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SENATE MEETING MINUTES March 10, 2006

The 494th Meeting of the Senate of Saint Mary's University was held on Friday, March 10, 2006, at 1:00 PM, in the Secunda Marine Boardroom. Dr. D. Naulls, Chairperson, presided.

PRESENT: Dr. Dodds, Dr. Dixon, Dr. Enns, Dr. Richardson, Dr. Wicks, Dr. D. Naulls, Dr. Bernard, Dr. Bjornson, Dr. Dawson, Mr. Hotchkiss, Dr. Konopasky, Dr. Linney, Dr. MacKinnon, Dr. McCalla, Dr. Pendse, Dr. Power, Dr. Pye, Dr. Russell, Dr. Stinson, Dr. Stretton, Mr. Peter Webster, Miss Esling, Mr. Jarda, Mr. Lordon, Mr. Larry Corrigan, Mr. Ron Cochrane, and Ms. Bell, Secretary to the Office of Senate..

REGRETS: Mr. Churchill, Dr. Dostal, Dr. Murphy, Mr. Shaw, Dr. Vessey, Ms. Lefebvre,

06013 **CALL TO ORDER**

Dr. Naulls, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 1:10 PM and advised members of the following:

- Dr. Dawson was welcomed as the newly elected Senator to the Senate.
- The elected SMUSA representatives for the 2006-07 student term starting on May 1 are: Zach Churchill, Olivier Jarda, and Christina Lopez.
- Members were advised of an addition to the agenda under the item for new business: two faculty members chosen by the Senate for a Review/Search Committee for the Vice-President, Academic and Research.

06014 **SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY 2006-2007 OPERATING BUDGET**

The Chair welcomed Mr. Larry Corrigan, Vice-President, Finance, to the meeting. He advised Senate that Mr. Corrigan would be presenting the University's 2006-2007 Operating Budget to Senate for information. Mr. Corrigan advised members that Ron Cochrane, Director; Financial Services would assist in the presentation and in the question and answer session. Mr. Corrigan advised that an electronic copy of the presentation would be supplied to the Senate Office and circulated to members by email.

Mr. Corrigan provided Senate with an outline of the 2006-2007 University Budget. Members were informed that this was a three-year rolling budget (The Board of Governors approves the first year with a forecasted outlook for years two and three).

Question and Answer Session:

- Question: When is the budget approved? Response: There are several presentations to various groups today including to the executive committee of the Board. Other presentations will follow within the next week. On March 30th it will go before the Board for approval.
- Concern was expressed about the projected \$100,000 reduction in TESL expenditures. Response: It was noted that there was room within the budget to make adjustments without significant changes to existing operations.
- Question: Has a process been put in place for the review of department budgets? Response: Not at this time. A suggested approach is to have it dealt with by the policy and priority committee. Consultation with the Deans and all directors will be done.
- Question: Has the University considered a reward structure for ideas submitted through the suggestion box system for the ideas that are implemented? Answer: Not at this time. Traditionally departments have been solicited for suggestions. Response has been poor. A system redesign is necessary.
- Concern was expressed regarding discontinuing annual publishing of the university directory. Response: As a cost-saving measure it will be published on a triennial basis. Soliciting a sponsor to fund the publication was offered as a potential alternative.
- Concern was expressed that Community College enrolments were increasing and could potentially impact first year enrollments, especially with increasing tuition fees. Response: The figures do not support any major drain.
- Question: Are there any plans to narrow the gap between SMU's tuition and the national average? Response: Members were advised that it was not a level playing field. SMU has the lowest funding in NS and likely the lowest in the country. If SMU gets more government funding this area will be reviewed.
- Question: How is the declining birthrate being planned for in the future? Response: The University has five years to respond. Expenses are being cut now (almost a million dollars) to meet this forecast. A mechanism to review all department budgets is being set up.
- Question: Where is the suggestion box? Response: In L. Corrigan's office.

Presentation concluded at 2:47 pm

Moved by Dr. Richardson, second Dr. Dawson, **“that Senate will break for five minutes and return for another hour in session to complete the balance of Agenda items.” Motion Carried.**

06015

REPORT OF THE AGENDA COMMITTEE

The report of the Agenda Committee was accepted with one addition. In the essence of time, and to enable Senate to complete all remain business, Dr. Dixon requested an adherence to the rules relating to discussion.

06016

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

.01 Minutes of January 13, 2006 meeting were circulated as Appendix B.

The following amendment was noted under Report of Joint Committees – Honorary Degrees: 06057.01.0101 Dr. Mary Sun:

“Hotchkiss advised that he took *several* courses from this individual and that in his opinion, she was an outstanding educator.”

Moved by Mr. Jarda seconded by Dr Russell, **‘that Senate approve the minutes of the meeting of January 13, 2006 as amended. Motion carried.**

06017

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

.01 None

06018

OUTSTANDING ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS AGENDA

.01 None.

06019

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

.01 Academic Planning

.0101 MPHEC submission from Faculty of Science “Certificate in Elementary-School Science” circulated as Appendix C.

- Members were advised of the background of this proposal and that Dr. Robert Dawson would respond to questions.
- Knowledge/training in pre-calculus was identified as a gap. Proposing MATH 1203 as an alternative was questioned. Response: Members were advised that MATH 1203 had previously been accepted with satisfactory results.
- It was questioned why some science courses were selected over others. Response: The initial course selection was made with the non-science student in mind.
- Why was only one psychology course included when a number of courses might have been better? Response: Members were advised that psychology is not a subject taught in the elementary curriculum in Nova Scotia. It was suggested that the list of courses could be adjusted over time and that the coordinator could allow students to take courses outside of those listed.

- It was noted that the title "Certificate in Elementary-School Science (CESS)" needed correction in the budget title and in section 5.2.
- The math calculations on the budget sheet were questioned in relation to the expected revenues. Concern was expressed about putting new programs in place that will require additional resources. Response: These are part-time students only. The market demand was projected to be for one course per semester for all sessions (total of 10 ½ credit courses). These numbers are a conservative forecast. The Certificate in Mathematics program for secondary school teachers has had a much higher subscription than expected. Elementary school teachers outnumber secondary school teachers. Members were advised of two PHIL courses coming on stream this year that might also be attractive to these students.
- Concern was expressed relative to teaching resources for first year Biology courses that have very high enrollments. This program would add 28 and 35 students in years two and three.
- Members were advised that Dr. Dawson has significant experience with the existing Certificate in Mathematics program and has the necessary background to generate the financial forecast for the new program. The number of elementary school teachers outside of the metro area is greater than that within the metro area. A greater demand for upgrading is expected within this group.
- Concern was expressed relative to who would coordinate this program. Response: A part-time coordinator will be assigned.

Moved by Dr. Enns, seconded by Dr. Richardson, **"that Senate approves the proposed MPHEC submission from Faculty of Science "Certificate in Elementary-School Science" circulated as Appendix C with the noted changes regarding the certificate title". Motion carried.**

.0102 Canadian Centre for Ethics in Public Affairs – Bylaw changes circulated as Appendix D.
Deferred due to time constraints.

.0103 Senate Nomination to CCEPA Board circulated as Appendix E.
Deferred due to time constraints.

.02 Academic Regulations

Academic Regulation 5 (a&e), 6 (b&e), 7 (a), and 21 (f) revisions attached as **Appendix F**

.0201 Regulation 5 (a&e)

Revisions to 5 (a)

- A minor change to 5(a) is simply to reduce grade points from three to two decimal places.

- There has been a change in the grade equivalencies, grade points and percentages table in response to a strong message from the students about the need to clarify what constitutes an A and C and how a number grade is converted to a letter grade.
- Members were advised of the following:
 - A number of universities across the country do not report how they convert number grades to letter grades. The ones that report on a method of conversion commonly do it the way we have proposed it.
 - This table is equivalent to those of Laurier and McMaster. McGill and Western have a range difference at the bottom end of the scale and Acadia has an A+ starting at 94.
- Discussion focused on the interpretation of an A+.
- In the comments area: Correct “decimal points” to read “decimal places”.
- It was suggested that an exceptional student is assessed in very different ways within different disciplines and it is necessary for an instructor to have some flexibility.
- Student representatives spoke in strong support of this revision for the following reasons:
 - Students are discouraged by the practice of assigning grades based solely on the arbitrary perception/decision of faculty, rather than on clearly established, objective facts.
 - Students seeking an A+ in a particular course are unable to develop a working plan without a clear definition of what they have to do in order to achieve that outcome.

Moved by Dr. Dixon, seconded by Dr. Pye, **“that Senate approves the proposed revisions to Regulation 5 (a) as circulated”**. **Motion carried** (11 For/ 7 Against).

Revisions to 5 (e)

- Following the practice of counting an IC as an F, is pre-judgmental and especially difficult for students in their graduating year.
- Most schools do not count ICs into the grade point average and have set time limits for resolution. A time limit of one month after exams is common.
- The following small editorial change was noted in the first sentence of the submission: “bee” corrected to “be”.

Moved by Dr. Dixon, seconded by Dr. Richardson, **“that Senate approves the proposed revisions to Regulation 5 (e) as amended”**. **Motion carried unanimously**.

.0202 Regulation 6 (b&e)

- Members were asked to address revisions 6 (b & e) together.

- The opinion was expressed that courses done on letters of permission should be counted into the GPA.
- Question: How will different grading schemes used elsewhere would be treated? Response: Members were advised that the new conversion table would allow for easy interpretation of grades. A pass grade is not included in the GPA and would similarly not be given a grade.
- Question: Will this be retroactive? Response: It would be difficult to recover transfer credit grades retroactively.
- Question: How is a D+ recorded? Response: It would be recorded as a D in the GPA.

Moved by Dr. Dixon, seconded by Dr. Enns, **“that Senate approves the proposed revisions to Regulation 6(b&e) as circulated”**. **Motion carried.**

.0203 Regulation 7 (a)

- When students are registered in a program they want to know which rules apply at graduation. Historically this has been variable given the date of registration and the date of declaring a major. This arises when a course is no longer being offered or another course is added as a prerequisite.
- The following correction to the revised text was noted:
 - 7. Standing Required**
 - **a.** There are multiple regulations governing a student’s program of study. These include the overall regulations for the credential (degree, certificate or diploma) as well as those for the area(s) of specialization (concentration, major, Honours, minor). For each set of regulations, the ones that apply are those in effect at the time the student first registers in the credential or declares the specialization. For example, a student admitted to a B.A. in 2004 who then declares an English major in 2006 is governed by the B.A. requirements in effect in 2004 and the English major requirements in effect in 2006. ~~If following new regulations are to a student’s advantage, the newer regulations will apply.~~ If it is advantageous for a student to follow the new regulations in meeting the requirements for the credential or specialization, the new regulations will apply

Moved by Dr. Dixon, seconded by Dr. Wicks, **“that Senate approves the proposed revisions to Regulation 7 (a) as amended”**. **Motion carried.**

.0204 Regulation 21 (f)

- It was noted that the original statement that the Dean has authority to stipulate a minimum grade, is in conflict with an agreement signed by the President some years ago. Rephrased.

- Once the Dean signs off on the course and how it is to be used, that establishes the situation for the Registrar's purposes.
- The following amendment to the revised text was noted:

21. Transfer Credit Hours

- f. All courses for which a student receives a passing grade [D (or equivalent) or higher] on Letter of Permission will be accepted for transfer credit hours. However, the Deans have the authority to stipulate a minimum grade which must be attained to transfer a particular course ~~to apply the credit in~~ for fulfillment of a particular degree or program requirement. This revision to this regulation cannot be applied on a retroactive basis.

Moved by Dr. Dixon, seconded by Mr Jarda, **“that Senate approves the proposed revisions to Regulation 21 (f) as amended”**. Motion carried.

06020 REPORT OF AD-HOC COMMITTEES

.01 None

06021 REPORT OF JOINT COMMITTEES

.01 Honorary Degrees
 Documents circulated as Appendix G
 Dr. Dodds stated that these were not necessarily for the Spring Convocation and presented information on each candidate.

Moved by Dr. Dodds, second by Dr. Bernard, **“that Senate approves the recommendations for Honorary Degrees as submitted.”** Motion carried.

06022 REPORT OF PRESIDENTIAL COMMITTEES

.01 None

06023 NEW BUSINESS FROM

.01 **Floor (Not involving notice of motion)**

- .0101 Two faculty members to be chosen by the Senate <<not necessarily from the Senate>> for a Review/Search Committee for the Vice-President, Academic and Research.
- Dr. Dodds advised that the Bylaws of Saint Mary's University state that when there is one year remaining on the term of a Vice-President, Academic and Research, a Review/Search Committee must be established.
 - Dr. Robert McCalla was nominated by Dr. John MacKinnon and agreed to serve. Dr. Dodds advised that the Committee will be officially established at the March meeting of the Board of Governors. Subsequent to that date, the committee will meet and decide on a course of action. Dr. Dodds suggested that if this becomes a search committee, the intent would be to get an appointment by Christmas.

- Dr. Kathy Singfield was nominated by Dean Enns. Confirmation of agreement to serve will be solicited.
- Dr. Robert Dawson was nominated Dr. Paul Bernard.
- Members were advised to indicate their choice by secret ballot to be collected and tabulated by the recording secretary.

Election result: Dr. R. McCalla and Dr. K. Singfield

06024

ADJOURNMENT

Further agenda items were deferred due to time restrictions. The meeting adjourned at 4:00 P.M.

Barb Bell,
Secretary to the Office of Senate