

The Joint Governance Council of the Academic Health Sciences Terms of Reference

Background

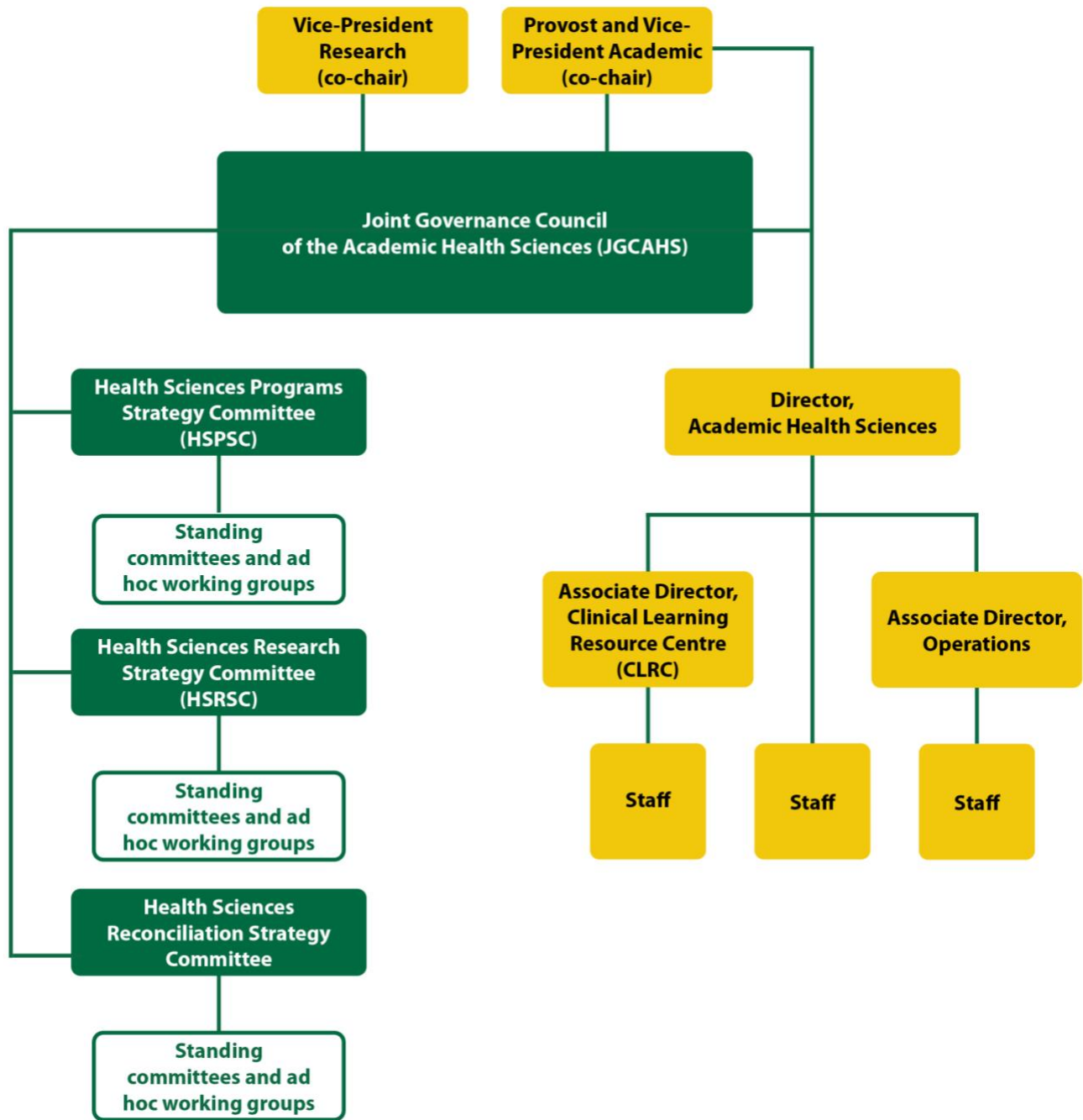
The Academic Health Sciences (AHS) unit is a support centre within the portfolio of the provost and vice-president academic. The Health Sciences Building was intentionally designed as a collaborative space — one that fosters unique opportunities for interdisciplinary training, research, and innovation. This physical integration of programs supports a culture of connection and shared purpose that few institutions can match. To support and unify this diverse collective, the University of Saskatchewan (USask) has established a governance model for the Academic Health Sciences — a strategic unit that connects people, ideas, and opportunities across academic units, the broader university, and external partners.

The governance model for the Academic Health Sciences is collaborative (see Figure 1) with equal representation and equal voice from the colleges, schools and units that occupy the Health Sciences Building. Representation from other health science colleges located outside of the Health Sciences Building will be proportionate to their participation in academic, research, and building operations. Representation will be achieved through existing mechanisms, including the committees of council, Deans' Team Health, and Academic Health Sciences advisory committees. The Joint Governance Council of the Academic Health Sciences (JGCAHS) governs shared matters related to space, the Clinical Learning Resource Centre (CLRC), collaborative research, shared teaching, interprofessional education, Indigenous and equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) initiatives, and building operations. Although the JGCAHS ensures oversight of shared governance issues, each college/unit maintains autonomy with respect to its own governance, accreditation requirements, academic programs, and college- or unit-specific research programs and strategic plans.

Consequently, each dean/executive director leading a unit occupying the Health Sciences Building will have two mandates: governance of their college/unit and shared governance of the Academic Health Sciences. In the latter case, decisions are made by consensus. Without consensus, decisions are reached by majority vote, and in the absence of majority vote, the co-chairs of the JGCAHS make the final decision. Decisions related to these shared governance matters take precedence over individual college or unit priorities.

Planning, strategy, and decision-making regarding the Academic Health Sciences are set out by the JGCAHS, following the terms of reference for the council. The director, Academic Health Sciences is responsible for the oversight of staff in the AHS unit. The position serves as a key support for the effective functioning of the JGCAHS and the director holds primary responsibility for implementing decisions, directives, and priorities set out by the JGCAHS. The director's position has an organizational reporting line to the provost and vice-president academic (or designate).

Figure 1: Governance Structure for the Academic Health Sciences



NOTE: Discussions are ongoing as to the mandate of the Health Science Reconciliation Strategy Committee

Purpose

The Academic Health Sciences (AHS) is a support centre within the portfolio of the provost and vice-president academic at the University of Saskatchewan (USask). The Joint Governance Council of the Academic Health Sciences (JGCAHS) provides strategic decision making, co-ordination, and governance for operations of the Health Sciences Building and associated infrastructure and fosters interdisciplinary research and academic collaboration, enhancing academic and research excellence for USask's health science colleges, schools and programs. The JGCAHS will ensure the effective management of shared resources, space, interprofessional education, and other collaborative initiatives. Deans/executive directors who form the JGCAHS will have a mandate from their college/school and serve on the JGCAHS with a fiduciary responsibility to ensure the effective and efficient management of the Health Sciences Building and associated infrastructure that maximizes: (1) research impact, (2) training of highly qualified health professionals and (3) interprofessional education. The Academic Health Sciences unit receives funding through the university's resource allocation process under the provost and vice-president academic. All decisions pertaining to building operations within the Health Sciences Building will be made by the JGCAHS subject to university policies and procedures.

The work of the JGCAHS does not overlap with college or school-level responsibilities and accountabilities with regard to academic programs.

Responsibilities

The JGCAHS makes decisions regarding the building operations of the Health Sciences Building (HSB), including:

- Building on the collective strengths of its members to make decisions regarding the operations of health science facilities, sharing of resources, and accessing new resources to generate efficiencies.
- Providing direction for operations, facilities, resources, finance needs, and issues related to the health sciences.
- Promoting and supporting interdisciplinary health research activities through committees of council.
- Promoting interprofessional education curricula and shared course development, implementation, and evaluation through the committees of council.
- Developing and implementing policies and procedures that maximize the effective and efficient use of the Health Sciences Building.
- Collaborating with the associate vice-president research (infrastructure and ethics) to manage and support research-related infrastructure and equipment, with the goal of optimizing research utilization and financial sustainability of infrastructure, in accordance with the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) Policy and Program Guide and other applicable guidelines.
- Facilitating communication and collaboration among the health science colleges/units that occupy the Health Sciences Building.
- Providing a forum for addressing common challenges and opportunities within the Health Sciences Building.

- Providing support for clinical simulation in health professional education, specifically as it relates to the use of the Clinical Learning Resource Centre (budget, space utilization, staffing, college/unit supports).

Membership

Co-chairs and voting in the case of a tie

- Provost and vice-president academic (co-chair)
- Vice-president research (co-chair)

Voting members

- Dean of the College of Dentistry
- Dean of the College of Medicine
- Dean of the College of Nursing
- Dean of the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition
- Executive Director of the School of Public Health

Members with voting rights on non-space-related issues

- Dean of the College of Kinesiology
- Dean of the Western College of Veterinary Medicine

Non-voting members

- Director of Academic Health Sciences (key resource person)
- In addition to this core membership, the following resource personnel will be periodically invited to attend and provide updates in their respective areas of responsibility:
 - Committee chairs;
 - Deans overseeing colleges/units that do not occupy the Health Sciences Building; and
 - Anyone the JGCAHS feels they need to consult to make an informed decision.

Decision-making

Subject to relevant University of Saskatchewan policies and procedures, the JGCAHS makes decisions and undertakes policy-related activities in areas including, but not limited, to:

- Space
 - Administrative office allocation
 - Faculty and academic staff office allocation
 - Research space allocation
- Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP) shared office allocation

- Health Sciences Building policies (subject to change):
- Annual space audit
- Art placement
- Communications requests
- Display monitors
- Facility filming/photography
- Health and safety
- Key and access cards
- LEED daylighting
- Posters and temporary signage
- Smudging and ceremonies
- Space booking
- Faculty committee(s) Terms of Reference (subject to change):
 - Health Sciences Reconciliation Strategy Committee (HSRecSC)
 - Subcommittee(s): Indigenous Space & Visual Symbols Committee (ISVSC); The Gathering
 - Health Sciences Education Strategy Committee (HSESC)
 - Subcommittee(s): Interprofessional Education Curriculum Committee (IPECC)
 - Health Sciences Research Strategy Committee (HSRSC)
 - Subcommittee(s): Health Sciences Research Expo Committee; Health Sciences Research Group Leaders
- Leadership of the Office of the Academic Health Sciences
 - Director, AHS
 - Budgetary matters, subject to review and approval by the provost and vice-president academic who holds authority over the AHS as a support centre
 - Academic Health Sciences budget
 - Clinical Learning Resource Centre (CLRC) budget
 - Leslie and Irene Dubé Health Sciences Library Endowment Fund

Meetings

- The JGCAHS will meet monthly and, when required, more frequently depending on the business of the council. Meeting dates will be provided in advance with reasonable notice. Additional meetings may be called at the discretion of the co-chairs or upon written request supported by three or more voting members.
- Quorum is achieved when a majority of JGCAHS members are present, including either the provost and vice-president academic or the vice-president research (or their delegates), five voting members, two members with voting rights on non-space related issues, and the director of the AHS. With the exception of delegations by the co-chairs, member substitutions are not permitted. If quorum is not met, voting by email ballots will be permitted within two days of the meeting to give all voting members a chance to weigh in on decisions as outlined under *Governance*.
- The agenda for each meeting will be prepared by the director and distributed to members at least two days in advance.
- The Academic Health Sciences unit administrative support will record and distribute minutes of each meeting to members, normally within two weeks.

Governance

- The JGCAHS will be co-chaired by the provost and vice-president academic and the vice-president research or their designates.
- The JGCAHS will normally make its decisions by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, decisions will be made by a majority vote of the voting members. Email ballots may be used outside a meeting to give all voting members a chance to weigh-in on decisions.
 - On space-related decisions, the majority is represented by three of five members.
 - On non-space-related issues, the majority is represented by four of seven members.
- In the event of a tie, the co-chairs will hold the casting vote.

Reporting

- The JGCAHS will be accountable to the provost and vice-president academic and vice-president research.
- Meeting notes will be kept on file by the director of the Academic Health Sciences in a secure folder accessible by the members.
- Any information deemed to be confidential (e.g., individual health or personal issues) will be handled and stored in a secure manner.
- Confidential information recorded during meetings will be stored in a secure folder, with the location of that information referenced in the minutes.

Review and amendment of the Terms of Reference

- These Terms of Reference are intended to be a living document.

- The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually by the JGCAHS.
- Amendments to the Terms of Reference may be proposed by any member and will require approval by a majority of council members before being recommended to the provost and vice-president academic and the vice-president research.
- Changes to the Terms of Reference recommended by the JGCAHS must be approved by the provost and vice-president academic and the vice-president research.
- The provost and vice-president academic and the vice-president research, by mutual agreement, may also make changes to the Terms of Reference. When this occurs, they will share information with the members of the JGCAHS, and these changes will not require a vote of the council.

DATE APPROVED BY JGCAHS: Aug. 6, 2025