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SENATE MEETING MINUTES March 13, 2009

The 516th Meeting of the Senate of Saint Mary's University was held on Friday, March 13, 2009, at 10:00 AM, 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 Dawson, Dr Kimery, Dr McCalla, Dr Naulls, Dr Pe-Piper, Dr van Proosdij, M. DeYoung, B. MacDonald, S. Cunningham, A. Dong, A. Harris, Dr Short and B. Bell, Secretary to the Office of Senate

REGRETS: Dr Wicks, Dr Bjornson, Dr Charles, Dr Crocker, Dr Kennedy, Dr Pendse, Dr Rand, Dr Russell, Dr Stinson, Y. Hanna, K. Hotchkiss, and C. MacDougall.

Meeting commenced at 10:10 AM.

08063 REPORT OF THE AGENDA COMMITTEE

Senators were advised of an amendment to the report of the Agenda Committee. The following items will be reordered: Emeritus will be addressed first, followed by Honorary Degrees, and the motions related to the Literacy Council.

Report accepted as amended.

08064 NOMINATIONS FOR PROFESSOR EMERITUS

Dodds presented the nominations for G. Thomas and J. Hill circulated as **Appendix E**.

Discussion covered the following key points:

➤ Hill is associated with English and not History.

Moved by Dodds, and seconded, **“that Senate approves the recommendation of Dr. Gillian Thomas and Dr. Janet Hill for Professor Emeritus status and will forward the recommendation to the Board of Governors for awarding.”** Motion carried.

08065 REPORT OF JOINT COMMITTEES

.01 **Honorary Degrees**, recommendations circulated at **Appendix F**

Dodds presented brief background information on each recommendation.

An omnibus motion was moved by Dr. Dodds, and seconded, **“that the Senate approves the recommendations for Honorary Degrees as presented in Appendix F.”**

Motion carried unanimously.

08066

NEW BUSINESS

.01 Floor (involving notice of motion)

.001 Motion to rescind a previous motion circulated as Appendix G

Key points:

- Enns advised that she is responsible for oversight of the Literacy Council and that is why she is bringing this motion forward.
- The Council was established as an advisory group to, and a governing council for the Writing Centre. The intent was to ensure a faculty link with the Centre. In 2006 it seemed appropriate to consider this as the Senate Committee. In time this decision proved not to be the best approach. There are several considerations: 1) The Senate Committee has a larger mandate than the Literacy Council; 2) Faculty have the opportunity to rotate through Senate Committees and that isn't possible with the Council. A faculty position was created in response to an agreement with SMUFU. One responsibility in the job description is to chair this committee; and 3) The Council was established more to deliver the literacy strategy.

Moved by Enns, and seconded, **“that Senate *rescind* the motion approved at the meeting of January 13, 2006 (06011.02), specifically that Senate recognize the Literacy Council, established by mutual agreement between the University and the Faculty Union, as the Senate Committee on Literacy Strategy called for in the Campus-wide Literacy Strategy approved by the Senate.” Motion carried unanimously.**

.002 Amendment to Senate Bylaw sub-section 5.2.13 attached as Appendix H.

Key Points:

- The University Librarian will chair this committee.
- There will be faculty representation on this committee consistent with other committees of Senate (Arts, Science and Commerce) with the stipulation that one of those faculty representatives be a member of Senate.
- This committee will have a more strategic focus than the Literacy Council.
- Correction in 5.2.13.1 – remove the comma after the word Strategy.
- Question: When were problems noted? Answer: This came to light most recently when the chair of the Literacy Council wanted to resign from the position of chair. This was a responsibility in her job description and could not happen. The council was also working too much on policy when it was intended to do other things.
- Question: Should the Chair of the Literacy Council be included in the members of the Senate Committee? Answer: That isn't necessary. The Senate Committee will coordinate with the Council.

- It was suggested that the Director of Continuing Education be added to the committee membership because this position could provide a good perspective to the committee.

Moved by Murphy and seconded, **“that the Director of Continuing Education be added to the membership structure of the Senate Committee on Literacy Strategy.”** Motion carried.

Moved by Enns and seconded **“that Senate approve the change to Senate Bylaw sub-section 5.2.13, terms of reference for the Senate Committee on Literacy Strategy submitted as Appendix H as amended,”** Motion carried

08067 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

- .01 Minutes of the meeting of February 13, 2009 were circulated as ***Appendix A.***
Moved by Murphy, and seconded, **“that the minutes of the meeting of February 13, 2009 be approved as circulated”.**
Motion carried unanimously.

08068 **BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

- .01 **ASTR & PHYS Program Review Reports** circulated as ***Appendix B, C & D.***
Discussion covered the following key points:
 - Murphy advised this was a very constructive and positive review especially with respect to those recommendations that fell within the purview of Senate.
 - The Department was congratulated for the way this review proceeded.
 - A senator expressed concern related to Recommendation #8 *“the University and the FT faculty union to together create a new type of permanent position at Saint Mary’s for people who would serve as full-time Instructors, teaching no less than 3 and 3 each year, who would differ from FT Professors in that they would not be expected to carry out research nor to supervise undergraduate or graduate student research.”* A handout dated 14 November, 1986 ‘Recommendations of Research Policy for Saint Mary’s University’ was circulated to Senators for information purposes only and identified as ***Appendix J*** for this meeting. Statements a) and b) on page three (3) are germane to this discussion. This document was approved by Senate and stated that that all faculty have equal responsibility for both teaching and research. *“It is hoped we will never have a two tiered system where some professors are only responsible for teaching. I disagree with the creation of a position responsible for only one of research or teaching.”*
 - Short responded that this item came from a recommendation in the self study. It would help the department solve a number of practical problems which are: 1) the trouble finding qualified people to teach courses. The term professor would not be associated with this new position. Other research universities classify a professor as one who

does what we currently do at Saint Mary's. A faculty member who just instructs courses is called an instructor. We have faculty members who are exceptional researchers. They balk at the teaching workload that we have here at SMU. We have attracted some extraordinary researchers and they don't want to carry a teaching load of 3 and 2. They bring in significant research funding and bring international regard to the university. The department recognizes that SMU will have to address the philosophical question "What kind of a University is SMU trying to become?"

- Question: Other departments find the half course reduction ample. Why is an exception needed? Answer: The chair has to go out and find qualified part-timers to teach the courses for which release has been granted. There are a very limited number of part-time instructors that can teach quantum theory. There is a hidden cost to this problem. Undergraduate students surveyed in our self-study identified the very poor quality of instruction in core courses taught by part-time faculty as a major problem, but not those taught by full-time faculty. The hope is that a permanent full-time instructorship would attract a higher quality applicant than does a term-limited part-time instructorship, and that someone in such a position would see themselves as vested in the quality and long-term viability of their department's programs.
- The Dean of Science acknowledged that a broader discussion was undertaken within the faculty of science on this issue. The issue isn't one of reducing teaching, but of providing effective instruction for the students. Part-timers are not vested enough in the institution to ensure long-time quality teaching for the students. A longer-term contract would give the part-timers more stability and hours. The benefit would be to attract a higher quality instructor and to enable existing faculty to do research. There was support within the Faculty of Science for such positions if structured properly. In most sciences there is significant money dedicated to pedagogical research outside of Canada.
- This debate is more a collective bargaining issue, and as such is beyond the scope of Senate. Perhaps a special committee should be formed to review this issue.
- The current part-time faculty are, for the most part, only instructing and not doing research. The situation under discussion already exists at SMU. Consolidating part-time positions into full-time positions might be a step forward.
- At a recent meeting in Ottawa, colleges out west reported that in facing the current financial conditions, their institute found they could not uphold the 2-2 and were going back to 3-2 workload.
- Question: Program Review Reports presented to Senate that include a long listing of recommendations are seldom discussed or debated in terms of individual recommendations. The tendency is to approve those reports as a package. Question: Perhaps Academic Planning should be more specific in regard to this area? Answer: In past reviews, Academic Planning has supported some recommendations and not others in their submission to the Senate. Recommendations may come forward as a slate but Academic Planning might have

already taken action on certain recommendations. Currently the review process is being amended.

- The opinion was expressed that a broad based academic provides students with a higher quality education in contrast to going down the road of specialties.
- Some department faculty were advocating reducing the teaching load lower than 2-2. We currently have Canada Research Chairs whose teaching load is reduced below the 2-2 level.
- In other universities across Canada, this situation is more the norm. More universities are adopting this position relative to enabling research. Non-tenure track instructors are delivering core courses.
- In a recent survey it was discovered that lab instructors at Acadia, St. FX etc., found that they needed these positions to balance their responsibilities to their students.
- Question: What is the plan of the university to increase the availability to space and equipment? Answer: The Sobey Building was a needed addition on campus. Renovations were recently completed in the Science building with the Atrium providing additional space. The priority is now renovating the McNally Building. Burke is also on the horizon. We try our best to plan this within the very ill defined funding programs at the provincial and federal levels..
- Question: If the program review process results in recommendations for such increases, does this position the department favourably within that process. Answer: Yes.

Moved by Murphy, and seconded, **“that the Academic Planning Committee recommends to Senate that the Astronomy and Physics program proceed with the timely implementation of the recommendations accepted by the Department, and that a status report be submitted to Senate by October, 2009”**

Motion carried.

08069 NEW BUSINESS FROM

.02 Chair

.01 Nomination for Saint Mary's University representative on the CEEPA Board attached as ***Appendix I***.

Moved by Murphy and seconded, **“that Dr. Shelagh Crooks be appointed to serve as Senate’s representative on the CCEPA Board from June 1, 2009 – May 31, 2012.” Motion Carried.**

.02 Nomination call for Senate Committee on Literacy Strategy

Moved by McCalla, and seconded **“that subject to confirmation of acceptance, Dr. Kennedy is appointed as the Senate representative on the Literacy Strategy Committee.” Motion carried unanimously.** <<*Subsequently, Dr. Kennedy declined due to sabbatical and end of term on Senate in August, 2009.*>>

- The Registrar advised that all Senators were invited to join the Arts Open House lunch at noon.

08070

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Barb Bell,
Secretary to the Office of Senate