

SENATE MEETING MINUTES
January 19, 2024

The 649th meeting of the Senate of Saint Mary's University was held on Friday, January 19, at 2:00 PM, in Secunda Marine Boardroom (SSB 401)

PRESENT: Dr. Summerby-Murray, Dr. VanderPlaat, Dr. Veres, Dr. Ingraham, Dr. Raymond, Dr. Sarty, Mr. Seneker, Mr. Brophy, Ms. van den Hoogen, Dr. Austin, Dr. Grek-Martin, Dr. Samou, Dr. Hlongwane, Dr. Brosseau, Dr. Hare, Dr. Ylijoki, Dr. Kocum, Dr. Barclay, Dr. Grandy, Dr. Sanderson, Dr. Stinson, Dr. Doucet, Dr. Sewell, Ms. Tan, Ms. Barrett, Ms. Boudreau, Ms. Hodge, Ms. Shannon Morrison, Secretary to Senate

GUESTS: Mr. Gupta, Dr. Fiset, Dr. Morales, Dr. Takseva, Ms. Courtney Kyle, Ms. Mahbouba Kafrouny, Dr. Kay, Ms. Sargeant-Greenwood,

REGRETS: Dr. Dodge, Mr. Ganapathy,

The meeting was called to order at 2:05 P.M., Dr. Grandy chairing and a territorial acknowledgment was provided.

24050 **REPORT OF AGENDA COMMITTEE**
The agenda was accepted as posted.

24051 **PRESIDENT'S REPORT** – Posted as ***Appendix A*** (10 min)
The President referred to the report included with meeting materials and highlighted the following:

Discovery and Innovation in a Learning-Centered Environment

- Winter convocation ceremonies will be held on Friday, January 26th, and Saturday, January 27th, and there will be three Honorary Degree Recipients.
- Dr. Luigi Gallo is the recipient of the 2023 President's Award for Exemplary Service in Research in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the SMU community and his field of research.

Intercultural Learning

- The National Advisory Committee for the Scarborough Charter met in mid-December to discuss plans for the next national forum, which will be held in Waterloo.

Institutional Sustainability

- The Financial Recovery Task Force has been in place since November, and its mandate is to evaluate, prioritize, and make recommendations to the Executive Management Group on initiatives that should be undertaken by Saint Mary's to return the institution to financial stability.
- Government relations activity remains strong over the past month. Liaising with three areas of government. Areas of focus include:

- continued lobbying and engagement with the Universities Canada and the AAU on recent changes to IRCC requirements for international students (financial requirements). On the first of January, several restrictions were put in place. There is the potential for a cap on international students coming into the country, and the three provinces that will be targeted are BC, Ont, and NS.
- CONSUP continues its work to secure a viable MOU with the province to increase the operating grant and clarify tuition policies.
- We are continuing to lobby for funds to improve accessibility in order to move towards the accessibility legislation across the province.

24052

VICE-PRESIDENT ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH REPORT –

Posted as **Appendix B** for this meeting. (5 mins)

Dr. Madine VanderPlaat referred to the report included with meeting materials and highlighted the following:

- The Accessibility Lead started at Saint Mary's on January 3rd, 2024, and has been engaging with members around campus.
- Regarding the AVP Diversity Excellence position we are looking at a reconfiguration and how to best serve diversity excellence on campus.
- Dean of Sobey School of Business applicants have been short-listed, and the ad for the Dean of Science is out, the long list will be compiled next week.
- Dr. Marie Battiste was on campus and helped us discuss the appropriate advising support for our Indigenous students. There will be follow-up meetings, and she will provide recommendations on moving forward.
- We are re-initiating the search process to fill the Black and Indigenous Advisor roles and will be progressing with this as soon as possible. Both roles have been posted and are in various stages of the search process.

24053

SMUSA PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Listed as **Appendix C** (5 min)

- SMUSA welcomed students back to campus with several events including Welcome to the Gorsebrook and Societies and Partners Expo. The final Winter Welcome event will be skating at the oval. Engagement was great, and societies are at an all-time high.
- Students are relieved that no exams are being scheduled from 7 p.m.-10 p.m.
- Students have shared their concerns with SMUSA regarding the recent convocation changes, expressing a sense of frustration due to the short notice. Students continue to believe that convocation is in September based on past traditions.
- Zero Textbook Courses (ZTC) has been very well received and students are so excited about the initiative. We encourage any faculty members who know of books or software that are free to add to the list.

24054

QUESTION PERIOD (length at the discretion of chair based on business volume)

- **Question:** Who is on the Financial Task Force Committee, what is the breakdown of members and what do you hope this committee can achieve? **Answer:** President Summerby-Murray: The committee was established in November and includes the Deans, the University Secretary, several vice presidents, and an academic sub-committee, which includes faculty colleagues and is chaired by Dr. Adam Sarty. The group generated 62 broad recommendations and provided EMG with the top 10 recommendations to begin the initial steps. Dean Ingraham notes: Each idea had pros and cons, and a lot of research and conversation went into making the list of recommendations.
- **Question:** What is the update on the search for Provost/VPAR? **Answer:.** Most of the search committee is in place, and we will seek members of Senate to sit on the committee.
- **Question:** Will Dr. Marie Battiste be providing a report that will be available to the community? **Answer:** Yes, she will be.
- **Question:** Is the Accessibility Lead a part of the committee and reframe work for the diversity excellence conversations? **Answer:** It is not a formal committee and yes, Jennifer Webb is part of the committee.
- **Question** for SMUSA: Regarding the zero textbook courses program (ZTC) is there a funding model for the courses that have the textbooks to support students? **Answer:** No. SMUSA is not offering textbooks. This is only an option for students who need extra financial support. It will not affect their course choices unless they are in financial distress. This is an extra resource to help the students who need it.
- **Question:** Is there a timeline for the Indigenous and Black Student Advisor? **Answer:** We are working to fill these positions. They are both in different stages of the competition. We require guidance from the individual communities. The goal is to interview in late January or early February. **Follow-up question:** Is there student representation involved? **Answer:** Yes, they will be involved in both searches.

Moved by Dr. Kocum and seconded, **“to rearrange the section of the agenda, Report of Standing Committees and speak to the Accessibility Committees item first.” Motion carried.**

24055

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the meeting of December 15, 2023, were circulated as **Appendix D**

- Comment: Could an update be made to the December 15, 2023, minutes?

In response to a SMUSA point made regarding students being unable to write makeup **final-Mid-Term exams**, Senators were reminded that the decision on makeup **final Mid-Term exams** rests with the faculty dean **and that they would consult their faculty members and report back to Senators in the January Senate meeting.**

- Senate members do not recall this being stated.

There being no amendments or objections, the Senate meeting minutes of December 15, 2023, are approved.

24056

WINTER GRADUATION LIST

Documentation presented at the meeting as Appendix E

Key Discussion Points

- This Winter there are 352 graduates. Of these, 7 receive more than one parchment, and 45 graduate with distinctions.
- Convocation will be held on January 26 and January 27th.

Moved by Mr. Seneker and seconded by Ms. Boudreau **“to confer degrees and distinctions on those represented on the list (circulated as Appendix E) at the Winter Convocation”**. Motion carried.

Moved by Mr. Seneker and seconded by Ms. Boudreau, **“to enable the Registrar to add such graduates as may be identified subsequent to this meeting.”** Motion carried.

24057

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS AGENDA

- Membership on Senate Committees for 2023-2024

Elections Committee:

Dr. Marc Doucet

Executive Committee

Dr. Andrew Hare (Faculty Alternate)

Budget Advisory Committee

Dr. Clarissa Sit

Moved by Dr. Austin and seconded by Dr. Ingraham, **“that Senate approve the recommendations for memberships on the Senate Committees.”** Motion carried.

24058

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

1. Academic Planning

Key Discussions:

Comment: Something to consider in the future. It may be more time efficient for Senate if APC passes the one and three-year reports without any issues that they be submitted to the Senate as a report, like the Curriculum Committee submissions. If Senators are concerned about a report, can that report be taken out and the other ones approved by an omnibus motion?

a). Global Business 1-Year Program Review (Dr. John Fiset)

Moved by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Dr. Ingraham **“that Senate approves the one-year follow-up report the Global Business Program as meeting the requirements of Section 5 of the Senate Policy on the Review of Undergraduate Programs at Saint Mary’s.” Motion carried.**

b). Certificate in Sports Business Proposal (Dr. Miguel Morales)

Moved by Dr. Ingraham and seconded by Dr. Raymond, **“that Senate approves the proposal for a Certificate in Sports Business,” Motion carried.**

Key Discussions

- This is supposed to enhance the major with a focus and understanding of sport, business, and health and wellness.

c). School of Interdisciplinary Studies (SOIS) (Dr. Tatjana Takseva)

Moved by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Dr. Ingraham, **“that Senate approves the proposal for a School of Interdisciplinary Studies at Saint Mary’s University.” Motion carried.**

Key Discussions

- The proposal intends to provide an administrative and research hub and oversight of the existing interdisciplinary programs created. This includes actual programs, micro-credentials, and minors. This hub will be a research house that will help foster interdisciplinary forms of teaching and research among different programs.
- **Question:** Is there any data on the number of students in the various minors that do not necessarily have a home under an existing department structure? Secondly, what can you tell us about the governance structure and appointment of an Associate Director, Chairs, and Coordinators? Under the Collective Agreement, a nominating committee will require faculty representation. **Answer:** No data has been collected, but this could be conducted if the Senate were to approve this proposal. Secondly, I would hope that the Dean, Academic Planning Committee and Senate would outline the process that would include faculty representation for the nominating committees.
- **Comment:** There is no new programming; it would have to come through Senate or the Curriculum Committee. This is primarily an administrative move.
- **Question:** Is the Dean supportive of this? **Answer:** Dean Ingraham expressed support. Interdisciplinary programs are defined in the Collective Agreement. This would be creating a home for them. The list of programs that are included has come together looking for an umbrella in which we can continue to work together. This will help with administrative efficiencies.

- **Question:** Does the School of Environment have a Curriculum Committee? **Answer:** No, it would be a bit different from the School of Environment. We did look at the School of Environment as the model, which was a much shorter document. Some of the curriculum is delivered in other programs and departments. From the Program Coordinators' perspective, they are having trouble keeping track of what courses are being offered. Many programs overlap and tap other resources, without even knowing. Creating this school will help with those issues.
- **Question:** Was there any conversation to create a department versus a school? **Answer:** No, this did come up and there was no desire to create a department.
- **Comment:** Item #9 is a good example. There are at least six different administrative assistants working on that course. It causes concerns. This will allow for efficiency and creative opportunities.
- **Question:** Can you elaborate on the budget? **Answer:** No, the budget has not been developed as this is a concept paper.

Moved by Ms. Boudreau and seconded, **“that Senate temporarily adjourns for a 3-minute recess.” Motion carried.**

d). Direct Academic Support Units

Moved by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Dr. Doucet **“that Senate approve the new Senate Policy on Reviewing Direct Academic Support Units and the related Handbook.” Motion carried.**

Key Discussions

- There was extensive environmental research done over the past two years to create this policy and handbook. We found an appropriate pathway for reviewing units and treating the library as a faculty, to follow the usual Senate review process that programs follow. All other units would follow a more direct reporting structure.

e). Revisions to Senate Policy on the Review of Programs at Saint Mary's University (8-1015)

Moved by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Dr. Austin **“that Senate approve the revisions to the Senate Policy on the Reviews of Programs at Saint Mary's (8-1015).” Motion carried.**

Key Discussions

- The executive summary with recommendations will be uploaded to the Senate webpage.

2. Academic Regulations

a). Proposed Revisions to Undergraduate Academic Regulation 18

Dr Grandy relinquished the Chair responsibilities to Dr. Grek-Martin for this motion and discussion.

Moved by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Dr. Doucet “that Senate approve the revisions to Academic Regulation 18 and Graduate Regulation 33 as submitted in appendix L1”. Motion carried.

Key Discussions

- Updated the procedures and processes section to align with the current process.
- Update to the title Academic Discipline Officer (ADO) to Senior Academic Integrity Officer (SAIO). When the ADO role began, The Registrar had inherited this role. After conversations with the VPAR, it had been decided that it is not necessary for the Registrar to be involved in Academic Integrity.
- Question: Will the SAIO role be attached to the University Librarian or the person? Answer: This role is attached to the University Librarian.

b). Proposed Revisions to Undergraduate Academic Regulation 10

Moved by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Dr. Doucet, “that Senate approve the revisions to the Undergraduate Academic Regulation 10 as submitted in appendix M1”. Motion carried.

c). Proposed Revisions to Undergraduate Academic Regulation 16 and Graduate Regulation 11

Key Discussions

- **Question:** Bullet point (iv) states that a student cannot withdraw from a course during which an Academic Integrity investigation is ongoing. Is a student permitted to withdraw for other reasons? Will they still get their refund? **Answer:** It would depend on the decision of the Academic Integrity Investigation. The Academic Integrity decision should supersede.
- **Comment:** If someone has an academic integrity investigation ongoing, can the student request to withdraw in time for the refund. Could they submit in writing, “If I am found not in violation of an academic integrity offense, can I still get a refund?” Some explicit wording could be included that you can request to withdraw and then pending an outcoming that may be honored.

Moved by Mr. Gupta and seconded by Ms. Boudreau, “that Senate refers this item back to the Academic Regulations Committee.” Motion carried.

d). Pass(P)/ No Credit (NC) Grade Option – New Regulation proposal

Dr Grandy relinquished the Chair responsibilities to Dr. Grek-Martin for this motion and discussion.

Key Discussions

- Currently, PNC is a loose policy that is on a webpage. This was introduced during COVID-19, and we would like to formalize it as an official regulation.

Moved by Dr. Raymond and Seconded by Dr Grandy, **“in section g, adding (vii) Courses which will be counted towards the GPA requirement of certain Majors, as defined by those Programs.”**

- **Question:** Can you provide an example of what item (vii) would mean? **Answer:** To complete a Major in Finance, a student must have a 2.2 GPA in specific required courses. Therefore, a student may not be able to take the PNC depending on the GPA requirements defined by those programs. This is adding a situation where they are not eligible to take the PNC.
- **Comment:** A student may not be able to apply for a PNC with a major. If a student changes their major, can they now use the PNC for the course they were unable to before?
- **Comment:** Currently, students are not using PNC as an exploratory option.
- **Question:** Will the PNC cause international students or study visa issues? **Answer:** No, it would not affect a study permit.

Moved by Dr. Austin and seconded by Mr. Gupta, **“that Senate refers this item back to the Regulations Committee for further review.” Motion carried.**

e). Senate Policy on the Creation of the Academic Calendar of Events 8-1024

Moved by Dr. Sanderson and seconded by Dr. Austin, **“to defer items 2e and 4a to the February Senate” Motion withdrawn.**

Moved by Dr. Sanderson and seconded by Mr. Seneker, **“to defer item 2e to the February Senate” Motion carried.**

3. Accessibility Committee
 - a). Revised Terms of Reference

Moved by Dr. Kocum and Seconded by Dr. Sarty, **“addition to section 5.2.6.5, at least 50% of the committee will be persons who self-identify as having disabilities”.** Motion carried.

Moved by Dr. Brosseau and seconded by Dr. Sanderson, **“that Senate approve the amendment and revisions to the Senate Accessibility Committee Terms of Reference as attached in Appendix Q1,” Motion carried.**

Key Discussions

- The committee is bringing forward this revised version of the Terms of Reference as the committee was asked to seek further legal advice in 2021. The committee has worked hard to try and address all the concerns. Senators will note that the current TOR is outdated and has problematic language. Senate had concerns about a lack of diversity and that it does not speak from a first voice. This committee would like to remind Senate that not all disabilities are labeled. We opened the composition so that it could speak from the first voice. Senate was concerned that this committee lacked training. This committee is very excited to do the work. Therefore, we added the language that the committee members should seek training.
- **Comment:** Thank you to this committee and all the hard work. During the March meeting, one important point was raised that at least half of this committee should be people with disabilities. In the Accessibility Act of Nova Scotia, there is 50% representation from people with disabilities. In this committee, **when we are making decisions, the group with disabilities will not have the majority.** What 50% does is create a space where people have a first voice. The discussions are different, and the decision-making is better. With 50%, this will make the committee more effective.
- **Comment:** This is a Senate Committee and the committee worries that filling the positions may be hard. The committee will need advice and guidance on how to move forward with this would be a mandatory requirement.
- **Question:** Does anyone know how many people would be asked to fill this role in the faculty body? Are there many people who self-identify as having disabilities?
Answer: Currently, the Canada Research Chairs are the only mandated members who need to self-identify as having disabilities.
- **Comment:** This committee would have the support of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

4. Curriculum Committee

- a). Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Commerce, and Faculty of Science Curriculum Submissions

Moved by Mr. Seneker and seconded by Dr. Doucet **“that Senate approve the Curriculum submissions, as presented in Appendix R3 for insertion into the Academic Calendar for 2024-2025.” Motion carried.**

24048

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned 4:29 p.m.