

Halifax, Nova Scotia  
Canada, B3J 3C3  
Senate Office, MS 114  
Tel: 902-420-5412  
Fax: 902-420-5104  
Web: www.smu.ca

## SENATE MEETING MINUTES February 13, 2009

The 515<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Senate of Saint Mary's University was held on Friday, February 13, 2009, at 2:30 PM, in the Secunda Marine Boardroom. Dr. Naulls, Chairperson, presided.

**PRESENT:** Dr Dodds, Dr Murphy, Dr Butler, Dr Dixon, Dr Enns, Dr Vessey, Dr Beaulé, Dr Bjornson, Dr Charles, Dr Kennedy, Dr Kimery, Dr McCalla, Dr Naulls, Dr Pendse, Dr Stinson, M. DeYoung, K. Hotchkiss, B. MacDonald, A. Dong, Y. Hanna, M. Bennett, G. Morrison, and B. Bell, Secretary to the Office of Senate

**REGRETS:** Dr Wicks, Dr Crocker, Dr Dawson, Dr Pe-Piper, Dr Rand, Dr Russell, Dr van Proosdij, S. Cunningham, A. Harris, and C. MacDougall.

Meeting commenced at 2:33 PM.

### **08051**      **REPORT OF THE AGENDA COMMITTEE**

Senators were advised of an amendment to the report of the Agenda Committee. Under item #5 Business Arising the following item will be added:

**.02 MBA Program - Response to External Review of MBA Program.** The program is responding to a request for additional information arising from the Senate meeting of January 16, 2009. The document has been circulated as Appendix E.  
Report accepted as amended.

### **08052**      **RESENTATION – ATRIUM AND GLOBAL LEARNING COMMONS PROJECT UPDATE**

G. Morrison/ M. Bennett/ E. Enns/ M. DeYoung presented the following key points:

- A town hall meeting was held recently to present information to the SMU Community and to answer questions.
- From the perspective of consultation, the whole process has been stakeholder intensive through design, planning and construction stages.
- The Atrium complex picks up on the theme of the science building.
- The Atrium and Global Commons building consists of three floors and a basement level.

- The third floor: Department of Astronomy & Physics, graduate student space, an academic flex classroom, and ICS Resource.
  - The second floor: a flex classroom, ICF Suite, M&CS Research, the offices of the Dean of FGSR and a demo classroom.
  - The main level: a 100 seat interactive classroom, multipurpose rooms, the global commons, CAID and the CAT Lab, Library resource services, and the green café. Main features are: the Bio wall, fixed computer stations, mobile seating, elevator & stairway and artwork throughout.
  - There will be research in the form of growing pods on the atrium green roof with activity similar to that already established on the library roof.
- The opening of the global commons is scheduled for September, 2009. This deadline is challenging and we need good weather to stay on time. For full operational capacity, other areas of the building may have to open as they are completed in the next two or three months.
  - The concept of a learning commons is not new and many universities have incorporated them as a part of their facilities.
  - Dr. Murphy is the chair of the Implementation Committee consisting of 12 members representing numerous areas that will have a functional presence in the commons.
  - There are also a number of working groups dealing with various issues arising from this initiative; such as: HR – led by K. Squires, Usage – led by E. Enns, Technology – led by P. Sisk, and Communications – led by C. McCarthy.
  - The vision for this development comes directly from the Academic Plan, specifically to: “Increase student success by enhancing programs and services that support that goal.”
  - The Global Commons is a deliberately designed learning environment and the function is to transform space, services and resources to facilitate learning. Universities increasingly promote learning-centered education, where faculty and students work together in an environment that encourages “generative learning”. That is the philosophy behind the Global Commons. This space is not intended to function as a social centre. It is intended to enable collaboration, accommodate a wide variety of teaching styles and facilitate academic discourse. And offers a variety of ways to communicate, through the use of IT, Technology and New Media.
  - The Green Café is meant to facilitate the social discourse that is connected with learning.
  - The Commons was conceived as a ‘hub and spoke’ model incorporating an extended range of learning support functions.
  - The core elements of the ‘Hub’ are, info services and resources; space for students & faculty to get together, space for group work and also for individual student study; CAID/CAT Lab for faculty and student support, a demonstration classroom, videoconferencing facilities and international displays to reflect the multicultural nature of SMU.
  - The spokes are: The Writing Centre, the flex room (to provide activity and engagement), The Atlantic Centre (special needs learning lab – support for students with challenges), The Den in response to students advising that there are never enough computers and opportunities to access those resources on campus.

- Satellite locations, for example the SMU Art Gallery, add to the rich cultural resources.
- Next Steps are:
  - Finish construction by early Fall 2009
  - Continue the work of the Global Commons Implementation Committee to ensure timely response to changing demands;
  - Communicate awareness of the commons as a new learning facility on campus, to change the culture on campus. This place is there to facilitate learning and not just a place to socialize and hang-out.
- Question: How will the results to be measured? Answer: Student surveys will give some answers to this. If the message that this is a learning space gets through, observation of that fact would be a measure of success. If there is evidence of faculty and students working collaboratively within the space that would be another indication of success. A higher rate of student persistence could also be looked at as another measure of success. This space should also promote a sense of belonging and a sense of community on campus. This should be able to be measured as an indication of success.
- Question: How are the spokes connected? Answer: Trained individuals will be working within the space representing the library and ITSS. These individuals will be aware, and have a full knowledge of what is available to students. They will be able to refer students to the appropriate support groups around campus. The human element of that service will be the focus.
- Question: Will there be an information desk? Answer: The library opens significantly into this space and there will be an information area that is clearly designated.
- Question: Will signage be clear on where these services are located? Answer: It is a challenge but evidences the importance of having service staff who are fully knowledgeable of what is available to our students. The communication plan will have to be revisited in relation to this.
- Question: Has thought been given on how to inspire students from different disciplines and faculties to come to this area? An example for concern was suggested: commerce students who utilize the currently existing facilities in the Sobey building. Answer: The 'hub and spoke' construct addresses that issue. Because of the resources available in the global commons, it is expected that all groups will come to access those and will mingle in that environment.
- Question: Will there be extended hours for these services to be open? Answer: Specific services will be open earlier and close later than the current library schedule.
- Question: Is it anticipated that faculty will hold informal classes in the common area? Answer: That is a possibility.
- It was suggested that teaching faculty should declare a time that they would be available in the learning commons similar to the posting of office hours.

**08053**

**MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

- .01 Minutes of the meeting of January 16, 2009 were circulated as **Appendix A**.  
Moved by Enns, and seconded, “**that the minutes of the meeting of January 16, 2009 be approved as circulated**”.  
**Motion carried unanimously.**

08054

**BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

- .01 Report on the status of Saint Mary's University Suggestion System  
Dodds presented the following key points:
- A hard copy of the report was forwarded to the senator requesting this item for the agenda.
  - 252 suggestions were received.
  - A number of suggestions received related to energy efficiency. An energy audit was completed in April of 2007 and we have since initiated our Energy Management Project. As a part of our commitment to environmental stewardship, the conversion to natural gas will reduce the university's emissions by more than 2,000 tonnes a year. This will result in a reduction of carbon dioxide emissions by 32 per cent, sulfur dioxide emissions by 99.9 per cent, nitrogen oxide emissions by 79 per cent and particulate emissions by 90 per cent. We are also currently working on some of the energy savings suggestions we received. The cost of the energy audit is a total of \$5 million with an eight year payback in terms of savings.
  - A number of suggestions received were from individuals simply venting on one issue or another. The university will continue to survey faculty and staff on issues.
  - Some examples of suggestions were:
    - To listen to our students.
    - That we should have more comfortable ‘arm’ chairs in some classrooms. There is not enough of the tabled desk/chairs for left handed individuals. They are also not very popular. As we renovate this is being addressed. We are committed to upgrading our classrooms. The next big renovation will be McNally building. We will address this issue in that building then.
    - There were 22 suggestions related directly to faculty and approximately 22 related to IT issues. Many were related to facilities.
  - Question: An opinion was expressed that the small number of suggestions was disappointing. If the SMU community saw these implemented with more vigour and persistence, more suggestions might be received. Answer: SMU will be working on this area. We will also be improving the areas of energy consumption over time.
- .02 **MBA Program - Response to External Review of MBA Program.**  
Murphy presented the following key points:
- At the last Senate meeting the point was made that the rationale was not provided for rejecting the recommendation to reduce the number of core courses. Senate requested clarification. This document addresses that issue.

- It was noted that in the third line of the document stating there are 14 or 15 required courses out of 20. It is stated that this number is lower than at other universities. The examples given later in that paragraph are Dalhousie and Carleton at 65%, Memorial at 60% and McGill at 50%. SMU is at 75%. All the examples are less than our program which would appear to support the recommendation of the review. Members were advised that since these programs are lock step programs, they are more like 80 – 100%.

**.03 Revision to Saint Mary's University Policy on Integrity in Research and Scholarship and Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Scholarly Misconduct**

Vessey advised members that legal advice had been received regarding the changes to this policy approved by Senate at the January 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. No issues were found. The policy was approved as amended on January 16 and will be posted on the Senate website.

**08055 REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

**.01 Academic Planning**

**.0101 ASTR & PHYS Program Review Reports** attached as *Appendix B, C & D*.

Murphy advised that due to an oversight, the invitation for the department to attend the Senate meeting was not sent. Discussion will be postponed until the next Senate meeting to allow the department to participate if it wishes to do so. If Senators have any specific questions they were asked to provide those as soon as possible to provide the department ample time to provide a response.

**.0102 IRST program review**

Murphy advised that the department has responded. The APC requested additional information and had meetings with the department prior to submission of the documentation to Senate. An amended review response is expected for submission to Senate in March.

**08056 REPORT OF AD-HOC COMMITTEES**

None at this time

**08057 REPORT OF JOINT COMMITTEES**

None at this time

**08058 REPORT OF PRESIDENTIAL COMMITTEES**

None at this time

**08059 NEW BUSINESS FROM**

**.01 Chair**

As per SMU By-Laws, Section 4 Officers of the University, Article 4 (2) (a) & (b) (III) - two faculty members are to be chosen by the Senate <<not necessarily from the Senate>> for a Review Committee for the Administrative Vice-President.

- Question: What is the timeframe? Answer: Once all nominations are received we would send out a notice to faculty and staff and then solicit from outside the University. The whole process should be complete by the summer. The following faculty volunteered:
  - S. Bjornson, Biology Department
  - D. Naulls, Political Science Department

**Volunteers approved by acclamation.**

**08060**

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Dodds advised the following:

- The Sobey School of Business went through the AACSB reaccreditation procedure this week. They had representatives from AACSB on campus Sunday, Monday and Tuesday of this week. While the review committee found some gaps, overall the review was positive. The reviewers expressed some concern about outcome measurement and stated that if their recommendation to the Accreditation Board were not accepted, it would be for that reason. They were looking for more alignment to the Academic Plan. The recommendation was that the school continue for a further five years. This recommendation goes to a higher body for review and approval but the outcome is expected to be positive.
- Dodds presented the following information regarding the media coverage of the lecture event of last Thursday.
  - This was a prolife event.
  - It was widely advertised.
  - The sponsoring group is not a recognized member of SMUSA.
  - Dodds became aware of the event the day before it was scheduled. Requests to cancel the lecture were received but were rejected after investigation resulted in no valid reason to take such an action.
  - A protest or demonstration was expected, campus security was alerted, and subsequently SMU security advised police that a protest demonstration was expected.
  - Video footage of the incident is available on YouTube.
  - Protesters were not all SMU students.
  - An individual police officer dropped by to check on the event and subsequently called his staff sergeant. When the staff sergeant arrived he called for backup.
  - The protestors were told that they would be arrested if they continued.
  - Brownlow did come into Saint Mary's and attempt to reduce the conflict. She is currently away from campus leading a student delegation to Belfast, but when she returns she is going to attempt to get the two groups together.
  - Friday the lecturer went to ST FX where 100 attended a similar lecture. There was a silent demonstration and the lecturer was able to present.
  - We are reviewing our options on this event and how we handle future events.
- **QUESTION:** Who stopped the event from proceeding? **ANSWER:** The protestors stayed after they were warned they would be arrested. The demonstrators only left when the decision was made to move the event off-campus.

- **QUESTION:** Who made the decision to move the presentation?  
**ANSWER:** It appears to have been a consensus decision. There was discussion between Brownlow, the Chaplain and Security. It appears that out of that discussion a consensus was reached and the Chaplain then advised the group that the event was going to be moved so that those who wanted to hear the presentation could. This raises a fundamental issue that in the university environment a dialogue must be allowed. We were proactive in the afternoon prior to the event and we did consult with Security and Brownlow. There was a risk of protests but the university should not respond to threats or restrict the presentation of differing views. We felt that within this environment people would respect freedom of speech. This sets a terrible precedent for the future and we welcome any suggestions from Senate.
- **QUESTION:** Freedom of expression should be an issue over which Senate has purview. We have no policy on who makes the call on these types of issues. Is there a role for Senate to come up with a policy? There was support in the Senate members for this concept.
- Members were advised that a search on the presenter was done by the head of SMU Security. No reason was found to prevent the presentation. The police were made aware that the potential for a protest was there. In future we should have a greater lead time to prepare for these potential situations and have a plan in place to deal with them. Since Thursday, the focus and most if not all of the angst has been around freedom of speech. In the end, no one was hurt, no one was arrested and the presentation did go ahead, albeit in an adjacent Church property.

**08061**

**QUESTION PERIOD**

- Murphy reminded members of the upcoming open house events. There will be separate events for Science, Commerce and Arts. Students seem to be more advanced in the decision making process and want something more specific. The dates are: February 27, March 6, and March 13.
- Members were advised that Saint Mary's will open registration of students for the 2009-2010 academic year in the early Spring. Many people worked very hard to make this goal possible. March 12 is the date that on-line registration opens. This will allow us to respond better when a course come under pressure due to heavy enrolment. Murphy expressed appreciation to all those who worked to make early registration possible.

**08062**

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Barb Bell,  
Secretary to the Office of Senate