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Recordkeeping Guidelines for Committees, Working Groups, and Governing Bodies

Prepared by:
Records Management
University Secretariat

Version 1.0
December 2016

University of
Lethbridge

FIAT LUX

Contents

1 Introduction

Committees, regardless of their size and formality, are essential to the functioning of the University of Lethbridge. These guidelines are intended to assist committee chairs and support people to manage the records of University committees, working groups, and governing bodies.

Following these guidelines will help ensure that committee decisions and actions are easily retrievable when needed to support effective decision making, facilitate the university's compliance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and preserve our institutional history. These guidelines were developed in accordance with the University's Records Management Policy[1].

2 Responsibility for Committee Records

While the chair is ultimately responsible for the management of the committee's records, an administrative support (secretary) person for the committee is usually identified when then committee is formed. This person is the Designated Records Officer (DRO) for the committee and will be tasked with:

- Distributing the agenda, minutes, & relevant information to the committee
- Recording the minutes of meetings
- Managing the master set of minutes, agendas, and business papers of the committee to ensure that they are true and accurate
- Incorporating the records into a recordkeeping system
- Arranging for the transfer and/or disposition of committee records in accordance with the University's policies and procedures

Recommended practice is for the office or unit responsible for chairing or secretarial functions to serve as the Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR)[2] and file all non-transitory committee records in its recordkeeping system. If the OPR for the committee changes, all records should be transferred to the new OPR.

Most records held by other committee members will be transitory and should be destroyed as soon as they are no longer needed, and no later than the disposition of the official copies or their involvement on the committee has ended. All committee members are responsible for this and for ensuring that official university records in their possession are filed appropriately with the DRO.

3 What are Committee Records?

A record is any recorded information and committees will produce records as a part of their activities. They are likely to consist of two types of records: university records and transitory records. This distinction affects how the records need to be managed.

University records include any recorded information, regardless of medium or format (includes email), that documents the business of the university, documents decisions or transactions made by the university, or that has future operational, financial, legal,

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[1] www.uleth.ca/policy/records-management-policy

[2] The OPR is the University department or unit responsible for managing the official copies of university records. This is usually indicated in the University of Lethbridge Classification System (www.uleth.ca/records-management/classification).

research, audit, or archival value to the University. This includes information created, received, and/or maintained by the committee or its members.

Depending on the nature of the committee, university records may include the official copies of any of the following:

- Mandate or terms of reference
- Membership list and contact information
- Meeting records (agendas, minutes, supporting documents)
- Reports produced or received by the committee
- Administrative arrangements (catering orders, meeting schedules, etc.)
- Case files for awards, grants, job applications, promotions, etc.

Transitory records are records of temporary usefulness that are needed only for a limited period of time in order to complete a routine action or prepare an ongoing record. These records should be destroyed as soon as they are no longer required. Further detail and examples are provided in the Quick Guide to Transitory Records[3].

Additional guidance on distinguishing between university records and transitory records is available in the *University and Transitory Records Decision Diagram*[4].

4   Drafts and Working Papers

Drafts and working papers of University committees, working groups, and governing bodies may have historical value to the University. If they document decisions or approvals that are not documented elsewhere (e.g. in the minutes), or if they detail the evolution of the document (e.g. policy), drafts and working papers should be kept and managed as records, in addition to the final versions.

5   Security

Depending on the nature of the committee and/or the particular information contained in the records, committee records may be subject to a security classification of medium (2), high (3), or critical risk (4) and, as such, require precautions to be taken to maintain the security of the information. This will be the case for any records that are not generally made available to the public.

5.1   Storage, Access, and Transmission of Information

Precautions are necessary to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of committee records and information, whether this information is electronic or physical. Judgement must be exercised to determine the methods appropriate in any given situation.

5.1.1   Electronic Records

The University's Data Storage Standard[5] defines responsibilities and standards for storing electronic information appropriately, considering the risk presented by the information. This includes storing information in an appropriate location and protecting it with the appropriate security measures.

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[3] www.uleth.ca/sites/default/files/QuickGuideTransitoryRecords.pdf
[4] www.uleth.ca/sites/default/files/TransitoryRecordsDecisionDiagram.pdf
[5] www.uleth.ca/policy/it-data-storage-standard

Cloud storage solutions (e.g. Microsoft OneDrive) will protect the information as much as possible, but could be breached by hackers. Furthermore, their data centres are not necessarily in Canada, making anything stored in the cloud potentially subject to foreign legislation regarding access and monitoring.

Likewise, email is not a secure storage tool and presents similar security risks to cloud storage solutions. Email also restricts access to only the person who owns the email account. Such access restrictions are undesirable for managing records accessibility. Portable electronic storage media, such as USB keys, are at an increased risk of being lost, stolen, and/or forgotten about. They should be used with caution.

Precautions may also be necessary when transmitting information. Encryption should be used when transmitting potentially sensitive information electronically in order to prevent unauthorized access, which can happen if the record is accidentally sent to the wrong recipient or there is a security breach (e.g. hacking). Encryption can be as simple as adding password protection and as complex as data masking.

Training
Information Technology Services has developed online training courses to teach staff and faculty how to identify and use appropriate data storage and encryption methods for electronic records:
www.uleth.ca/information-technology/security/information-security-courses

All University staff and faculty are required to complete this training once every two years.

5.1.2   Physical Records
As with electronic records, care must be taken to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of physical records. Confidential information should be securely stored to prevent unauthorized access. At a minimum this includes storage in a locked filing cabinet.

As the risk presented by the information increases, so should the measures taken to protect it. For example, high and critical risk information, such as performance review or job application materials, should not be duplicated. It may also be prudent to limit and/or monitor access to such documents.

When transmitting physical records, precautions may include marking "confidential" on the envelope, signing or stamping over the envelope seal, utilizing postal tracking services, double envelope mailings, and/or personal delivery.

Records that no longer need to be accessed regularly may be transferred to Records Management for secure storage until they are eligible for disposition (see Section 9.1 – Storage of Semi-Active Records).

5.2   Disposal of Records
The disposition of **university records** must be authorized and documented through the Records Management program (see Section 10 - Disposition of Committee Records).

Physical university records should be sent to the Records Management office for disposition. The method of disposition is identified in the ULCS; it will either be secure destruction (shredding) or archival selection. Records eligible for archival selection that are not selected by the Archivist for transfer to the University Archives will be shredded.

Procedures are currently in development for the disposition of electronic university records. In the meantime, the Records Management department will provide case-by-case guidance for the disposition of university records that are in electronic format.

Individuals have the authority and responsibility to dispose of **transitory records** as soon as they are no longer needed. All transitory records that contain private, sensitive, or confidential information should be shredded. The Records Management department provides shredding services for both physical transitory records and electronic storage media[6].

Procedures for transferring university records to Records Management, disposition, and confidential shredding are posted on the Records Management website[7].

6 Access to Information and Privacy

Like all other records held by the University, committee records are subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIP), which means that:

- Committee records containing identifiable personal information or privileged information must be protected from unauthorized access. For example, it may be inappropriate for new committee members or even a new chair to have access to the committee's previous deliberations.
- All or part of a committee's records may be accessible in the event of a freedom of information request, whether or not the work of the committee is considered, in full or part, to be confidential. This includes any transitory records that are in existence at the time the FOIP request is made.

The committee chair should provide direction on how committee records (both "university records" and "transitory records") should be managed. The following are practices are recommended:

- Committee records should be created with the expectation that they could be released under FOIP. Avoid recording unsubstantiated or subjective comments, and personal information.
- Collect and shred paper copies distributed to committee members at the end of the meeting or once a decision is made.
- Use a secure site, such as SharePoint, or a shared network folder, for electronic records rather than distributing by email, and encourage members to refer to the electronic version, rather than print or save their own copies. Direct that any copies made from the electronic version are to be securely destroyed.
- Committee members should be encouraged to deposit all university records with the designated OPR, and to destroy transitory records as soon as they are no longer needed (e.g. the decision has been made).
- Educate new committee members regarding expectations for keeping/disposing of copies at the beginning of their term and review such expectations with the entire committee annually.

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[6] Simply deleting a file does not actually destroy it. Electronic storage media (e.g. hard drives, USB keys, CDs) that have contained sensitive, personal, or confidential information should be securely deleted (through the ITS Solutions Centre) before beinog repurposed, and securely destroyed at the end of their life.

[7] www.uleth.ca/records-management/forms

7   Agendas – Recommended Practices

An agenda is the outline of the activities planned for the meeting. It is often distributed to committee members in advance of the meeting in an agenda package that also contains all supporting material that members need in preparation for or during the meeting (e.g. reports, proposals, etc.). The proper creation of an agenda and an agenda package assists not just with running an effective meeting, but also ensuring accurate records are created.

An agenda should include:
  · The name of the committee or group holding the meeting;
  · The date, time and location of the meeting; and
  · A listing of items that will be addressed/presented during the meeting (via information, action, reports, or discussion).

See Appendix A for a sample agenda.

An agenda package should include both the agenda and all relevant enclosures. If the supporting material is posted on a website, it is advisable to print or PDF a copy of the site for inclusion in the agenda package. This will ensure that the information remains consistent for the meeting and what was seen by the committee is accurately captured in the record.

It is also advisable to create the agenda package as a single PDF document for ease of use by the committee members. In this case, headers and footers should be added to the final PDF to indicate enclosure numbers page numbers (formatted as page x of x). If a document was received after the agenda package was sent to the committee, or if a document was handed out at the meeting, copies of those documents also form part of the official agenda package and must be retained.

For the many committees or groups that use agenda packages, the package and the approved minutes are the official records that provides the reader with a complete picture of what happened at the meeting. Unapproved (draft) minutes that are presented to a committee or group should never form part of an agenda package as they are considered a transitory record. Emailing the minutes as a separate attachment to the agenda package is the acceptable practice. Also apply a "draft" watermark before distributing.

8   Minutes – Recommended Practices

Meeting minutes document discussion and decisions. They are part of the, or can be the only, official record of a committee or group meeting. Minutes are not just for use by current members; they may also be used by future members, non-members, and even the public, where appropriate. They are an important component of the University's written history, and should be created with this in mind.

There are three types of minutes: decision-only, anecdotal, and verbatim. Verbatim minutes, a word-for-word account of who said what, are not advisable. Decision-only minutes record only formal motions or decisions, and do not include a record of any discussion that took place. Anecdotal minutes record both formal motions and decisions, along with a summary of the discussion. The style of minutes can also vary from formal to informal.

The type and style of minutes should match the committee's needs and, if not specified in the group's terms of reference or bylaws, should be decided upon by the committee in advance. Whatever is decided, the type chosen should be used consistently.

8.1   Formal minutes

To allow the reader to understand the rationale for decisions that were made and the rejection of alternatives, a combination of decision only and anecdotal minutes are recommended for most University committees. The following details should be included in such minutes:

- Full name of the committee or group
- Date, time, and location of the meeting
- Attendees of the meeting, as follows: present (voting members), regrets (all voting members not in attendance), and others (resources and guests)
    o The Chair and Secretary should be identified
    o For email votes, only those members who vote are considered present and the others are recorded as regrets
- Formal motions or decisions, which should be recorded word-for-word
    o Include the outcome and, if applicable, the number of people opposed and/or abstained (e.g. "Carried (1 abstained, 2 opposed")
    o The names of movers and seconders can be recorded; however, Robert's Rules of Order, which govern the Board of Governors, General Faculties Council, and Senate, only require recording that the motion was moved and seconded (i.e. "Moved/Seconded")
- Actions that were taken by the committee during the meeting and any action items agreed to during the meeting
- In the absence of a motion, a list of any items that were on the agenda and deferred or tabled
- If anyone left/rejoined the meeting due to a conflict-of-interest, or any transfer of the role of chair that took place during the meeting
- An objective, concise summary of the points made in the presentation or discussion.
    o Names/titles of individuals should not be included unless someone explicitly requests it, or the person is presenting a report, as identified in the agenda. For example: "Discussion occurred on challenges due to the ongoing lack of financial support" instead of "Jake said we can't do this because we are never given enough money."

See Appendix B for a sample of formal meeting minutes. The University Secretariat office will provide additional guidance (see www.uleth.ca/governance).

8.2   Semi-formal, informal, and action minutes

Working groups may decide to function more informally and, as a result, not record formal minutes. Instead, the committee may decide that it is only important to record what occurred at the meeting for absent members and for future reference. Such minutes may include:

- A concise summary of the topics discussed, decisions reached, and other actions taken
- Action items planned, including the people responsible and the deadlines

They may also include some background information, but are usually written for the benefit of people already familiar with the group and its activities.

8.3   Preparing minutes

Minutes should be completed as soon as possible after the meeting. At the very least, the notes taken should be reviewed immediately following the meeting to ensure that they are sufficiently detailed for preparing the minutes at a later time.

Once the minutes are approved, all transitory material related to the meeting should be destroyed (e.g. notes, audio recordings). Regardless of the formality of the minutes, personal and/or subjective information should not be recorded in the minutes (see Access to Information and Privacy)

9   Committee Meeting Formats

While many committees still meet face-to-face, technology is providing new and increasingly popular methods for people to meet remotely and/or to record the proceedings of committee meetings.

The same methods used to document face-to-face meetings should be used for online meetings. For example, if the committee normally documents its decisions at meetings through the creation of minutes, the same should be done for any online meetings.

When the proceedings of meetings are recorded (whether by audio, video, or in writing), these recordings constitute records that must be managed and that are discoverable in the event of a freedom of information request or litigation. Recordings that are used only for the purpose of preparing minutes are considered transitory records and should be destroyed as soon as the official minutes are approved.

10 Organizing Committee Records

To support the effective management of committee records, records should be organized according to the University of Lethbridge Classification System (ULCS)[8]. The ULCS classifies records into functional categories, applies a retention period to each record category, and identifies the final action to be taken on records at the end of their retention period.

The Naming Conventions[9] guide provides detailed recommendations for organizing and naming electronic folders and files. It also provides detailed examples of these best practices. Many of these principles can also be applied to physical storage systems.

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[8] www.uleth.ca/records-management/classification
[9] www.uleth.ca/sites/default/files/NamingConventions.pdf

Committees are free to establish their own conventions; the important thing is to be consistent.

The recommended practices for organizing records vary depending on the type of record category: annual, open-ended, case-oriented.

10.1 Annual Records

Annual records include meeting records, reports, statistics, membership lists, and other general records that are considered current only for a short period of time. The retention period for these records is triggered by the end of the year in which the record was created (abbreviated as 'C' in the ULCS retention period).

Annual records should be organized chronologically so that all records for each year and function/topic are stored separately. For example, instead of having one file containing agendas and another for minutes, keep agenda packages and minutes in files (or binders) by year. This ensures that all records for each meeting are stored together. Meeting records should be stored separately from catering and supply orders, and membership lists, for example. Note that agenda attachments do not need to be kept separately if they are included in the agenda package that will be managed.

However, when keeping paper records of meetings, a useful practice is to maintain a separate file with a copy of the agenda for each meeting to serve as a quick index to the committee's business and make it easier to retrieve particular meeting records when necessary. As these are convenience copies, they are transitory records.

The University recognizes three different years for the purposes of records management:
- Academic Year (July 1 to June 30)
- Fiscal Year (April 1 to March 31)
- Calendar Year (January 1 to December 31)

Governance committees follow the academic year and other committees should consult the ULCS and/or Records Management to confirm which year should be followed for recordkeeping purposes.

10.2 Open-ended Records

Open-ended records include terms of reference, policies, procedures, and other records that remain current until they are superseded or become obsolete. For committees, this includes working copies and drafts. The retention period for these records is triggered when they are superseded or become obsolete (abbreviated as 'S/O' in the ULCS).

These should be organized according to the topic/function of record. For example, terms of reference should be kept separately from policies.

10.3 Case-oriented Records

Case-oriented records include those that deal with a particular application, individual, project, or agreement. These records are considered current only while the particular case is active. The retention period is triggered when the case is terminated or expires (abbreviated as 'T/E' in the ULCS).

As such, these should be organized according to the case. For example, a committee that reviews applications should maintain a file for each application or competition, as

appropriate. Similarly, a separate file should be kept for each contract or agreement (and any related correspondence and drafts).

11 Retention of Committee Records

Retention periods are established to ensure that records are maintained long enough to meet the operational, financial, audit, legal, and archival needs of the University, and that risks to retaining information too long are minimized.

It is important to identify the master set of committee records, whether they are physical or electronic, and that they are incorporated into the recordkeeping system of the OPR (see Responsibility for Committee Records). This is to ensure that the records are:

- Accessible to all who require them
- Controlled and managed in accordance with policy and procedures
- Secured against tampering, unauthorized access, or unlawful destruction
- Disposed (archived or destroyed) promptly in accordance with policy

Many committee records, particularly minutes, have long-term value to the University and will be retained permanently in the Archives. Others will be destroyed at the end of their retention period.

Transitory records (copies, working copies, etc.) only need to be retained for as long as they are needed to complete a transaction or create an ongoing record, and must be destroyed no later than the official university records.

Organizing committee records according to the ULCS classification will make it much easier to adhere to the approved retention rules, which are detailed in the ULCS, alongside the classification categories. The following folder structure is recommended as a starting point:
- Name of committee/working group
  - Administrative processes (e.g. meetings, catering, bookings)
  - Meetings (agendas, minutes, & papers)
    - § Date of meeting
  - Membership
  - Terms of reference

Naming conventions are recommended for both electronic and paper folders and files. Additional guidance on naming conventions is available in a related information sheet[10].

11.1 Storage of Semi-Active Records

Once university records are no longer active and do not need to be accessed regularly, they can be transferred to Records Management for secure storage until the end of their retention period.

When files are needed, Records Management will retrieve files from storage and return them to the authorized requestor.

Procedures for transferring university records to Records Management and retrieving files from storage are posted on the Records Management website[11].

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[10] www.uleth.ca/sites/default/files/NamingConventions.pdf
[11] www.uleth.ca/ records-management/forms

12 Disposition of Committee Records

Disposition is the final action to be taken on records at the end of their lifecycle. There are two methods of disposition for university records: destruction and archival selection.

As per the Records Management policy, the disposition of **university records** must be authorized and documented through the Records Management program. Physical records should be sent to the Records Management office for disposition; they cannot be disposed of directly by individuals in other units. Disposition procedures are posted on the Records Management website[12].

Procedures are currently in development for the disposition of electronic records. In the meantime, the Records Management department will provide case-by-case guidance for the disposition of university records that are in electronic format.

Individuals do have the authority, and responsibility, to destroy **transitory records** as soon as they are no longer needed, and no later than the official university records (see Section 6.2 - Disposal).

13 Additional Resources

The Records Management department offers support to committee chairs, support personnel, and members with the management of these records. Additional resources are available on the Records Management website (www.uleth.ca/records-management) and staff are available to answer questions or provide additional guidance.

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[12] www.uleth.ca/records-management/forms

Appendix A – Sample Agenda

SAMPLE COMMITTEE MEETING #24
Agenda

University of
Lethbridge
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Thursday, November 16, 2016
1:30 p.m. (Regular Meeting)
W646

Only indicate the scheduled start time

1. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
   2.1. October 13, 2016   Emailed
   2.2. October 24, 2016 Email Vote   Emailed

Send draft minutes separately from the agenda package, as they are not official until they are approved.

3. **BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

For ease of use, add hyperlinks to the correct page when the PDF agenda package is created.

4. **REPORTS & PRESENTATIONS**
   4.1. President's Report   Enc. #1   p. 2
   4.2. Third-party Group Presentation (N. Lethbridge)

5. **ITEMS FOR ACTION**
   5.1. Annual Retreat Budget   L. Pronghorn   Enc. #2   p. 3
   5.2. Animal Care Policy   F. Lux   Enc. #3   p. 4
   5.3. Research Policy – Revisions   J. Doe   Enc. #4   p. 7

6. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**
   6.1. Project Update   R. Brown
   6.2. Committee Report   A. White   Enc. #5   p. 12
   6.3. Upcoming Event Information   D. Black   Post-agenda

7. **OTHER BUSINESS**

If someone specific will be speaking on a particular item, indicate this on the agenda
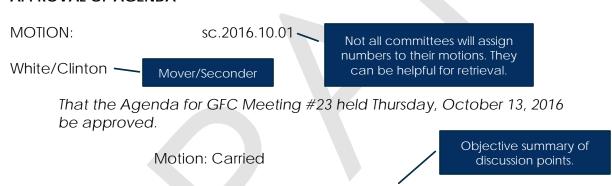
8. **ADJOURNMENT**

Use "post-agenda" to indicate that a document will be sent out prior to the meeting, but after the agenda.

Until the agenda and minutes have been approved, use a watermark to indicate that they are drafts.

Appendix B – Sample Minutes

University of Lethbridge
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SAMPLE COMMITTEE MEETING #23
Minutes

Thursday, October 13, 2016
1:30 p.m. in W646

> List only chair and voting members under "Present"

Present: R. Brown (Chair), A. White, J. Doe, Y. Norton, D. Clinton, B. Jones, D. Black, L. Pronghorn

Regrets: S. Williams, I. Smith

> All absent voting members, even if they did not provide notice of their absence.

Other: J. Smith-Jones (Secretary), R. Pat, W. Perry

> Resource members, guests, and other non-voting attendees

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: sc.2016.10.01

White/Clinton

> Mover/Seconder

> Not all committees will assign numbers to their motions. They can be helpful for retrieval.

That the Agenda for GFC Meeting #23 held Thursday, October 13, 2016 be approved.

Motion: Carried

> Objective summary of discussion points.

A question arose about a report from the Sustainability Committee. It was noted that this will be added to the Sample Committee Executive Committee agenda, as that committee approves the Sample Committee agenda draft.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: sc.2016.10.02

That the Minutes for the Sample Committee Meeting #22 held Thursday, September 12, 2016 be approved as amended.

Motion: Carried

> Until the agenda and minutes have been approved, use a watermark to indicate that they are drafts.

3. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

J. Smith-Jones has scheduled the upcoming annual retreat on January 15, 2017 at the Paradise Canyon Golf Course.

4. **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

> Depending on the nature of the oral report, a more detailed summary may be required.

The President had nothing to add to his submitted report. No questions arose.

5. **ITEMS FOR ACTION**

5.1 **Environmental Committee Budget**
(J. Doe left the room for this item.)

> Identify if someone has an identified conflict of interest that requires them to leave the room. An alternative solution in this situation could be that the person abstains from voting.

MOTION: sc.2016.10.03

Pronghorn/Doe

> *That the Sample Committee approve a budget of $250 for the Environmental Committee for the 2017/2018 fiscal year.*

Motion: Defeated (2 in favour)

Discussion occurred around the possibility of having a coulee cleanup event in the spring. This decision will be left to the Environment Committee. Concern was expressed that a larger budget is needed for the Committee to accomplish its mandate.

5.2 **Hours of Work Policy**

MOTION: sc.2016.10.04

Norton/Pronghorn

> *That the Sample Committee approve the enclosed revisions to the Hours of Work policy,* effective January 1, 2017.

Motion: Carried (1 abstained – A. White)

> Do not include names or counts unless requested.

MOTION: sc.2016.10.05

White/Doe

> *To amend the wording in the enclosed revision point 3 by replacing the word "will" with "may".*

Motion: Carried

The benefits of these changes for employees and supervisors alike were acknowledged. The efforts of the members of the Hours of Work Working Group, who completed the review of this policy, were appreciated.

6. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

   6.1 **Grant Application Deadline**

   All members were reminded that the deadline to submit application for the Sample Important Funding Opportunity is December 1, 2016.

   6.2 **Project Update**

   L. Pronghorn introduced W. Perry, who provided the committee with the following update on the Sample Important Project. It is on schedule and, to date, under budget by about $2500. Staff from the Project Office are in the process of completing the final steps of the testing phase and have been passing along identified issues to the development team, who have been able to quickly resolve and correct them. Such issues have included broken links, alignment concerns, and, in one case, an error in a calculation. Next week, the team is scheduled to start training the end users on the product. This is expected to last for two weeks and deployment is planned for November 24, 2016.

   Some questions and discussion occurred around how staff were identified for training and what other training opportunities would be provided to those who will not be able to attend next week. W. Perry confirmed that individualized or small group training can be arranged as needed.

7. **OTHER BUSINESS**

   No other business.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

   MOTION: sc.2016.10.05

   Black/White

   That the Sample Committee Meeting #23 be adjourned.

   | Meetings often need a motion to adjourn. Consult Robert's Rules for details. |

   Motion: Carried