SENATE MEETING MINUTES
October 9, 2015

The 568th Meeting of the Senate of Saint Mary's University was held on Friday, October 10, 2015, at 2:30 PM, in the Secunda Marine Boardroom. Dr D. Naulls, Chairperson, presided.

PRESENT: Dr Summerby-Murray, Dr Gauthier, Dr Dixon, Dr Bradshaw, Dr Smith, Dr Vessey, Dr Naulls, Dr Conrad, Dr Hlongwane, Dr Bjornson, Dr Campbell, Dr Grek-Martin, Dr Stinson, Dr VanderPlaat, Dr Warner, Ms Marie DeYoung, Mr Hotchkiss, Mr Gordon Michael, Mr Armony, Mr Rice, Ms Vishwa Bhayani, Mr Ali Algermozi, Mr Sisk, Ms Murphy, Mr Rajnis, Mr Beckett, Ms Morrison (teleconf), Mr Leitch, Ms Jillian Morgan (Dal Journalism) and Ms Bell, Secretary to the Office of Senate.

REGRETS: Dr MacDonald, Dr Austin, Dr Kozloski, Dr Gilin-Oore, Dr Tanya Peckmann, Dr Suteanu, Dr Takseva, and Ms MacDonald,

Meeting commenced at 2:32 P.M.

15012 **REPORT OF THE AGENDA COMMITTEE**
The report was accepted as circulated.

15013 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**
Minutes of the meeting of September 18, 2015, were *circulated* as *Appendix A.*
The following revisions were noted:
- Dr VanderPlaat's name is misspelled
Moved by Smith, and seconded, **"that the minutes of the meeting of September 18, 2015 are approved as revised." Motion carried.**

15014 **FALL GRADUATION LIST**
- The listing of graduates was circulated to Deans with a copy for Senate.
- Convocation is next Friday, October 16th in the theatre auditorium. Undergraduate programs in the Sobey School of Business at 11:00 am; undergraduate programs in the Faculties of Arts and Science at 3 PM and Graduate degrees in the Faculty of Graduate Studies at 7 PM.
- A total of 462 credentials will be presented to 438 graduates. Of these, 43 are graduating with distinctions. This number us up significantly from 2013 when there were only 25 distinctions in 467 graduates.

Moved by Dr. Dixon, and seconded, **"to confer degrees and distinctions on those represented on the list (circulated as Appendix B) at the Fall Convocation". Motion carried unanimously.**

Moved by Dr. Dixon, and seconded, **"to enable the Registrar to add such graduates to this list as may be identified subsequent to this meeting." Motion carried unanimously.**

15015   <u>**SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY WEB STEERING COMMITTEE**</u>
Presentation: Perry Sisk, Margaret Murphy, Predrag Rajnis, Alex Beckett, Paul Dixon, and Gabe Morrison (by teleconference).
Key discussion points:
- Sisk advised that it was not clear what Senate was looking for. He advised members that in 2013 there was a redesign of the web site done to handle all of the university community with a focus on external interface and recruitment. Question: What are Senator's thoughts and expectations, and what improvements you would like to see happen?
- Sisk advised that the team was committed to present a consistent message and a standardized user experience. This is important because of google searches and the fact that people could access the site at any page within the site and not necessarily land on the home page.
- The redesign was the result of a broad consultative process accomplished over number of months. Because content written for the web is different than text created for other purposes, a content writer was hired to assist departments create their content.
- The site has 15,000 pages, which is down from 75,000. There are 8,000-12,000 visits to the website every day.
- The website was created to be the communication portal for external interface. SMUport was created with a focus for internal communications only.
- The basic principle of the redesign was that the contents would not be the responsibility of only one unit or person.
- Content owners are the Deans and the Department Heads. This responsibility is delegated downward as appropriate. Technical support is available and Rajnis oversees the team that is responsible for the technical content.
- The Web Steering Committee sets the overall strategy for the web, approves web projects, determines priorities, and provides advice to the EMG on issues related to the website. The content is the responsibility of the content owners.
- The site constantly evolves. Improvements are ongoing, being done in cooperation with web site content owners.
- Utilizing a program called Faculty 180 (SMUCV), information is integrated into the website. Faculty CV information only has to be entered into the site once and then that information can be transferred into CVs, funding applications, etc.
- The technical team is currently working on developing an online calendar and numerous other projects.
- Perhaps you are aware that Senate initiated an Ad Hoc Website Committee. The Ad Hoc Committee is looking at this project as a friendly, supportive and collaborative effort. We have investigated comments and complaints on the website from faculty, staff and students. Question: What are your plans

to address that feedback? Answer: We are interested in hearing about the issues that might arise from such an inquiry.

- Question: What is your understanding of the challenges that emerged after the 2013 website redesign? Answer: Some feedback indicated a desire to use functionality in terms of the tools we were using. Other feedback indicated a desire for a more programs structured site.
- Question: Did you consider going back to the content owners for feedback after the change? The content owners feel no sense of ownership because requests for revision have to go through ITSS or Public Affairs. Did you think about having some focus or advisory groups after the implementation? There has been no opportunity provided for that. Answer: We had focus groups with perspective students after the implementation.
- Question: Did you have any focus groups with department or program secretaries? Answer: No. We sat down with everyone that was going to be a content owner and offered some training. Perhaps more is needed. Response: That would be welcomed.
- Specifically the Faculties of Arts and Sciences have a lot of feedback. One of the issues is entry through the front door route, which is entirely controlled by public affairs. People do not realize that they are not seeing the unit or program information that they need. Navigating from there to the Department/Program sites where more detailed information is available is difficult. There is also a situation on our website where there is duplicate information. This content is out of date and not under the control of the Department or Unit. That is a major issue for the Faculties of Arts and Sciences.
- Senators were advised that the connectivity from the home page to other pages is a web steering committee responsibility. It was suggested that we need to address accessibility for all users coming to the website, no matter where they happen to come into the site.
- From the perspective of potential students who need to find potential supervisors; they have to be able to gain access to information on which instructors are doing research that matches their area of study/interest.
- There is also some content that sits at a higher level than the Deans. They do not control the page that the content is on. This may also happen at other levels and the inefficiency of having ITSS change the other data is frustrating. Web Team Response: We try to control the stale data on the website which is why we assign responsibility to content owners.
- It was suggested that it seems inefficient to have two department websites. If department chairs were allowed to have control of their content it would all be current. At the moment it goes through two people. Web Team Response: I think you are talking about the Department/Program pages that were written specifically for in-coming students. They are intended to give the overview of the Department.
- It was noted that the Program pages are maintained by recruitment and there is disconnect from there. The students think this is the Department page and it is not. A link needs to be included from the initial page written by the website content writer to the actual Department/Program page so that there is an easy transition. Web Team Response: We are aware of the problem and we are looking at this issue. If you look at the web policy, you will note that the control of content is pushed out as far as possible. We need to work collaboratively to accomplish this.

- Participants were advised that Senate created the Ad Hoc Website Committee because it had serious concerns about academic programming and how that is addressed on the website. **Action Item: Bell** to provide the dialogue of this meeting item to the Web Site Steering Committee so that collaboration with the Ad hoc Website Committee can occur.
- Question: Can the Web Site Steering Committee estimate when the known problem of navigation from the official department/program page to the detailed information on the pages of the actual Department or Program is going to be addressed? Answer: Not at the present. We are still at the early stages and once we have an idea of the scope of work we will be able to move forward. We would like to know what the issues are so that we can capture those and move in a direction to resolve the issues as soon as possible.
- The Ad Hoc Committee advised that they are halfway through developing a survey on the issues. That survey will also include student experience. The Ad Hoc Committee formally asked that this item be placed on the November 6th Senate Agenda and that the Web Steering Committee be invited back to be present when their report is presented and perhaps to respond to it.

15016　　**BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTE**
.01　　**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES**
 a.　　**Bylaws Committee**
- The committee was tasked to review the end-dates of all Senate Committee and Officer Appointments. Bylaws Committee Memo (C1), Revision Summary (C2) and Revised Senate Bylaws document (C3) attached as *Appendix C1 – 3.*
 Key discussion points:
- Committee met and responded to the Senate request. A revision has been made to stipulate that memberships end at the time of the first Senate meeting of the new academic year.
 5.1.4 "Committee membership shall ordinarily terminate at the beginning of the initial Senate meeting of the academic year."
- This does not change the term of membership on Senate Committees which is three years (5.1.3).

 Moved by Stinson, and seconded, **"that the Senate approves the revisions to the Senate Bylaws as revised." Motion carried.**

- The Bylaws Committee was also tasked to address concerns regarding faculty absence from the Senate Executive Committee. Bylaws inquiry memo attached as *Appendix C4.*
 Key discussion points:
- Senate asked the Bylaws Committee to address concerns regarding faculty absences from meetings of the Senate Executive and asked that alternates be designated for the faculty members elected to the Senate Executive Committee
 5.2.12.4 "In the event that an elected member of the committee shall be absent from a scheduled meeting ~~during the summer months~~, the committee shall be empowered to replace the absent member on a temporary basis with another member chosen by it

from the elected members of Senate <u>according to the composition described in 5.2.12.7</u>.

Moved by Stinson, and seconded, **"that the Senate approves the revision to the Senate Bylaws as above." Motion carried.**

- The following potential friendly amendments were suggested: – establish a designated alternate at the time we assign the membership for the committee in September.
- It was suggested that we could insert a new sub-article which would become the new 5.1.4 that states: "Committee membership shall ordinarily terminate at the beginning of the initial Senate meeting of the academic year." The following articles would have to be renumbered. We would also revise the composition of 5.2.12.7 (8) to state the following: "Two members <u>and two alternates</u> of Senate elected by Senate from the elected faculty members of Senate. <u>Should the elected member be unavailable for a meeting, their alternate shall attend</u>."

Moved by Stinson, and seconded, **"that the Senate approves the revision to the Senate Bylaws as above." Motion carried.**

- It was suggested that Senate may want to reconsider the current practice of the Senate Executive Committee being tasked as the nominating committee for Section A only of the Committees listing. The suggestion was that the Senate Executive recruit for all Committees, including those in Section B and C. An alternative suggestion was to establish a nominating committee of the Senate to recruit faculty members for the Senate Committees.
- After discussion, there was no consensus that a revision to the Senate Bylaws was necessary to address this.
- There are also only two faculty members elected for the University Budget Committee. Question: Should we revise the Budget Committee section in a similar way. Senators were advised that this committee is a University Committee and not under the control of the Senate. The President advised that he would look into this.

b.   **Academic Regulations Committee**
Proposed Policy from the Fred Smithers Centre for Support for Students with Disabilities, attached as ***Appendix D.*** Dr David Leitch invited to respond to questions.
Key discussion points:
- Most universities in the country have policies similar to this. This proposed policy is being assumed, with permission, from Memorial University. There have been minor modifications for the Saint Mary's Environment but the core and theme are the same.
- At the bottom of page 9 there is a reference to a place in the Academic Calendar. A suggestion was that this should refer to the beginning of Academic Regulation 19 and not reference a page number.

- It was suggested that this was a good policy and long overdue. Memorial University have experienced some recent difficulties in this area and we need a policy that guides our actions and decisions.
- It was noted that at the top of page 4 and one-quarter the way down on page 6, the policy references the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act. Legislation is subject to change. Caution should be exercised in referencing specific sections. We would have to update the policy every time there is a change in legislation. A statement (perhaps in 5.1) such as "In the event that the legislation is revised and this policy becomes in conflict as a result, the legislation takes precedence".
- Question: An incident at Memorial was referenced. Did this policy help them? Answer: There was a prior agreement between the faculty members and the administration and it conflicted with Memorial's Policy on Accommodation. The student involved made a Human Rights complaint. The National Group is rallying groups across the country in support of this complaint, which has raised a lot of negative thought.
- In terms of the scope of this policy; it only covers courses for credit. Question: What about components like labs, seminars and various public lectures that are not accessible because the funding is not available to provide accommodations. Answer: We tried to focus on the academic side of the accommodations issue. If there is something connected to the student's academic work, this policy should cover it. The policy could not cover everything.
- It was suggested that there may be other ways to address the issues for example with sensitivity training. Response: The challenges re still there. Finding good interpreters is a challenge for the Centre.
- The policy title could be modified to stipulate that is applied only to academic environments.
- There is no definition provided for the term "Academic Accommodations". Graduate students are required to go to labs but no access provided. This would be required for student's academic success but it is not labelled as an academic component. The Centre Director advised that this would be labelled as an academic component. The Centre has provided assistance in field situations and also outside of the country.
- Question: What about the events and activities that are provided for students? Are external affairs responsible to provide access and accommodations? The policy does not stipulate where the boundaries are. Answer: If we are referring to the events organized by SMUSA, those would be outside of our definition.
- Concern was also expressed in regard to longer test/exam times cutting into the time of other instructor's courses. This results in students skipping other classes to accommodate writing their exams. Response: We are down to 3-4 staff and so the challenges are significant to deal with the demand. Sometimes it is a no-win situation, but the Center is trying very hard to accommodate both students and instructors.
- It was suggested that the section 2.0 titled Undue Hardship feels like a definition. It needs a context as to why this definition is located

here in the document. Answer: It provides a qualifier as to how the university will respond.

- The policy would have to be reviewed by the University Lawyer prior to being implemented to ensure it meets all legal responsibility.
- Members were advised that there is a new act that will soon be implemented for accessibility for adults and those changes will impact this policy.
- Question: Does the university have an accessibility forum or committee to ensure the university is responding appropriately? Answer: The President advised that there is no accessibility committee or forum as such. The accessibility issue would be addressed through Facilities Management. The University is currently working on how to address diversity on campus.

.02 REPORT OF JOINT COMMITTEES

a. Honorary Degrees Committee

Criteria for awarding Honorary Degrees. Review and construct a terms of reference. Discussion deferred until after their first meeting of this Academic Year.

Key discussion points:

- The President advised that the committee was scheduled to meet prior to this Senate meeting, but did not have quorum present. Another meeting has been scheduled.

.03 Career Tracks Program Initiative (information session – Dr S. Smith)

Key discussion points:

- This initiative came out of the Going Forward Initiative last year. It also partially came from the feedback from students. We were looking at student careers before they come to Saint Mary's, during their programs here and after they graduate.
- The name of this initiative is not cast in stone and may be changed
- A web portal will be designed for all undergraduate majors. It will map out all the necessary academic requirements for each undergraduate major in all of the Faculties.
- The initiative is structured around student success in terms of their transition into, through and out of university. We are also hoping to connect the alumni to the university through the use of this tool.
- The program is being sponsored through the office of the VPAR
- Phase one involves developing prototypes in the Departments of English, Chemistry and Accounting. We will do in-depth testing to ensure each prototype has all the info needed to meet student needs in each of the majors.
- Phase two will involve developing and testing the information sites for all of the program majors in all Faculties.
- Project deliverables have been defined. We have also developed a project charter, project plan, change management plan, communications plan, schedule and budget.
- Towards the end of next summer we will transition to the operational units, which will include, lessons learned, etc.
- An example from the Department of Chemistry, Queens University was presented. We will be making some modifications to align with our

environment. We will be updating this initiative on an on-going basis. The site will be a very active web portal. Everything on the site will be live and tested on a continual basis to ensure it stays current. We will also have a reverse strategy so that if students change their goals part way through their program, they can see what they need to do to achieve their new goals.

- There are very few institutions that do this. Queens and Georgia State are the only ones that have any kind of similar structure.
- Questions: What does it look like on a Smart Phone? Answer: It will absolutely be able to be viewed on a Smart Phone as well as a number of other devices.
- Question: What about the challenges of updating the system? Who will do this? Answer: We don't know at this stage. Part of this will depend on the conversations we have with the Chairs and Program Coordinators. We need to make sure that there is someone to test the links on a regular basis and that will be a critical piece.
- Question: Will you be monitoring whether it produces the results that you expect, whether it addresses our issues of retention and whether it is doing what the students need? Answer: We will certainly know where people are logging in from and where they are going. We could create a study of particular focus groups and how they use it as they go through their program. We will definitely be doing this type of analysis and monitoring.
- It was stated that you are not wedded to the titles in the first column. Question: Are these similar to the categories that you will follow? Answer: We don't know at this time. We have identified some of the things we want to include.
- It was suggested that the team should be thinking globally. There is a real opportunity here to exercise SMU values and missions and to emphasize our goal of having our students be 'Citizens of the World'.
- A student representative noted that Career Counseling Centre currently does this type of advising. Question: Is that unit involved in this initiative? Answer: Yes.
- Question: Will this translate into help with the recruitment process? Answer: Ideally yes. We are hoping to create links with alumni and future alumni to promote the abilities of our students and graduates. There is a really good document on Career Services that we have been using as reference as we develop this initiative, but it will come down to what we can do with the available funding levels.
- A student representative noted that that recruitment from Western Canada is limited and opportunities from that regions of Canada do not even come to SMU.
- We are looking at the diversity of our current student population and the values of SMU. Beyond that, we intend to look at relevant experience. This often means non-academic service.
- Question: What would your approach be? Answer: This is part of our approach in terms of the 'Get-Going' part of the program. We can only control those components within our university but outside of our environment I am not sure what we could do to address that.
- This is intended to be an improvement to our advising system. Students feel that all the challenges they are facing are all connected. At times, they are being directed to one place and they should be directed somewhere else. Some advice may be non-academic and the students need to know where to

get that type of advice. There are gaps that we are attempting to address by this program. There are other parts of this initiative that will be addressed at a later stage.

15017   **REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

a)   Academic Appeals Committee Annual Report, attached as ***Appendix E*** (info only).

There being no objection, the annual report of the Academic Appeals Committee was accepted into the Senate record.

b)   Academic Planning Committee Annual Report attached as ***Appendix F*** (info only).

There being no objection, the annual report of the Academic Planning Committee was accepted into the Senate record.

c)   Academic Regulations Annual Report attached as ***Appendix G*** (info only).

There being no objection, the Academic Regulations Committee annual report was accepted into the Senate record.

d)   Agenda Committee Annual Report attached as ***Appendix H*** (info only).

There being no objection, the Agenda Committee Annual Report was accepted into the Senate record.

e)   Bylaws Committee Annual Report attached as ***Appendix I*** (info only).

There being no objection, the Bylaws Committee Annual Report was accepted into the Senate record.

f)   Curriculum Committee Annual Report attached as ***Appendix J*** (info only).

There being no objection, the Curriculum Committee Annual Report was accepted into the Senate record

g)   Elections Committee Annual Report attached as ***Appendix K*** (info only).

There being no objection, the Elections Committee Annual Report was accepted into the Senate record.

h)   Executive Committee Annual Report attached as ***Appendix L*** (info only).

There being no objection the Executive Committee Annual Report was accepted into the Senate record.

i)   Library Committee Annual Report attached as ***Appendix M*** (info only).
     Key discussion points:
     • Question: What is going to happen with the plan for the 3rd floor of the Library and the anticipated loss of space to student use? Answer: No student space will be lost. We are going to be able to supply

additional study stations and increased electrical access. There will also be 24 hour turnaround access.

- In regard to the 3000 square feet that will be required by the CLARI hub in the Saint Mary's Atrium; at this time we do not know what the alternative will be.

There being no objection the Library Committee Annual Report was accepted into the Senate record.

15018   **NEW BUSINESS FROM**
     a.   Chair
- The nominee declined the appointment to the Budget Committee.
- Dean, Sobey School of Business nominated Dr Daphne Rixon in Accounting. There being no objections, the nomination was accepted.

15019   **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**
Key Points:
- One of our graduates from the Department of English has been named a 3M Teaching Fellow.
- Since the last Senate meeting:
  - Attended the Board of Governors Launch, AGM, Board reception and President's Installation and dinner.
  - Attending meetings with: SMUSA President, SMUSA Board Chair, our Board of Governors Chair, and MPHEC CEO.
  - Met with Ron Bond regarding the review of our Engineering program.
  - Participated in a number of activities in terms of connecting with student athletes.
  - Attended AAU Council meeting in PEI.
  - Met with the members of the Fulbright Foundation to pursue future opportunities for collaboration. Also a meeting with Edu-Nova in terms of recruitment and internationalization.
  - Met with Bill Bu and the visiting delegation from Zhuhai, China.
  - Signed a five-year renewal of our agreement with the Confucius Institute.
  - Attended meetings with a number of Embassy Officials from China, Japan and the US. Also met with the President of the African Society.
  - Outreach to the Chamber of Commerce, Greater Halifax Partnership, and a number of other groups.
  - Dealt with items related to our financial sustainability and the initiation of our one time market adjustment on tuition fees.
- The budget process for 2016-2017 is beginning.
- Next week there will be an announcement of a significant gift to SMU and there will be another significant announcement in the weeks ahead.

15020   **QUESTION PERIOD**
- ➤ There were no questions.
- ➤ DeYoung advised that the student IDs and photos are now available through Banner. This is working well and is actively being used.

15021   **ADJOURNMENT**
The meeting adjourned at 4:30 P.M.

Barb Bell,
Secretary to the Office of Senate