrity in the process – need to take a look at what online does well, and what the failures are, and be aware of those before decisions are made.
- Remote operations have provided an opportunity to think about what is essential and not essential in our teaching and the services we provide. It has allowed us to raise key questions: what aspects of the curriculum can be remote or even benefit from being remote? How might this serve international students, Indigenous students, and rural students? What are the challenges associated with the provision of remote learning options? Remote operations have also provided an opportunity to think about experiential learning on campus and what facilities (labs, studios, etc.) are essential.
- Increased opportunities for interaction with students in lecture courses was identified as a benefit of virtual/remote learning technologies that had been a positive experience. Instructors also experienced greater flexibility for sharing/delivering different content; for example, the ease of having guest lecturers join classes.
- There may be opportunities to develop distance education offerings afresh with a wider perspective on how distance education courses might be offered. This might create more balance.
- There is a both an opportunity and a challenge to distinguish UM from other institutions offering online/remote programming. What is it that we do that is unique? How do we best define ourselves in this new space? It is critical that we highlight the value-added of the in-person activities in our programs.
- The UM should use this as an opportunity to self-reflect on best practices in teaching and learning, including, (i) how best to teach select courses remotely in the long-term, (ii) identification of learning outcomes and how they can (or cannot) be addressed through continuing with remote learning; and (iii) rethinking assessment and examination methods, including weighting of final exams.
- Units should be encouraged to brainstorm/discuss (across faculties/campuses, not just within the same faculty/dept/unit) what has worked well within this online platform (i.e., in terms of engaging students). Also, what hasn't worked so well?
- In moving forward from the changes that students had to make over this past year, students will begin to take a more unusual path with their course loads/schedules – they have done so more recently and will continue to do so. Important to ensure that academic paths are navigating towards priorities of students.
- Need to be willing and open to be flexible in planning and scheduling classes. Going back to the way we were will be challenging and it will have to be done differently.

Work Environment

- We have an opportunity to engage with faculty and staff regarding what optimal work environments look like. There are ways to work with individuals to determine what their optimal work environment is, whether at home or on campus.

- There is opportunity for cross-training to deepen understanding and knowledge across units - need to find ways to be more resilient – where there may have been just one person with specific knowledge we need to ensure that this can be expanded so that we can pivot more easily to respond to future instances.
- We can critically reflect on things we would not have ordinarily done. Some work effectively from home but would like to engage in person for some work. We can move forward to working with community in a different way.
- Continued offering of services through digital means.
- There have been benefits from working remotely. The lack of a commute has saved time and seems to have led to increased attendance at many meetings. However, there have been some major challenges with teaching.

Wellness and Inclusion

- Students have always had mental health issues, but Covid has made it acceptable to acknowledge the mental health struggles. We can work towards supporting our students, our faculty, and our staff. We have an opportunity to look at what works and what doesn't and develop a robust model of supports for people.
- There is a need to think about accommodation for students in new ways. Students affected by illness, international students, etc. will require new accommodations. Remote learning activities have pointed to ways that we could be more accommodating to students generally.
- In the context of the University's goal to be a safe and inclusive place to learn and the pandemic having forced people to do things differently, it will be important to reflect on and discuss whether experiences over the previous year had made the institution more inclusive and to identify things that did not contribute to this effort. It would be important to have this discussion across the institution, as the discussion would differ across academic programs and units.

Challenges

- Need to work on convincing citizens of Manitoba that there is value in the University, need to show what it is that we do, for example, producing lawyers, or better grain etc. – we do not do a very good job of making it understood to the citizens – with budgetary pressures after the pandemic, need to be making the value case not just to attract students but to convince the citizens of Manitoba that there is value added to this university.
- It was noted that the University may see (or already be seeing) the questioning of the degree as a necessity. On the one hand, we may see more life-long learners; on the other hand, we may see a shift in the way that undergraduate students are approaching their degrees.
- What are we facing in the next few years from the provincial government? The current government's proposed legislation makes it seem as if we will lose a great deal of autonomy. Pressure to respond to short-term labour market needs does challenge the long-term role of Universities in teaching, research and service.
- Funding models will continue to be a huge challenge.
- The provincial government is cutting funds and expecting the UM to help carry out its agenda.

- The loss of student engagement in remote learning contexts, which might be a new issue. An examination of remote teaching experiences over the past year might reveal whether the lack of student engagement was simply amplified by the particular mode of course delivery or was something uniquely associated with it. It might lead to strategies to promote student engagement regardless of teaching mode.
- Heavy workloads of everyone and increased pressure.
- Blurring of personal/work boundaries; need for self-care and focus on wellness
- Recruiting new faculty in this environment.
- Consideration needed regarding the use of SEEQ's in the tenure and promotion process going forward and how that would look. Given technical issues and challenges that some professors have had, student evaluations may be negative.
- There is a challenge in thinking long-term at this juncture and a preference to instead focus on providing high-quality supports and resources to successfully manage the next 18 months.
- Difficult to look forward and vision while we're "still in it"; still flying by the seat of our pants with how things rapidly change so it's hard to look forward. Hard to evaluate what has worked well and what hasn't while we are still dealing with the situation.

Senate Break-Out Group Discussion Notes

April 7, 2021

The following notes represent a collation of the notes taken in the small group discussions that took place as part of the April 7th, 2021 Senate meeting. The notes have been grouped together by theme for ease of reference.

Appreciation is extended to the facilitators (Robert Biscontri, Ed Jurkowski, Cary Miller, Derek Oliver, Evan Podaima, Janice Ristock, Annette Schultz, and Jeff Taylor) and the note-takers (Shannon Coyston, Cassandra Davidson, Shelley Foster, Laura Orsak-Williams, Sandi Utsunomiya, Melissa Watson, David Watt, and Marcia Yoshida).

There was a very positive response to the small group discussion format. Thanks to Members of Senate for their engaged contributions to the discussion. It was suggested that when this is done again, it would be useful to provide the questions to the university community in advance of the meeting, so that people could connect with their faculty senators to provide comments and input.

As we begin to emerge from remote operations, what should the University be thinking about:

Academically

Remote/online and in-person learning

- A robust study is needed to consider the balancing act between virtual and in-person course models.
- Balancing in-person and asynchronous learning.
- The UM needs to pay particular attention to, (i) incoming students, (ii) students transitioning from year-1 to year-2, who have been participating in remote-learning for 18-months, including for some, in their last few months of high school; and (iii) students who opted to take a gap year and not enrol in university this past year. These unique experiences will result in students with different levels of academic preparedness and will have broader psycho-social impacts on students transitioning back to in-person learning.
- One person noted that there is a saying that one can tell where one's priorities are based on where the body is. Remote operations now and in the future will invite questions about what percentage was in class and what percentage was online. There were some comparisons at the beginning of the pandemic between universities that continued to teach in person and those that taught online.

Graduate Studies

- Graduate students in research labs have had their degrees and their progress delayed or destroyed because of the pandemic. We need to give them support and opportunity to get back on track.
- Lab-based research – especially wet labs were impacted significantly. Supporting grad students has exhausted research grants and budgets. Resources are being exhausted while we are in survival mode.

- Research-based grad students need to be able to catch up on the research missed. They will need a year to catch up and graduate on time and research grants will still need to support them.
- We will see a gap in research programs next year.
- Would like to see the Faculty of Graduate Studies consider the benefit to virtual thesis defenses, which have shown to be better over Zoom with flexibility of schedules, etc.
- Experiences over the previous year, which demonstrated that graduate courses could be delivered using remote learning platforms have raised the possibility of institutions making greater use of the Western Deans Agreement. This could lead to a review of related processes to make these easier to negotiate and to facilitate students' registration in courses at other institutions.

Transition back to some on-campus experiences

- Important for student education and well-being to make a plan to support some in-person learning.
- Understanding that some classes/instruction/exams may remain online, in general, please return to in-person.
- The importance of having in person exams with real invigilation was noted.
- Focus on getting back into classrooms.
- Hopeful that the UM does not view online virtual classes completely viable, however in speaking of committee/administrative work, virtual meetings are much more effectively when done remotely.
- While there was some acknowledgement that meetings have been more efficient, it was noted that teaching does not seem to be effective. The same person noted that this is perhaps an unfair comparison given that we have had little experience teaching this way, but this does draw attention to how much experience there is teaching in person.
- A return to in-person will be extremely complex. In health sciences there will be immense backlogs in radiology, MRIs etc., which will impact access to these shared health resources. It could be six months to a year before we can access shared health resources for research purposes.
- We need to think very carefully about how we develop community in classrooms and how we balance that as we move back to campus.
- Supporting the needs of students and faculty - those who for whatever reason choose not to participate in person, those who will blend in person and remote work/teaching/learning, and those students who have been disadvantaged by remote learning.
- Student Senators identified benefits associated with the use of technology and virtual teaching/learning formats, including that virtual formats can provide more flexibility for sharing different types of information, in various formats, including during one-one-one meetings with advisors and students have access to recorded lectures. Moving forward, there are opportunities to continue to use these technologies and formats as complementary methods for teaching/learning.
- Student Senators said remote teaching/learning formats did not facilitate learning in specific types of courses, including laboratories, design courses, and other types of courses that require collaboration among students and benefit from in-person interaction with instructors and peers.
- The UM should consider how we deliver and manage large-enrolment introductory-level (first year) courses on an on-going basis.
- Re-engagement of student athletes.

- From the student perspective, there seems to be a lot of motivation to get back to campus. There need to be plans in place to allow people to return comfortably. A careful re-integration into the norm (or a new normal) will be important, and it may require a phased re-integration.
- We need a clear plan - students and faculty need to understand what the guidelines are for emerging and re-opening – if we are having classes of up to 20 in the fall, what does that look like and what are the rules around doing that – there is a lot of unknowns assuming we can move ahead with some re-opening in the fall – as a graduate unit, they would like to meet with students in person and would like to know how that will unfold – so need guidelines on being able to interact in person with our students is key for academics and operations.
- Students who may have both in-person and remote classes may find it challenging to find a space to participate in remote classes on campus.
- Challenges to offering hybrid courses that would make use of both in-person and remote/virtual teaching/learning technologies would include providing a level teaching and learning experience for all students, considering inequitable access to technology, internet, and that students might be in different geographical locations.
- There are going to be more expectations from students for greater flexibility.
- Students are feeling uneasy about the possibility of hybrid learning/teaching models – particularly with the combination of online courses and having in-person labs (getting on and off campus, etc.)
- How do we re-engage first year university students who have not had positive experiences? We don't want to lose them – how do we make up for that?
- Double cohorts (new students from September 2020-September 2021) – reorientation to the campus physical spaces and get them excited about being a U of M student.
- Increased harassment of students and faculty from other students in virtual settings which wouldn't necessarily happen in a classroom setting; some of the security settings then do not allow for meaningful participation.
- One value learned through the process is from recording lectures – need to consider taking advantage of the hybrid system going forward to allow for remote students who live outside of Winnipeg – consider allowing a format going forward for students who otherwise cannot attend in person – online is not the same as in person, but it is a legitimate delivery opportunity for some people and should be considered.
- Access to study spaces on campus is problematic, especially for those students who are outside of the city and spend the day on campus and need a space to study.
- When considering remote learning in the long-term, the UM should consider matters of accessibility, including access to courses for students in remote Indigenous and rural settings.
- As we return to normal life or whatever that will be post-pandemic, need to realize that there will be a lot of post-pandemic anxiety about being around other people and being in person – will people be okay with being in a lecture hall – are there options for flexibility, could classes be live-streamed, could there be hybrid models, or options - students may not feel comfortable and safe going right back to the way it was – are there ways to accommodate and put a class more spaced out – there is a difference between what is deemed safe, and what people are actually comfortable with – manage the anxiety that people will have.
- It was noted that students who entered the University in the 2020 Fall Term, would potentially be coming to campus in the 2021 Fall Term for the first time, to complete at least some of their courses in-person. It would be important to bear in mind that, not only had they completed the entire first year of their university studies remotely, but they

would have completed the last several months of their high school program in the same way. It would be important to consider the types of supports this particular cohort of students would require, to transition back to (some) in-person learning and to have those supports in place for at least a couple years.

- The UM should consider what processes and academic supports are in place for students who may have to stay home for periods of time for self-isolation, and/or for those students who may need to be accommodated if they are uncomfortable attending in-person courses.
- How can we be more available to students, not just in Manitoba, but across the country and the world? Many of our current students are international, or in a different Canadian province, but if classes return to in-person these students may not be able to continue their studies at UM.
- K-12 in class vs remote learning will impact ability of incoming students and needs to be considered.

Well-being and Mental Health

- There will be significant malaise and mental health issues as people are exhausted and demoralized. That goes for everyone. There has been a profound emergence of mental health issues in people from ages 16 to 24 or 25. The University needs to target some supports for that.
- There is also a need to balance our attentiveness to the mental health repercussions of returning to class with the mental health repercussions of not being in class.
- Remote operations have brought our attention to the value of privileging small communities of learning that may be safer and more comfortable from a physical, social, and psychological perspective.
- Consideration of longer-term mental health implications.
- Focus on equity and how to support the students lost to the pandemic. What supports are needed to bring them back?
- Other factors that might contribute to gaps in students' learning, which could have ripple effects over the next several years, for progress in their programs, include mental health issues, or challenges related to learning in a remote teaching/learning context. The University will need to put appropriate supports in place now to mitigate any impacts, to the extent possible.

Remote and Online Learning - Supports

- The Centre has done a great job - must continue that and build more capacity.
- Instructors have spent significant effort on re-creating courses and teaching in ways that is easier for students. Despite efforts, students are too stressed to do the work. It might be useful to see our efforts through the lens of EDI, seeing how we may be harming our own students. We need to change the way we are doing things. Need to consider the stress of the pandemic through an EDI lens.
- We don't always understand the stresses that students are under – need to consider student welfare.
- With virtual classes, we assume that everyone has good internet connection – we need to be cognizant of the constraints under which students are working.
- Issues with technology, bandwidth, and the fact that some international students struggled to access courses/programs in remote learning formats were identified as

barriers to inclusivity. The existence of such barriers might create gaps in learning over the last year, which would need to be addressed when students returned to campus to complete their programs.

Effects on Career Progression for Faculty

- Maximum untenured period was extended, but the effect of COVID will last for many years.
- Something that the University and Senate need to look at upon return is addressing the restarting of research and the restarting of careers – at the Dean level, working on tenure and promotion policies to address people whose career progressions have been impacted – Senate needs to look at from a student's standpoint – students need competency but need to look at greater flexibility because of the way that people's lives have been impacted and Senate will have to play a role.

Operationally

- The UM should identify non-academic activities and events that have not been offered in a remote setting and identify how these can be best reintroduced into the student experience.

Communication/Transparency

- There is a need for transparency from central administration and the decision-making process around returning to campus.
- Does appreciate information from administration but students were emotionally devastated when heard that classes were capped at 20 and so already decided that classes will be remote this fall – would be nice to have more clarification.
- Whatever the longer term plan is for the University, it requires legitimacy and people accepting the overall structure of the University, and if the return to normal is not handled properly, it could undermine the legitimacy of central administration and the University's leadership more broadly – we currently have somewhat conflicting instructions from the institution – on the one hand, we are told that people should be ready to be back in Winnipeg for the fall, but then we are told that we are capped at 20 which practically means that will continue online – so already sending conflicting signals right now and this needs to get tightened up because ties to any future strategy and the respect that people will have for the institution in trying to develop and implement a strategy.

Facilities and Infrastructure Resources and Administrative Support

- The outstanding contributions of security and caretaking staff over the last year enabled those who needed to be on campus to do so in a safe way.
- Extremely important to ensure that there is administrative support for ongoing operations
 - In Dentistry, they have been using a hybrid model of learning throughout the pandemic. One of the largest struggles with this is not having the proper administrative support for students and professors (therefore, those staff that do come into the (on campus) office are taking care of all sorts of extra administrative duties)

- There is a need to be thinking about how effectively we use existing facilities for experiential learning. This reflection could focus on labs and other kinds of spaces on campus that has grown up over time, but it might focus on other kinds of facilities as well. There is also a need to find a balance between what we appreciate from our perspectives as teachers and student needs and interests on the other hand.
- In trying to manage large classes on UM Learn, there are only five live people who can be contacted when you need help with technology – need more technical help and expertise – need to invest in IT infrastructure and have live humans who can help – there are limitations to the technology and to the support – problem is a combination of what we have and how it works.
- Paper forms that have moved online/electronic – more of this should be done.
- Concern that the needs of support staff have not been addressed.
- Importance of continuing and building IT support.
- Assess the IT structure we have and adjusting to fit what we need.
- Need to look into a different platform than UM Learn because of the amount of time doing grades, exporting and figuring out in Excel.
- Many processes have moved online and have been streamlined as a result; leverage what we've learned and use some of those tools going forward.
- There is an assumption that we will just go back to how it was before, but that may not be the case – we may have a hybrid model to cap enrolment but there is a problem with that in that one class may expect to be there in person and then the next be attending online, which creates certain problems – in the long term, whether having had some exposure to online teaching if there will be a push in the long term to a hybrid or blended approach – and if so, the University needs to be ready in terms of technology etc. – does not seem to be on the radar that this is anything but temporary, but it is not.
- It was suggested that one way to resist external impositions would be for faculty members to come together from the ground up, to value and to reinforce their commitment to the work they and the institution do. One way to do this might be to identify, collect, and share the positive things learned about using technology in teaching over the previous year. This could be important, if it would allow instructors to use technology, including UM Learn, more extensively even following the pandemic. The discussions might start at department councils with information gathered there being shared up to broader discussions at faculty councils. A Senator spoke about having enjoyed learning more about how to use – and not to use - UM Learn, which had resulted in an entirely new approach to teaching a first-year course.
- It was noted that it will also be important to ask students what their experience had been over the previous year, with respect to use of technology in teaching but also more broadly.
- Given the potential for a more flexible work-environment, the UM should take this opportunity to review how we utilize space to maximize its use.
- Some exterior spaces could be cultivated as an exterior life and get out of doors more. Support is needed for that.
- Remote operations have provided us with an opportunity to think about how we use space and to think about ways that we can use our infrastructure to accommodate that.

The Work Environment

- The UM should reflect on how we can be more nimble/resilient on an on-going basis.
- The UM should rethink its current bricks and mortar model – what will the future workforce look like? Staff may advocate for a more flexible work environment (with

allowances to work from home) and it would be best to have a university-wide policy in place, as opposed to multiple unit-level policies.

- Supporting staff returning – how are we supporting staff and faculty returning to campus?
- Transitioning back; do we need to be more considerate of staff needs? In what ways can we allow more flex hours to make mental health and wellness context easier to navigate?
- Re-evaluation of sick leave (all or nothing); part-time sick leave for longer period of time (long-haul COVID) (faculty & staff)
- Should support those who wish to stay home longer.
- What does continuation of work from home look like for some staff? How do we respond to those requests in a way that is both thoughtful and strategic?
- What will working from home look like, but also what support and services do we need on campus to ensure that operations are supported for staff, faculty, and students.
- Consideration of pre-existing conditions for faculty; respecting the needs of our teaching staff with medical conditions who may need to continue to work remotely.
- People with children have also struggled a lot with kids being sent home from school and having to isolate. The workplace of the future has to be flexible for everyone. UMFA has received some financial support but CUPE members have not, nor have support staff.
- People are under-estimating what it means to have the transition from isolation and distancing back to congestion – University needs to have a plan because cannot just throw open the doors – some have talked about possibly phasing it in.
- Do students feel that they can contact you more? Less? Do you find you have more student engagement while working remotely? More frequent engagement, but also more meaningful engagement with students that are struggling.
- Loss of hallway conversations; varies by student & preferred way of connecting – depending on what feels safe for them.
- How can we create a safe place for support staff to return to? Need to communicate that this is a safe place to come.
- Committee work held virtually has been quite useful, particularly when going back and forth between meetings and classes.
- Do we really need to be present in person for a meeting? Can this hybrid version of meetings be used effectively? Good use of time and quality of life.
- The UM should consider how to best support faculty and staff in giving them appropriate time-away from their work to recuperate.
- Work-life balance is important.

Strategically

- Need to assess the social and emotional damage first, before jumping into anything big.
- Safety and flexibility will be key.
- What does coming out of the pandemic actually mean? This week has been very sobering, as other provinces impose new shut down measures in response to the variants of concern. There is anxiety about the planning parameters, when conceptually we don't know what the future will look like. A return to in-person classes is predicated on what?
- Remote communities – can we reach out to them more with remote learning possibilities?
- With the virus being rapidly changing, ability to adapt quickly.

- Managing the unknowns.
- Moving forward to become a “compassionate university” and what the underpinnings of that – bereavement, compassionate care, family caregivers.
- It will be important to recognize and plan for appropriate supports, for the many students, faculty, and staff experiencing mental health issues as a result of the pandemic/remote learning context, as people return to campus. Operationally, the move to have everyone working/learning comfortably from home took three or four months. It might be expected that the transition back to campus will require at least as much time. Planning for the transition back to campus will be further complicated by the significant need to consider supports for individuals who will be navigating mental health issues related to the transition(s). Planning for those supports should consider that, for some individuals, the mental health effects may remain for a significant period of time.
- Moving forward with implementing EDI & Indigenous Senior Leadership reports.
- Anti-racism policies, procedures, supports to protect students, faculty, and staff who are experiencing increased harassment due to the anonymity allowed online.
- Students finding ways to find their communities but enduring harassment with others not seeing it as a university space.
- Any strategic plans to support wet lab research would be great.
- A lot of what we are talking about, even from a public policy perspective, there is something called the “science of muddling through” and that is what we have been doing and what we will continue to do for the next six months – this is not going away as we had hoped – the virus will now start attacking younger age groups – we should start to converge our efforts to more strategic thinking – what has this meant for the future of higher education – how will we be teaching in the future, is it a blend, should we expect a blend, how will we manage exams, how will we certify professionals, where do we fit in the larger social structures, which will be impacted by expectations of the work force (will they be back at office, or stay at home, or a combination).
- Hybrid and online learning tools. More remote courses made available. Evaluate how we can offer a mix for our students.
- Creativity and goodwill are going to be necessary.
- In thinking of work at home policies, thinking strategically into the future, need to think about how will modify our own work patterns and how that fits into teaching and research.

Health - Vaccines

- What about vaccinations? Will the UM have a policy that requires students/staff/faculty to have been vaccinated? Understanding that this may be controversy, but this really needs to be considered in terms of recovery.
- Openness to blended learning, considering students who are compromised and/or may not be vaccinated.
- We’re going to encounter a lot of challenges – healthy concern about day-to-day well-being; we may be vaccinated but we don’t know who around us isn’t.
- With respect to returning to campus, consideration would need to be given to the large number and diversity of people who comprise the University community, including many instructors who would be vaccinated and students who would not be, and the risks this would present not only for instructors but for staff working in Physical Plant and Food Services.

Government

- Pressure from existing government to ensure that our education is consistent with expectations.
- The UM should reflect on how to best work with the provincial government and its priorities for post-secondary education.
- It was suggested that the context for the discussion should be the province's plans to implement a performance-based funding model (the Tennessee model), which would have significant impacts, if it is implemented in the way that it has been in the States, on the degrees of autonomy that Senate and the University have. It was suggested that Senate, UMFA, UMSU/GSA, the Board of Governors, and, perhaps, other universities in the province should engage in a discussion about how to respond. Ideally, this would happen before the province's plan was implemented. Otherwise, any conversations might be overturned by the government, which has a very different plan for the University.
 - Where performance-based models have been implemented in other jurisdictions, including Ontario, for example, only a small percentage of the institutions' funding has been impacted. If the provincial government were to implement performance-based funding in the same way, the impacts might be only at the margins. One goal of the University was to graduate critical thinkers. Graduating students with skills that would make them employable, providing students with opportunities for experiential learning or exposure to international or global systems should be seen as positive things that the University is doing of its own initiative anyway.
- At the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, in March 2020, the province had planned to cut the University's budget by 30 percent, an individual raised concerns about the possibility of more significant that would not affect only the margins of the institution's public funding. Additionally, if the University was not proactive, it might face more significant existential threats from the province, including, potentially, differential funding for programs related to graduation rates, and employment rates for graduates, higher tuition fees that would affect access, and fewer program choices for students.
- Let's provide some information to government.

What opportunities and challenges do you see for the University of Manitoba specifically, and universities generally over the next few years?

Opportunities:

- How can we capitalize on remote learning?
- The UM should retain the increased opportunities for information-sharing and knowledge-transfer with provincial and national colleagues that has occurred over the course of pandemic.
- There is a both an opportunity and a challenge to distinguish UM from other institutions offering online/remote programming. What is it that we do that is unique? How do we best define ourselves in this new space? It is critical that we highlight the value-added of the in-person activities in our programs.
- Teaching remotely increases our reach across the world. Opportunity for joint courses and sharing experiences with other universities across the globe.

- The UM should look at opportunities for ‘*exnovation*’ (the opposite of innovation) to review and revise policies and procedures that may no longer make sense or may no longer be needed based on the experiences of the last year.
- The UM will need to come up with a very strong recovery plan, not only assessing damage, but what we can do to prepare for any future reoccurrences?

- We have an opportunity to reflect, but what does this reflection process look like? What is the timeline?
- Remote operations have provided an opportunity to think about what is essential and not essential in our teaching and the services we provide. It has allowed us to raise key questions: what aspects of the curriculum can be remote or even benefit from being remote? How might this serve international students, Indigenous students, and rural students? What are the challenges associated with the provision of remote learning options? Remote operations have also provided an opportunity to think about experiential learning on campus and what facilities (labs, studios, etc.) are essential.
- The possibility of continuing to deliver some programs, including graduate programs, either entirely or partly online was identified as an opportunity for the institution and for students, as it would increase access to educational opportunities for students not only from Manitoba but across the country, including northern regions.
- Increased opportunities for interaction with students in lecture courses was identified as a benefit of virtual/remote learning technologies that had been a positive experience. Instructors also experienced greater flexibility for sharing/delivering different content; for example, the ease of having guest lecturers join classes.
- There may be opportunities to develop distance education offerings afresh with a wider perspective on how distance education courses might be offered. This might create more balance.
- We can critically reflect on things we would not have ordinarily done. Some work effectively from home but would like to engage in person for some work. We can move forward to working with community in a different way.
- The UM should use this as an opportunity to self-reflect on best practices in teaching and learning, including, (i) how best to teach select courses remotely in the long-term, (ii) identification of learning outcomes and how they can (or cannot) be addressed through continuing with remote learning; and (iii) rethinking assessment and examination methods, including weighting of final exams.
- There have been benefits from working remotely. The lack of a commute has saved time and seems to have led to increased attendance at many meetings. However, there have been some major challenges with teaching. Moreover, we may lose some of the efficiencies we have gained from remote meetings when some people are in the room and some people are not. We have begun learning about what kinds of things that work well and about some of the things that do not work well in several realms.
- The UM should take the opportunity to step back and reflect over the experiences and lessons learned over the past year.
- We need to make a candid assessment of the successes and the failures of the online delivery model – there is a convenience factor for students but there are some clear failures as well that we need to be conscious of going forward – recording of classes is not ideal because it is left to the student to do the things that they should be doing but no way to force them to do – how do you adjudicate exams properly and ensure the integrity in the process – need to take a look at what online does well, and what the failures are, and be aware of those before decisions are made.

- Look at the creative solutions that units have developed, particular to the disciplines, but would not like the UM to kick back into “status quo” on what we used to do but discuss what we have learned during this forced move to virtual.
 - Can we keep some of the good things of what we have learned? (i.e., committee meetings, workshops)
 - How can we do things that work well with student learning and for faculty and staff?
 - Ensuring we have openness to doing things differently.
- Can be more flexible overall.
- There has been a great deal of variation in how faculties have dealt with the pandemic. Not all deans have been proactive. It would be useful to look at what has worked in some faculties and see how it could be applied in other faculties.
- Units should be encouraged to brainstorm/discuss (across faculties/campuses, not just within the same faculty/dept/unit) what has worked well within this online platform (i.e., in terms of engaging students). Also, what hasn't worked so well?
- Think about what works well remotely – we've had some good successes; can we keep aspects of that?
- Have units consider what has been successful in remote learning.
- We have an opportunity to engage with faculty and staff regarding what optimal work environments look like. There are ways to work with individuals to determine what their optimal work environment is, whether at home or on campus. There are resources that deans can provide for working remotely. We can accommodate those who want to work from home, for example, faculty with young children.
- There are real opportunities to reflect on what worked well and what didn't. We have been able to extend our reach in providing services to students. We have been able to introduce some innovative initiatives which we may carry on.
- In the context of the University's goal to be a safe and inclusive place to learn and the pandemic having forced people to do things differently, it will be important to reflect on and discuss whether experiences over the previous year had made the institution more inclusive and to identify things that did not contribute to this effort. It would be important to have this discussion across the institution, as the discussion would differ across academic programs and units.
- Regarding the question of students showing up in person, but some students do not learn that way and do not want to attend class in person – the bigger question is to consider what worked well and what did not work well – key thing is that have shown that can provide quality education using online and remote and should not just abandon going forward – need to optimize going forward.
- Students have always had mental health issues, but Covid has made it acceptable to acknowledge the mental health struggles. We can work towards supporting our students, our faculty, and our staff. We have an opportunity to look at what works and what doesn't and develop a robust model of supports for people.
- Increased student engagement and ability to access services much more easily.
- In moving forward from the changes that students had to make over this past year, students will begin to take a more unusual path with their course loads/schedules – they have done so more recently and will continue to do so. Important to ensure that academic paths are navigating towards priorities of students.
- There is an opportunity to provide new learners with different learning possibilities and flexibility in programming, including such things as experiential learning, prior learning assessment, and micro-credentials.

- Remote community engagement (provision of tools needed for learning – computers, internet connection, etc.)
- Can we ask a student to move “here” if only one of their classes is going to be in person (funding is often dependent on student expenses)?
- There is a need to think about accommodation for students in new ways. Students affected by illness, international students, etc. will require new accommodations. Remote learning activities have pointed to ways that we could be more accommodating to students generally.
- Need to be willing and open to be flexible in planning and scheduling classes. Going back to the way we were will be challenging and it will have to be done differently.
- Increased opportunity and competition will result from remote teaching and learning. Students can take courses anywhere – may attract new students from afar but may also lose some to the competition.
- There is opportunity for cross-training to deepen understanding and knowledge across units - need to find ways to be more resilient – where there may have been just one person with specific knowledge (both academically and administrative knowledge), we need to ensure that this can be expanded so that we can pivot more easily to respond to future instances.
- Appreciated the “hands on deck” approach by UMSU and UM administration, and the discussion of academic and infrastructure - more integrated approach for more higher education
- Will have to deliver value or define what the value is of ourselves as an institution – now we are competing with the Harvards and the MITs of the world in terms of an online world, so what is it about the community that we built here for in person component that is essential from the University’s perspective.
- Continued offering of services through digital means.
- Are starting to see that will need to make decisions about letters of permission and exchanges, as other schools in Canada and the world are getting overseers to approve more distance and online learning – risk of fragmentation unless we have a value proposition as to why students should be at the University.
- There is still an opportunity for the U of M to promote its research activities as a service to a province with a high Indigenous population. This is not to underplay the value of teaching, but since we are really a research-focused university there are some areas that we should be considering: this includes research in general with a focus on provincial strengths in Northern Research, Indigenous Research, Food and Fibre processing (which is one of the biggest employers), and small and medium manufacturing.
- Re-imagine how we look at risk, risk-registry, and business continuity moving forward.

Challenges:

- There is a challenge in recruiting new Faculty in this environment – in both the academic and research spheres.
- Overwork of everyone (workload creep) and increased pressure based on support requests and requirements.
- Blurring of personal/work boundaries; recognizing that we do have to take care of ourselves in order to keep functioning.
- Funding models will continue to be a huge challenge.

- It was noted that a year is not enough time to get everything right. Many departments have been scrambling because of the circumstances, so it would be premature to evaluate all the strengths and weaknesses of remote operations. There is more time needed to experiment and evaluate.
- There is a challenge in thinking long-term at this juncture and a preference to instead focus on providing high-quality supports and resources to successfully manage the next 18 months.
- Difficult to look forward and vision while we're "still in it"; still flying by the seat of our pants with how things rapidly change so it's hard to look forward.
- It was noted that the University may see (or already be seeing) the questioning of the degree as a necessity. On the one hand, we may see more life-long learners; on the other hand, we may see a shift in the way that undergraduate students are approaching their degrees.
- There are both latent and manifest functions of attending university – all of the networks, connections, opportunities, exchanges, are irreplaceable with online learning which can deliver content but does not provide social connections etc. – try to figure out how to retain value – figure out how to be back in person, yet there will be injustices for some students who need to be online for one course and in person for the next – the technical infrastructure required to survive the next year may not be in place.
- We have to consider the professional schools – cannot deliver our curriculum with distance learning as there are labs, experiential education, simulation that needs to be done on site – need to consider that we are graduating the professionals in Manitoba and really need to have in-person interaction – it can be hybrid but is an important consideration.
- If we are not careful on this value proposition, there are a lot of students and faculty and staff who like online learning and if we are not careful, will be redefined by the students – need to have an answer of why they need to attend in person – a lot of people are driven by what is easiest and need to have a good answer for that – already seeing the pressure right now.
- Many new challenges in trying to get students to participate in class discussions, could really use some other ideas (i.e., mentioned earlier re: brainstorming/discussions across faculties/campuses)
- It is difficult to have open and honest communications online. What are some ways that deans can communicate more effectively?
- It was noted that some faculty have expressed concerns about the loss of student engagement in remote learning contexts, which might be a new issue. An examination of remote teaching experiences over the past year might reveal whether the lack of student engagement was simply amplified by the particular mode of course delivery or was something uniquely associated with it. It might lead to strategies to promote student engagement regardless of teaching mode.
- What are we facing in the next few years from the provincial government? The current government's proposed legislation makes it seem as if we will lose a great deal of autonomy. How will we respond to that? How do we make it clear that these challenges to the University's autonomy will create problems? This will require some concerted work on the part of the University and may require public statements by the University and even the Senate. There was agreement with this statement and a sense that this applies to universities in general.

- The provincial government is cutting funds and expecting the UM to help carry out its agenda. Do we have strong leadership at the university to push back effectively? It was noted that UMFA will raise this in its negotiations with management.
- Need to work on convincing citizens of Manitoba that there is value in the University, need to show what it is that we do, for example, producing lawyers, or better grain etc. – we do not do a very good job of making it understood to the citizens – with budgetary pressures after the pandemic, need to be making the value case not just to attract students but to convince the citizens of Manitoba that there is value added to this university.
- Important that we need to look at how our education online or in person will reflect what the Government needs to provide us the funding that we need to provide a proper education
- Government directive to make it the professor's responsibility to place and train grads for MB private sector.
 - threat to the way a university operates and its function.
 - limits job growth and puts instructional responsibilities on those without the expertise to prepare graduate students.
 - Changes the mission statement of a university – moves from research and finding answers.
 - Backwards steps, oversimplifying career world.
- Consideration needed regarding the use of SEEQ's in the tenure and promotion process going forward and how that would look. Given technical issues and challenges that some professors have had, student evaluations may be negative.