

SENATE MEETING MINUTES November 18, 2005

The 491st Meeting of the Senate of Saint Mary's University was held on Friday, November 18, 2005 at 2:30 PM in the Secunda Marine Boardroom. Dr. Naulls, Chairperson, presided.

PRESENT: Dr. Dodds, Dr. Murphy, Dr. Dixon, Dr. Richardson, Ms. Lefebvre, Dr. Konopasky, Dr. Power, Dr. Pye, Dr. MacKinnon, Dr. Stinson, Dr. McCalla, Dr. Pendse, Dr. Russell, Dr. Linney, Dr. Stretton, Dr. Bernard, Dr. Naulls, Mr. Shaw, Miss Esling, Dr. J. Cameron, Dr. S. Crooks and Ms. Bell, Secretary to the Office of Senate.

REGRETS: Dr. Dostal, Dr. Deupree, Dr. Enns, Dr. Bjornson, Mr. Jarda, Mr. Lordon, Mr. Churchill, Dr. Beaupre, Dr. Vessey, Dr. Wicks, Mr. Hotchkiss

05031 CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Naulls, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 2:39 PM.

05032 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

.01 Minutes of the meeting of October 26, 2005, were *circulated as Appendix A.*

Moved by Dr. McCalla, second by Dr. Russell, 'that the minutes of the meeting of October 26th are approved as circulated.' Motion carried unanimously.

05033 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None

05034 OUTSTANDING ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS AGENDA

None

05035 UPDATED 2005-2006 MEMBERSHIP ON SENATE COMMITTEES

.01 Circulated for information as **Appendix D.**

05036 REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

- .01** Quality of Teaching
Quality of Teaching Committee Annual Report, circulated for information as **Appendix B**.

05037 REPORT OF AD-HOC COMMITTEES

- .01** Students' Evaluation of Educational Quality (SEEQ) Implementation Committee Report circulated as **Appendix C**

Discussion covered the following key points:

- Dr. Murphy gave a brief summary on the background of the project. Drs. Crooks and Cameron were introduced and answered questions.
- Dr. Murphy reported that there has been considerable discussion and negotiation with the Saint Mary's University Faculty Union. The results of these discussions have been incorporated into the committee's report. Members were advised that there is an MOU in effect which outlines a process of student evaluation of teaching that is different than the process recommended by the Committee and that this MOU has not yet been waived. This is the reason for the negotiations with the Union.
- Dr. Murphy summarized what the Union wants:
 - A pilot study be completed to explore the feasibility and usability of various reporting mechanisms for the SEEQ data and that SMUFU have the opportunity to review and comment on the results;
 - SMU's commitment to the consistent application and interpretation of the results of the SEEQ items by the administration in all promotion and tenure decisions;
 - SMUFU's approval of the final reporting process before the SEEQ is implemented; and,
 - Agreement that the principle of consistent application of SEEQ results be incorporated into the Collective Agreement during the next round of bargaining
 - To review and comment on the results from the pilot study.
- Dr. Murphy said that there is the potential for a new collective agreement to be in place before the new evaluation form is piloted.
- Members were reminded that there were no guidelines in the collective agreement that outline how the student evaluation data will be used administratively. Concern was expressed about inconsistent use of the information. On page 3 of the report, there is a statement of commitment to consistent application standards. There was discussion about the meaning of the words, "it is assumed that". Dr. Crooks indicated that this statement meant that the committee recommended that the information shall be used consistently. Dr. Richardson indicated that the same results might mean different things in different cases and experience was important in interpreting the results.
- Dr. Crooks was asked whether there was any literature affirming the usefulness of the test results in making personnel decisions. Dr. Cameron indicated that there was none.

- Dr. Murphy indicated that the committee recommended that a pilot study be undertaken in the winter term. Dr. Crooks said that volunteers are being identified for the pilot. If some groups are not represented, the committee will recruit participants.
- Senate was reminded that it approved the use of the SEEQ at the Senate meeting of January 14, 2005. Senate understood that approval of the process today meant approval only for the pilot study for the second semester of 2005-06.
- It was noted that a condition of implementation was that faculty believe that the SEEQ provides a fair evaluation. Asked how this would be determined, Dr. Crooks said that the faculty would be asked to indicate their beliefs.
- It was noted that on page 7 of the report, the Committee identifies that the process may require modification.
- It was noted that implementation requires an agreement between the University and the Faculty Union in relation to the MOU.
- Concern was again expressed on the amount of time that would be lost by the student course evaluation administrator (as much as 25 min). There was a suggestion to provide a drop-off station in each building. The committee had considered this option. Members were advised that the process was constructed as is because if students perceive that the data is handled with respect and urgency relative to the integrity of the process, it is believed they will respond in a similar fashion.
- It was noted that evaluations could be done earlier in the semester (as in the York University model).

Moved by Dr. Dixon, second by Dr. Bernard, **“that the Senate approve the proposed procedure for a pilot project to be done at the end of the second semester of 2005 – 2006. The SEEQ Implementation Committee will analyze the results of the pilot and report back to Senate in September 2006.” Motion carried unanimously.**

A commendation was extended to the members of this committee for their commitment and diligence.

05038 REPORT OF JOINT COMMITTEES

.01 Convocation:

Dr. Dodds advised that positive feedback was received relative to the number of faculty that participated in the Fall Convocation.

05039 REPORT OF PRESIDENTIAL COMMITTEES

None

05040 NEW BUSINESS FROM

.01 Floor (Not involving notice of motion)

- Dr. Murphy advised that there will be a notice of motion in relation to the Literacy Program for next meeting.

05041

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Senate members were advised of the following:

- Dr. Richardson reported that a number of students, especially from the Departments of Geology and Mathematics, had achieved recognition worthy of note. A SMU student recently won the 'Best Student' prize at a Geology Conference. Others were awarded scholarships and 2 students have been offered jobs on oil rigs in Alberta. Students from the Computer Science Department came in second in a recent competition and qualified to compete in the North East, North American Competition. The next Science Saint Mary's publication will have more information on these achievements.
- Breast Cancer Foundation will run a two-week, full-page advertisement in the National Post that highlights participation by SMU students.

05042

QUESTION PERIOD

- There was a question about whether health services were being withdrawn from faculty and staff. Dr. Dodds responded that this has not happened yet. He informed Senate members that the number of students has increased significantly over the last few years and that there is a limit to the number of patients that the three doctors can see. The Clinic encourages everyone to have their own regular physician as there are no evenings and weekend hours.
- Dr. Murphy advised that five confidential interviews for the position of Dean of Commerce, will be conducted on Monday. During the week of the December 8/9, candidates will be interviewed for the position of Dean of Science.
- Dr. Richardson reported that the steel frame for the science building addition will be going up the end of the first week of December if the footings are completed.
- Dr. McCalla asked if anything was being done in the area of recruitment of students subsequent to a recent report that enrollment in Halifax area schools was down. Dr. Dodds responded that this is a key issue for SMU. Through the recruiting office, many initiatives are being organized (e.g. open houses, fall preview days, informational sessions for targeted areas). The University has also recently hired buses to transport high school students to the campus thereby alleviating costs to the schools.
- Dr. Dixon advised that the local enrollment numbers at SMU are up, while Dalhousie is down 10% locally and 10% provincially.
- A member asked if any measurements were being done on the return from the advertising initiatives. Dr. Dixon advised that a survey was done annually on the reasons first year students choose SMU. From these results, it has become clear that there are identifiable indicators of what constitutes a SMU student.
- Focus groups have generated age-group-specific messaging for SMU promotional material.
- Dr. Dixon provided some projections for future enrolment.

05043

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:50 P.M.

Barb Bell,
Secretary to the Office of Senate