

SENATE MEETING MINUTES January 13, 2006

The 493rd Meeting of the Senate of Saint Mary's University was held on Friday, January 13, 2006, at 2:30 PM, in the Secunda Marine Boardroom. Dr. Naulls, Chairperson, presided.

PRESENT: Dr. Dodds, Dr. Murphy, Dr. Dixon, Dr. Enns, Dr. Vessey, Dr. D. Naulls, Ms. Lefebvre, Dr. Russell, Dr. Power, Dr. Pye, Dr. MacKinnon, Dr. Stinson, Dr. Linney, Dr. Bernard, Dr. McCalla, Dr. Pendse, Dr. Stretton, Dr. Bjornson, Mr. Hotchkiss, Mr. Churchill, Mr. Jarda, Mr. Shaw, and Ms. Bell, Secretary to the Office of Senate..

REGRETS: Dr. Richardson, Dr. Wicks, Dr. Konopasky, Dr. Dostal, Mr. Lordon, Miss Esling

06001 **CALL TO ORDER**

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

06002 **REPORT OF THE AGENDA COMMITTEE**

The Chair advised that the Agenda will be reordered to address the agenda item 7. Reports of Standing Committees c. Academic Regulations as the last item of business.

The report of the Agenda Committee was accepted as amended.

06003 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

.01 Minutes of the meeting of December 7, 2005, were circulated as ***Appendix A.***

The following amendments were noted:

- Typographical error on page 6, last sentence on the page: "and faculty is still fee to do whatever they want." Change the word "fee" to "free".
- On page 7 – Regulation 8, fourth bullet, first point: "Assignments, essays, projects, and exams during this period that are worth less than 30% take time away from other higher-weighted tasks." Change 30 to 10.

Moved by Dr. Dixon, second by Dr. Vessey, **"that the minutes of the meeting of December 7, 2005 are approved as amended."** **Motion** **carried**
unanimously.

06004 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None

06005 OUTSTANDING ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS AGENDA

None

06006 RECOMMENDATION FOR AWARDING PROFESSOR EMERITUS STATUS

.01 Nomination of Dr. Jaroslav Dostal

Moved by Dr. Dodds, second by Dr. McCalla, **“that Senate approves the recommendation of Dr. Dostal for Professor Emeritus status circulated as Appendix B, and will forward the recommendation to the Board of Governors for awarding.” Motion carried unanimously.**

06007 REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

.01 **Academic Planning**

.0101 Program Review, Biology Department circulated as **Appendix C.**

Discussion covered the following key points:

- In line with the recommendation of the External Review Committee, a search for a position in Molecular Biology has been authorized.
- Concern was expressed with the statement *“provide students with all the requirements for professional programs in the health sciences”*. It was noted that some of these requirements are in Chemistry. Dr. Bjornson advised that a Department sub-committee is currently investigating that issue.
- Concern was also expressed on the use of the words *“every effort to offer a full program of offerings that will provide students with all the requirements for professional programs in the health sciences.”* Dr. Murphy advised members that the external reviewers found the students interviewed were concerned that they were missing some routine requirements needed for admission to professional programs in the health sciences. The reviewers found that Saint Mary’s did not have a full range of courses that would normally be required by these programs. It was suggested that it might also be a deficiency in course content. Discussion established that the words “every effort” should remain.
- It was noted that requirements across Canada could change and may create a continually moving target.
- Dr. Murphy advised that the Academic Planning Committee wished to make the following two motions:

APC Motion #1

Moved by Dr. Murphy, second by Dr. Bjornson, **“that the Biology Department develop a five-year plan in accordance with the recommendation of the External Review Committee.”**

The following amendment was suggested and accepted by the mover: add the following timeline for the submission of this plan, **“by the beginning of the 2006-2007 academic year.” Motion carried unanimously**

APC Motion #2

Moved by Dr. Murphy, second by Dr. Bjornson, **“that pursuant to advice of the External Review Committee, the Biology Department makes every effort to offer a full program of offerings that will provide students with all the requirements for professional programs in the health sciences.”**

The following amendment was suggested and accepted by the mover. Delete the word “all” from this statement. **Motion carried.**

.02 Academic Regulations

Academic Regulations revisions (multiple) notice of motion submitted December 9, 2005 circulated as **Appendix D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K & L**

.0201 Revised Notice of Motion circulated as Appendix D for information.

.0202 Proposed revision to Academic Regulation 5 Undergraduate Rating, Grades and Quality Points circulated as **Appendix E**
➤ Dr. Dixon advised members that this is a relatively small change.

Moved by Dr. Dixon, second by Dr. Stretton, **“that Senate approves the revised Academic Regulation 5, Undergraduate Rating, Grades and Quality Points.” Motion carried.**

.0203 Proposed revision to 6 Quality Point Average – change to Grade Point Average and introduction of Degree and Program GPA’s circulated as **Appendix F.**

Discussion covered the following key points:

- Dr. Dixon advised members that the Grade Point is a more widely understood terminology.
- Members were advised that there were reasons for retaining the cumulative grade point average (CGPA): to trigger academic probation if it drops below 1.70; for distinctions, etc.
- Members were advised of the following definitions:
 - Program Grade Point Average is used internally. It is currently being manually calculated but is not intended to appear on the transcript.
 - The Degree Grade Point Average is calculated on those courses taken to satisfy degree requirements.
 - There was significant discussion related to the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) - cumulative average of all courses a student takes within the university.

- In relation to the Double Major Programs, members were advised that a course may well count the calculation of both program averages.
- The following text was noted:
 - “Courses for which grades of F have been given are included in the calculation of the grade point average even if such courses are subsequently retaken and passed.”
 - Because of this regulation, our students are at a disadvantage in terms of hiring, admissions elsewhere, etc.
 - It was further noted that there were no guidelines stipulating what is reported on transcripts.
 - This motion was tabled pending a discussion on Regulation 7. It was believed that Regulation 7 has bearing on Regulation 6. The motion was taken up again after this discussion.

Moved by Dr. Dixon, second by Olivier Jarda, **“that Senate approves the revised Academic Regulation 6, Grade Point Average.” Motion carried.**

.0204 Proposed revision to Academic Regulation 7 Standing Required – graduation based upon Degree GPA rather than CQPA circulated as **Appendix G.**

Discussion covered the following key points:

- Dr. Dixon advised members that transfer students are treated more favourably than SMU students in relation to failed courses. It was noted that this can happen at the beginning of a student’s university career before they establish a clear direction. If they then resolve the issues with a significantly improved outcome, SMU students remain burdened with those failures whereas transfer students are not. It was suggested that if the revisions were meant to address this situation, the proposed text of revised Regulation 6 further entrenches the policy of counting the ‘Fs’ in the CGPA.
- Members were advised of cases where students willingly retake a course (even multiple times) for which they have already received a good grade, simply for the purpose of raising their cumulative average.
- It was stated that few licensing or credentialing bodies hold past performance against an individual.
- An opinion was expressed that failed courses should be dropped from a student’s academic record because of a comprehensive list of unfortunate events that may happen in life which negatively affect a student’s performance. An opposing opinion was stated that if every time a student does badly it drops off of the transcript, this would not present a clear picture of their overall academic performance.
- Dr. Dixon advised that SMU does not include a major grade point average on the student’s transcript. There are

significant differences in the way transcript reporting is handled by the various degree granting institutions.

- The opinion was expressed, that the revised Regulation 6 is just a statement of measures further supported by revisions in Regulation 7. These revisions do not cover what is presented to the outside world on the student's transcript. The consensus was that guidelines need to be established on the information presented on transcripts.

Moved by Dr. Dixon, second by Mr. Jarda, **“that the Senate approves the revised Academic Regulation 7, Standing Required.” Motion carried unanimously.**

.0205 Proposed revision to Academic Regulation 20 Advanced Standing – clarification of 50% circulated as **Appendix H**

The following key point was raised:

- Dr. Dixon suggested that in some cases there was a discrepancy between the 50% rule and the stating of a required minimum number of credit hours. Simplification of this regulation was requested. It was pointed out that there is a measure of control in place with regard to determining advanced standings: the Dean approves course equivalencies and courses done on letters of permission.

Moved by Dr. Dixon, second by Mr. Jarda, **“that Senate approves the revised Academic Regulation 20, Advanced Standing.” Motion carried.**

.0206 Proposed revision to Academic Regulation 26 Certificate of Honors Equivalency – addition of provision for granting certificate to students who did not complete their degree at Saint Mary's, circulated as **Appendix I**

Discussion covered the following key points:

- The rationale for this revision was presented to members.
- The following typographical errors and friendly amendments (<< >>) were noted:

a. The Certificate of Honors Equivalency was established by the University Senate to provide a means of granting appropriate recognition to those Saint Mary's graduates who did not follow the regular honors program of the University but have subsequently completed all requirements for graduation in such a program, and having already received a degree, cannot have a second undergraduate degree in the same Faculty conferred upon them. To earn the Certificate of Honors Equivalency, students must complete all the requirements <<or their equivalents>> for the appropriate honors program.

b. Students who have earned a first undergraduate degree from another post-secondary institution ~~are~~ may be admitted to the Certificate if ~~the~~ they have achieved a cumulative grade point average of 3.00 or above. <<Admission requires the approval of

the appropriate department chairperson and the Dean.>>

Advanced standing will be granted in accordance with regulation 20 above. Students must complete at least 30 additional credit hours <<**at Saint Mary's**>> and satisfy all course and grade requirements for the honors program.

- It was noted that some Departments have very specific requirements, (e.g. History) and may not comply with this regulation.

Moved by Dr. Dixon, second by Dr. Vessey, **“that the Senate approves the revised Academic Regulation 26, Certificate of Honors Equivalency as amended.” Motion carried.**

Moved by Dr. Dixon, second by Dr. Vessey, **“that the Senate approve a fifteen minute extension to this meeting to complete the remaining business items”.** Motion carried.

.0207 Proposed revision to FGSR regulation 6 a & b Evaluations - to allow Pass/Fail grades for theses circulated as **Appendix J**

Discussion covered the following key points:

- A request was made to make the Pass/Fail option available to other courses. Members were advised that this revision was applicable only to the thesis.
- There was an inquiry related to using this in the case of the undergraduate thesis. Dr. Dixon responded that the undergraduate grading system is different from the graduate grading system, which has different letters and point values.
- It was suggested that the MBA program has a course to which the Pass/Fail system might apply. Dr. Dixon advised that the implications of applying this regulation to other courses would require more study.
- The following friendly amendment was noted, “The IP (In Progress) grade is applicable for graduate level courses, theses, dissertations, major research projects, practicum courses, and for Co-operative Education work terms.

Moved by Dr. Dixon, second by Dr. Bjornson, **“that Senate approves the revised Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research Regulation 6 a & b, Evaluations”.** Motion carried.

.0208 Proposed addition to FGSR regulation 6 Evaluations - to permit in progress evaluation for theses circulated as **Appendix K**

Discussion covered the following key points:

- Dr. Dixon stated that this revision established the requirement for the communication and reporting between the student and the committee and outlines responsibilities for both.
- The issue of a thesis continuing for years is addressed by this revision. Members were advised that measures such as these

are not an uncommon practice in graduate schools. It is also a benefit to the student relating to maintaining their loan status.

- Use of the word “their” versus his/her was questioned. The following friendly amendments were suggested:
 - d. A student may be required to provide updates to the Supervisor/Supervisory Committee on the progress of ~~their~~ <<the student’s>> thesis research.
 - Upon the recommendation of the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, the student will be required to withdraw from ~~their~~ the Program.

Moved by Dr. Dixon, second by Dr. Vessey, **“that the Committee recommends that Senate approve the addition to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research Regulation 6, Evaluation d as amended.” Motion carried.**

.0209 Proposed revision to Admission Regulation 2h Requirements for Admission – International Baccalaureate – to give additional recognition to the IB diploma circulated as **Appendix L**

Discussion covered the following key points:

- Members were advised that there is an increase in the offering of the IB program at the high school level and that academic demands on students are high. The province has designated seven schools across the province as IB Schools. Most of these are in the metro area. The emerging Canadian practice is to grant IB diploma students advanced standing (up to 18 credit hours). Saint Mary’s is proposing to recognize this as the equivalent of a full first year. These students traditionally are over achievers and are likely to pursue honors programs.
- It was noted that some IB graduates do not have the proper foundation, and struggle when they by-pass the introductory courses.

Moved by Dr. Dixon, second by Dr. Murphy, **“that Senate approves the revised Admission Regulation 2h, Requirements for Admission, International Baccalaureate.” Motion carried.**

.03 Academic Curriculum

Curriculum Committee Report circulated as **Appendix M**

Discussion covered the following key points:

- Dr. Dixon advised that the Committee did due diligence in the review of submissions and that the volume had been significant. The committee members were commended for their efforts.
- The level of detail in the curriculum submission was noted as excellent. Members advised their approval of the new report summary format.
- The revisions submitted by the Political Science Department were questioned. It was noted that although 1100 courses were specified, there were none in the calendar. Dr. Dixon advised that this was an

oversight and that the submission from this Department had been questioned. The Department reduced a number of courses from 6 credit hours to 3 and created additional courses with new titles and revised descriptions to cover the other half of those split courses. No new course proposals were submitted to cover these and they were not approved. The Committee received no response or subsequent submissions from the Department to address the inquiries.

- Discussion revolved around the Departments' and Councils' responsibility for the accuracy of submissions to the Curriculum Committee.
- It was noted that proposals for special topics courses at the introductory level were unusual and those submitted by this Department were not approved.
- The question arose about courses in the calendar that had not been taught for many years and if they were going to be removed. Dr. Dixon advised that over the winter the Curriculum Committee will be reviewing this situation and proposing revisions to the calendar for 2007-08.
- It was suggested that course Library assessments should be updated for existing courses.
- It was suggested that the Curriculum Committee should create a policy for the University that requires a reconciliation of available teaching resources for all new course proposals.

Moved by Dr. McCalla, second by Dr. Murphy, **“that the Political Science materials be removed from the curriculum report and sent back to the Political Science Department for clarification of details.” Motion carried.**

Moved by Dr. Dixon, second by Dr. Pendse, **“that Senate approves the Curriculum Report as amended with the removal of the Political Science submission.” Motion carried.**

06008 **REPORT OF AD-HOC COMMITTEES**

None

06009 **REPORT OF JOINT COMMITTEES**

.01 Honorary Degrees Recommendations circulated as ***Appendix N***
Dr. Dodds advised that the appendix is in two parts.

Moved by Dr. Dodds, second by Dr. Bernard, **“that Senate approves the first recommendation to award an honorary degree.” Motion carried**

Moved by Dr. Dodds, second by Dr. McCalla, **“that Senate approves the second recommendation to award an honorary degree.” Motion carried.**

Moved by Dr. Dodds, second by Dr. Murphy, **“that Senate approves the third recommendation to award an honorary degree.” Motion carried.**

Moved by Dr. Dodds, second by Mr. Hotchkiss, **“that Senate approves the fourth recommendation to award an honorary degree.”** Motion carried.

06010 **REPORT OF PRESIDENTIAL COMMITTEES**

None

06011 **NEW BUSINESS FROM**

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

.02 **Floor (Involving notice of motion)**

Recognize the Literacy Council as the Senate Committee on Literacy Strategy circulated as **Appendix O**.

Discussion covered the following key points:

- Dr. Murphy advised that the Senate approved the original campus-wide literacy strategy in the spring of 2002, in which a provision was created for the establishment of a Senate Committee to oversee and monitor the implementation of this strategy. As a part of the resolution of a SMUFU grievance, the University and the Faculty Union created a Literacy Council to provide academic direction to the Writing Centre and to the campus-wide literacy strategy. This Council has functioned in the same capacity as a Senate Committee might. It was noted that to create a Senate Committee to perform the same tasks was a redundancy.

Moved by Dr. Murphy, second by Madeleine Lefebvre, **“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.

06012 **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 4:46 PM