

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 May 16, 2008

The 510th Meeting of the Senate of Saint Mary's University was held on Friday, May 16, at 2:30 PM, in the Secunda Marine Boardroom. Dr. Naulls, Chairperson, presided.

PRESENT: Dr. Murphy, Dr. Charles, Dr. Dixon, Dr. Enns, Dr. Kennedy, Dr. Kimery, Dr. MacKinnon, Dr. Naulls, Dr. Pe-Piper, Dr. Power, Dr. Stinson, Dr. Vessey, Ms. MacDonald, Mr. Webster, Mr. MacDougall, Mr. Harris, and Ms. Bell, Secretary to the Office of Senate.

REGRETS: Dr. Dodds, Dr. Butler, Dr. Crocker, Dr. Dawson, Dr. Konopasky, Dr. Pendse, Dr. Rand, Dr. Wicks, Dr. Van Proosdij, Mr. Hotchkiss, Dr. McCalla, Mr. Dong, Miss Cunningham, and Miss Hanna.

Meeting commenced at 2:40 PM.

07074 **REPORT OF THE AGENDA COMMITTEE**
The report of the Agenda Committee was accepted.

07075 **SPRING GRADUATES**
Documentation was circulated by the Registrar as **Appendix A**.
Dr. Dixon advised that:

- There were no summary statistics available.
- Last year 1296 credentials were awarded. This year 1231 will be awarded. The decline was mostly in Arts with some decline in Science.
- Over the last couple of years, Dalhousie's increasing practice has been to admit students even if they are a couple of courses short of their diploma. These students are required to take the missing courses during their time at Dal.
- There has been an increase in the number of students receiving distinctions. This is, in part, because of the change in Academic Regulation 29 which was applied in the process of this year's calculations.
- Question: Convocation Program - There is a category for the EMBA graduates, in spite we don't have a degree called EMBA. The degree these students receive is an MBA and they should not be listed as if they are receiving a different degree. Answer: There is no regulation or rule to stop us from organizing graduating students in this way at the convocation. It is strictly an organizational issue.

- Question: This list is relevant to how people are organized and sit together. There is an MBA/CMA group that are not listed together and therefore do not sit together. They might wish to sit together as a group. It was conceded as a valid point and would be considered for the next convocation.
- Only 27 faculty have indicated they are attending convocation in the morning and only 24 have responded for the afternoon. Saint Mary's University has 259 full time faculty and therefore the participation rate is extremely low. Senators were asked to attend convocation.
- It was suggested that for each convocation ceremony the department identify representatives from their department to attend. There should be some local responsibility to this event.
- Senators were advised that the Department of Religious Studies has every member of the department attending.
- Question: What number of people are expected to be in attendance in morning versus afternoon? Answer: We don't have the numbers.
- It was suggested that there be one ceremony for each discipline with both Graduate and Undergraduate students receiving their degrees. Response: Traditionally all students are not grouped relative to their schools or disciplines. To achieve two ceremonies of a similar length it just worked out that grouping the Grad Studies with Arts created a ceremony of similar length. A review will be done on how much time would be needed to group them differently. There might be some benefit to having the graduate degrees awarded within their disciplines. It might present a higher profile within both Convocations and increase the profile of the graduate degree programs.

Moved by Dixon, and seconded, **“that academic credentials be bestowed on the candidates for Spring Convocation as recorded in the official graduation list, presented as *Appendix A*”**.
Motion adopted unanimously.

Moved by Dixon, and seconded, **“that Senate enables the Registrar to add such graduates to the official graduation list as may be identified after this meeting and before Convocation.”**
Motion adopted unanimously.

07076

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of April 11, 2008, were circulated as ***Appendix B***.

Moved by Power, and seconded, **“that the minutes of the meeting of April 11, 2008, 2007 are approved as circulated”**.
Motion adopted.

07077

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

See 07078-02 below

07078

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

.01

Academic Regulations

Notice of Motion attached as ***Appendix C***

- Revision to Academic Regulation 4 Grading System, and 16a. Withdrawing from a Course attached as Appendix D

Discussion covered the following points:

- Senators were given a background on the revisions.
- The following sentence in 4. Grading System d. was considered to be oddly stated: “For the majority of undergraduate courses, this feedback must equal a minimum of 15% of the final grade.” A friendly amendment was suggested: “Normally, for undergraduate courses, this feedback must equal a minimum of 15% of the final grade.” The amendment was accepted without objection.
- It was noted that this same academic regulation was found in the Graduate Calendar under the title ‘Evaluations and Grading’ and was Graduate Academic Regulation 22. Grading System. The opinion was expressed that this was predominantly an undergrad issue and might not be applicable in the graduate application. The issue was referred for further study to the graduate studies committee.
- It was noted that there would be some anomalies to the 15% rule such as directed study/readings courses at the undergrad level where they may be a single thesis paper. Students are usually aware of these situations at the beginning of the course. For certain courses, especially at the graduate level, there will be informal feedback arrangements such as having only one paper to be submitted at the end of the course.
- Question: What about templates for course syllabi/course outlines? Would this be something that should be added to that template. Answer: The Regulations Committee is looking at a template for syllabi.

Moved by Dixon, and seconded, **“that the revision to Academic Regulation 4 Grading System, and 16a. Withdrawing from a Course circulated as Appendix D is approved as presented.”**

Motion adopted unanimously.

- Revision to Academic Regulation 29 Distinctions attached as Appendix E

Discussion covered the following points:

- A question regarding the calculation of award distinctions was referred to the Academic Regulations on March 17th by Senate Executive.
- Senators were provided with a brief background on the issue. A perception of discrimination against transfer students was an issue because of the way distinctions were calculated. There was some feeling that we should treat all students equally. The committee recommends that we delete paragraph b containing those limitations. Since ‘grade point’ means different things, a more explicit description was needed. We changed the column heading in the table and in the text of the regulation to say Cumulative Grade Point Average.
- We also deleted: d. ‘In May 2002 as a Bicentennial project, the President’s Hall of Academic Excellence was established.....’ This is an editorial piece on the Hall of Academic Excellence and does not belong in the regulations.

- Question: When students transfer into a program at SMU, do they get grades transferred, as well as credits. Answer: No. There are no grades transferred. Response: It was suggested that in this situation, a student with C and C- average could transfer in and then do very well here. The GPA would be impacted in a significant way. This may not be fair to those students who are SMU students throughout their degree program. It appears to encourage people who come here and do poorly, to go someplace else. This issue of impact/potential bias for long term SMU students is referred back to the Academic Regulations Committee for further consideration.
- Senators were advised that 25% of degree students have started their degree somewhere else. Other universities have very strict guidelines on the faculty submission of grades and submissions for distinctions. If the information is not in at St. FX by the end of April, not only would the student not get their distinction, they would not graduate. We could do the same here but based on past experience, there would be a number of students that would not be graduating. If that were to happen, the relationship with those students would be ruined.
- A suggestion was to only take the last two years for the transfer students - take the best courses in the last 60 credit hours.
- There is no perfect absolutely fair solution when it comes to this.

Moved by Dixon, and seconded, **“that the Revision to Undergrad Academic Regulation 29 Distinctions circulated as Appendix E is approved as presented.”**

Motion adopted. (3 opposed)

.02 By-Laws

Senate By-Laws Revision (Version 6.1) attached as **Appendix F**

Discussion covered the following points:

- Senators were advised that a number of these changes had been submitted to Senate before but because of one or two issues within the document they were rejected with the document. There are a limited number of new revisions, most editorial.
- At the last Senate meeting there was extensive discussion around the entry for the REB. This has been removed and is waiting the revision of the Senate Policy.
- Any deletions are a result of decisions made within Senate Committees or the Senate.
- Discussion at the last meeting questioned why The Budget Committee (a Presidential Committee) was in the Senate By-Laws. This Committee remains because Senate has the responsibility to appoint members to it annually.
- 2.5 – Senate Order of business was changed related to the changes and additions to the Committees sections.
- Question – The Standing Committee on Scholarship has been inactive in recent years. Two attempts were made to activate this committee this year and a quorum could not be reached. It will be attempted again in September.
- Change to notices of motion”. The old language placed restrictive language around debate of notices of motion. If a notice is circulated with meeting documents a week prior to the meeting it was through reasonable to allow debate. However, notices arising at a meeting

require special consent. Senators would have the right to defer debate to allow for due diligence.

- As requested by SMUSA, every occurrence of the phrase “Student Representative Council”, was replaced with “Student Association”.

Moved by MacKinnon, and seconded, **“that the revision to the Senate By-Laws (Version 6.1) circulated as Appendix F is approved as presented.”**

Motion adopted unanimously.

.03 Curriculum

Curriculum Changes from the Faculty of Science – Dept. of Psychology attached as **Appendix G**

Discussion covered the following points:

- This course is being presented because it was discovered, after the fact, that we were short a course in Psychology for the Ph.D. Program. The Curriculum Committee has reviewed the submission and recommends acceptance by the Senate.

Moved by Dixon and seconded, **“that the Senate approve the Faculty of Science/Department of Psychology Curriculum changes as submitted.”**

Motion adopted unanimously.

07079 REPORT OF JOINT COMMITTEES

Convocation

- Dixon reported that more volunteers were needed for the afternoon ceremonies in the Faculties of Science and Commerce. Members requested that a list be circulated.
- This is the new Chancellor’s first convocation. Dr. David F. Sobey was appointed Chancellor of Saint Mary’s University in March, 2008.

07080 NEW BUSINESS FROM

None.

07081 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

Barb Bell,
Secretary to the Office of Senate