

**SENATE MEETING MINUTES  
May 12, 2023**

The 644<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Senate of Saint Mary's University was held on Friday, May 12, 2023, at 2:00 PM, in CLARI, Atrium room 340. Dr Grandy, chaired.

**PRESENT:** Dr Summerby-Murray, Dr VanderPlaat, Dr Bhabra, Dr Veres (for Dr Francis), Dr Ingraham, Dr Sarty, Dr Austin, Dr Barclay, Dr Grandy, Dr Hare, Dr Irving, Dr Power, Dr Sanderson, Dr Stinson, Dr Ylijoki, Dr Al Zaman, Dr Zhyznomirska, Mr Brophy, Mr Peters, Ms van den Hoogen, Ms Tan, Mr Ganapathy, Ms Hodge, and Ms Bell, Secretary of Senate.

**GUESTS:** Dr Kay, Ms Sargeant-Greenwood, Dr Bourgeois, Dr Hervieux, and Ms Harding,

**REGRETS:** Dr Francis, Dr Brosseau, Dr Fan, Dr Kocum, Dr O'Brien, Ms Barrett, and Ms Boudreau,

The meeting was called to order at 2:01 pm. Dr Grandy chaired.

**23097**      **REPORT OF AGENDA COMMITTEE**  
The agenda was accepted as posted.

**23098**      **SPRING GRADUATES**  
Documentation presented at the meeting as **Appendix A** (file copies to Deans and Senate only)  
**Key Discussion Points:**

- Question: Will the student's Major be printed in the program? Answer: No.
- Question: Can we make this a suggestion for a future term? Answer: Yes.

**Action Item: Peters.**

Moved by Peters and seconded, **“to confer degrees and distinctions on those represented on the list (circulated as Appendix A2) at the Spring Convocation”.** Motion carried.

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

**23099**      **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**  
Posted as **Appendix B** for this meeting (10 min).  
**Key Discussion Points:**  
The President referred to the report included with meeting materials and highlighted the following:  
**Discovery and Innovation in a Learning-Centered Environment**

- Recruitment of students is an important focus. Global recruiting calls have been dispatched.
- We welcomed many high school students from across Nova Scotia to campus for the annual Techsploration program encouraging 'women in science'. Saint Mary's has a long partnership with Techsploration and its many connections to pathways for careers for women in science.
- Provided input to the draft Inventory of Health Research being carried out by Nova Scotia's universities as we work to develop close alignment with the Action for Health agenda of the provincial government.
- Work is underway to plan and implement the many components of the healthcare data analytics initiative thanks to the many colleagues who are working on these related projects.

### **Intercultural Learning**

- Continue working with Canadian Military Veteran Friendly Campuses, both to design forms of engagement for post-secondary institutions and to seek financial resources through Veterans Affairs Canada.

### **Institutional Sustainability**

- The Universities Canada Board met with the federal deputy minister on April 27th, focusing on immigration issues, study permit processing, and the development of a 'trusted institution' model that highlights ethical practices in recruiting, permit processing and continued support for international students.
- We are continuing discussions with the province of Nova Scotia regarding student housing. There is considerable alignment with Students Nova Scotia.
- CONSUP continues to coordinate the preparatory work required to negotiate a new MOU with the NS Government in 2024. Emerging items include an increase in the percentage change (4-5%) in the operating grant, greater flexibility on tuition fees (set at 3%), seeking government support for accessibility and deferred maintenance, enhancing programming for the prevention of sexualised violence, accessibility, and for support of mental health programming, and student housing.
- We are working with government regarding the carbon tax issue. SMU is burning natural gas but that still has some impact.
- CONSUP will shortly release reports from Deloitte and Gardiner Pinfold detailing the economic impact of rising costs on the university sector. The Vice-Presidents Finance and Administration of our universities are working together to bring all this material together.

**23100**

### **VICE-PRESIDENT ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH REPORT**

Posted as **Appendix C** for this meeting (10 min).

#### **Key Discussion Points:**

- The report of the Ad Hoc Committee to Review the Faculty of Education was submitted to Academic Planning. APC decided that the report was of significant importance and required further consultation and consideration which they are undertaking. This report will come forward to the Senate in September.
- Planning, engagement with stakeholders, and scheduling has begun on the \$25 million healthcare initiative.

- We are working with SMUFU and CUPE 3912 to develop guidelines for Indigenous community co-instructors, which is to be discussed with the President's Advisory Committee for Indigenous Affairs.

### **AVP Enrolment Management and Registrar**

- Enrolments are good, and we are tracking above the results from last year for the spring and summer sessions.
- The 2022 – 2023 comparison enrolment data was presented.
- Field courses are beginning for the spring session. These are our first set of field courses since the pandemic. Student safety and budgeting are at the forefront of planning and monitoring.
- A space study is underway involving The Language Centre and the Engineering department.

### **AVP Teaching and Learning**

- Educational development - A number of projects are underway.
  - EDIA training modules development and roll-out.
  - Development of a digital learning presence for international leaders in Innovation, Development and Policy.
  - Faculty Awards and Grants.
  - Two workshops on accessibility were held recently.
  - Two upcoming campus events – Workshop on using H5P tools in Brightspace and a Faculty Regional Event highlighting teaching practices using Crowdmark platform.
- SMUCV is replaced with Uniweb Tools.

### **Academic program support – web-course development**

- 2023-2024 Online (ww) Course Development and Delivery Plans are almost finalized.

**23101**

### **SMUSA PRESIDENT'S REPORT** (Academic focus)

Listed as **Appendix D** (5 min).

#### **Key Discussion Points:**

- The new SMUSA Senate representatives are Shiray Tan, Ashish Ganapathy, Rilla Barrett, Naima Hodge, and Meghan Boudreau. The new SMUSA team transitioned in on April 24.
- Students are concerned about the winter exam schedule. At least one exam exceeded the three-hour maximum, and students wrote exams for six straight hours.
- Question: Which exams? Answer: It was an accounting exam. The previous SMUSA VPA reached out to Dr Power about the accounting exam in question, and it has been addressed. The faculty member thought that they were helping the students by allowing extra time for the exam.

**23102**

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

#### **Key Discussion Points:**

- Question: Is there any progress towards hiring a provost or a (not interim) VPAR. Answer: Dr VanderPlaat was offered a two-year appointment as interim

VPAR, but the process is underway, and we should see an appointment in August 2024. Currently, the positions are combined.

- Question: Does the MOU with the provincial government expire sometime soon? Answer: The current agreement runs until 2024 but the government is keen to move toward a renewal before the end date. A consultation process is currently underway. The chair of the CONSUP Board signs this document and it is the means to which the provincial government agrees to support programming at the post secondary institutions in Nova Scotia.
- Question: Is there an update on position of AVP Enrolment? Answer: There is an offer out now.
- Question: Is there a backup plan if the search for a VPAR/Provost is unsuccessful? Answer: We are working on that, but we can fall back to appointing an interim VPAR while we regroup. We are enhancing our policy on this through the Board.
- Question: Will a search process be started for the Dean of Science? There will be an interim Dean for both the Science and SSB until someone is hired.
- Question: Will we be revisiting the VPAR/Provost model? Answer: That is currently under review.
- Question: What content is being removed from the calendar? Answer: One of the reasons that content was removed from the calendar was so that information was not published in multiple places which often were not in sync. The processes were to be transparent regarding the course and program content in the Academic Calendar. Information specific to departments and editorial content about programs was to be moved to a webpage.
- Question: The percentage of graduates getting distinctions seems to be much higher than in the past. Is this a good thing, or a sign of something like grade inflation? Is the institution looking at the reason for this? Answer: The Dean of Science advised that the GPA of students coming in to the university has been higher than in the past, and their performance reflects that situation.
- The revision to exclude the P/NC grade from the calculations of the GPA was only implemented this year. We have not seen the influence of that revision yet.
- Question: What would be an acceptable response from Senate if there were issues with grade inflation? Answer: If such were happening, if the grades went through the Dean to the Registrar's Office that would add a check point to identify such a practice. This type of research and data analysis would require another resource in IA.

23103

### **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Minutes of the meeting of April 14, 2023, were *circulated* as **Appendix E**.

#### **Key Discussion Points:**

- Page 5 – Amendment – Recommendation #2 was about establishing communication between the Senate and the Board. The minutes say, 'the faculty and the Board.'
- Page 7 – After the motion regarding December 8 was defeated, there was further discussion. Move the three bullet points including the action item for President to a position after the motion.

**There being no further revisions or objections, the minutes of the meeting of April 14, 2023, are approved as revised.**

**23104**

**BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

1. Discrepancy between the Academic Calendar of Events and the notice from People and Culture concerning Dec 8 and the campus January reopening (Jan 4 vs Jan 3) (update by Dr Summerby-Murray).

**Discussion Points**

- The President conveyed to the EMG that Senate defeated the motion concerning December 8 (Friday) Patronal Feast of the University being changed to Administrative Offices 'open' instead of closed. They are still working on the resolution for this. They have offered options and possibilities for an event on Dec 8.
2. Experiential Learning Programs
    - Suggestion – The Senate should discuss the existing experiential learning programs and attempt to identify innovative approaches or improvements that could be initiated into our current process. To facilitate these future developments and/or identify potential improvements that could be implemented, SMU could also do a wide consultation with faculty that have operated these programs as a part of existing academic courses or programs.
      - Question: How would we bring this together? Answer: In Arts there is a Director of Outreach and Coordination and others that work on this area and on these issues.
      - Question: Is there such a process in each faculty? Answer: There are only field schools within the Faculty of Arts with the possible exception of the Model UN course and trip.
      - Question: Do all experiential learning opportunities need to be connected to a course? Answer: We have opportunities that are not connected to academic courses or programs. Some experiential learning opportunities are offered through the library, some are non-credit, and some are stand-alone for which credit can be given. Response: Perhaps a broader definition is needed to include these other opportunities.

Moved by Barclay and seconded **“that Senate temporarily adjourns for a five-minute break.” Motion carried.**

**23105**

**REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

- a) MBA (& CPA Stream deferred) Program Review documentation (Dr Chantal Hervieux).

**Appendix F** - APC Notice of Motion, **Appendix G** – Recommendation-Comparison summary, **Appendix H** – Self Study Report, **Appendix I** - Self Study appendices (I1-I7), **Appendix J** – Dean’s Response to Self Study, **Appendix K** - External Program Review Committee’s (PRC) Final Report, (**Note: see App G for the following two items**) Program Response to PRC Report and Dean’s response to PRC Report.

**Discussion Points:**

**Theme 1: Clarify the identity of the MBA Program.**

- **Recommendation 1.1:** APC concurs with the Dean and encourages the program to address this recommendation on a priority basis.

***Theme 2: Improve alumni engagement.***

- **Recommendation 2.1:** APC supports the responses of the Program and the Deans and asks the program to collaborate with the Deans and Advancement to develop a strategy to address this recommendation.

***Theme 3: Recommendations regarding the format and content of the MBA program.***

- **Recommendation 3.1:** APC concurs with the Deans and urges the program to explore options for bundling courses for the creation of certificates.
- **Recommendation 3.2:** APC concurs with the responses of the program and the Deans.
- **Recommendation 3.3:** APC concurs with the program and the Deans that this recommendation is beyond the scope of the MBA program review.
- **Recommendation 3.4:** APC supports the responses of the program and the Deans.

***Theme 4: Improve recruitment and admissions process.***

- **Recommendation 4.1:** APC supports the response of the Deans and encourages the program to collaborate with the Deans and Advancement to develop a strategy to address this recommendation.
- **Recommendation 4.2:** APC supports the responses of the program and the Deans and encourages the program to continue to evolve their admission criteria in response to this recommendation.
- **Recommendation 4.3:** Connected with 3.3. APC supports the responses of the program and the Deans.

***Theme 5: Ensure student success for all learners.***

- **Recommendation 5.1:** APC encourages the program to work with the AVP Diversity Excellence, the Director of Diversity, Inclusion, and Wellness, the Deans and Associate Deans to reflect on ways as a program they could increase and implement IDEA.
- **Recommendation 5.2:** \*APC supports the response of the Deans and acknowledges the vital role faculty and coordinators play as an integral part in this process.
- **Recommendation 5.3:** This is a resource issue and beyond the scope of APC and Senate. This is referred to the Deans and the program for review during the annual budgetary review.
- **Recommendation 5.4:** APC encourages the program to work with the AVP Diversity Excellence, the Director of Diversity, Inclusion, and Wellness, the Deans and Associate Deans to reflect on ways the program could decolonize and indigenize.

***Theme 6: Pedagogical methods and course delivery options for enhancing the student learning experience.***

- **Recommendation 6.1:** APC supports the responses of the program and the Deans and encourages the program to explore additional opportunities for experiential learning.

- **Recommendation 6.2:** APC supports the responses of the program and the Deans and encourages the program to consider more opportunities to foster more effective team learning approaches.
- **Recommendation 6.3:** APC supports the responses of the program and the Deans and encourages the exploration of additional opportunities for service learning.
- **Recommendation 6.4:** APC concurs with the program and the Deans.
- The program review was done during the pandemic but the feedback from students was still good. With acknowledgment of the economic situation and the recommendations impacted, there is commitment to work toward a response to the recommendations as per the responses provided in the documentation.

Moved by VanderPlaat and seconded,  
**“that Senate supports the APC recommendations arising from the MBA program review as listed above.” Motion carried.**

Moved as an omnibus motion by VanderPlaat and seconded,  
**“that the MBA program submit an Action Plan, which is based on the preceding recommendations, to the Academic Planning Committee in time for the August 2023 meeting of the APC”.**

and

**“that one year after the approval of the Action Plan, the MBA program submit a one-year report to the Academic Planning Committee on the progress made on the Action Plan according to Section 5 of the Senate Policy on the Review of Programs at Saint Mary’s University”.**

and

**“that two-years after Senate approval of the one-year report, the MBA program submit a three-year report to the Academic Planning Committee on the progress made on the Action Plan according to Section 5 of the Senate Policy on the Review of Programs at Saint Mary’s University”.**

**Motions carried.**

- b) Request to move the administrative home of the MAHSR program to the Faculty of Science (Dr Adam Sarty)

**Appendix L1** APC Notice of Motion - **Appendix L2 - Request.**

**Discussion Points:**

- Question: Is this consistent with the rest of the graduate programming?  
 Answer: Yes. This was the only program within graduate studies that did not have a home within a faculty.
- This program was intended to have an administrative “home” within the CN Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. This was not able to be effectively implemented and resulted in the de facto administrative “home Faculty” being the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR).
- Question: What is the view of those instructing in this program regarding the move? Answer: This has been discussed and supported within the program group.

- Members were advised that shifting the program administrative home for the MAHSR is an internal issue and does not require MPHEC approval. Notice of this change will be sent to MPHEC next week if this request is approved today.

Moved by VanderPlaat and seconded, **“that Senate approves moving the administrative home of the Master of Applied Health Services Research (MAHSR) program to the Faculty of Science effective as of September 1, 2023”**. Motion carried.

23106

**HONORARY DEGREE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Honorary Degree Recommendations, *Appendix M*

**Discussion Points:**

- Question: Is there confirmation that this candidate is retired? Answer: The question was asked, and our understanding is that they retired as of December 2022. **Action Item: President** will follow up to confirm.

**“BE IT RESOLVED THAT Senate accepts the recommendation of the Honorary Degrees Committee that the Board of Governors should award the degree of Doctor of Civil Law, Honoris Causa, to this candidate, and hereby makes such recommendation to the Board of Governors.” Resolution passed.**

23107

**NEW BUSINESS FROM**

- The out-going Senators were thanked for the service (O'Brien, Irving, Power, Bhabra, Peters, and Al Zaman).
- Senators were encouraged to attend Convocation next week.
- The Senate Chair was thanked for the effective manner in which she chaired Senate this academic year.

23108

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 P.M.