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## SENATE MEETING MINUTES December 11, 2015

The 570<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Senate of Saint Mary's University was held on Friday, December 11, 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 MacDonald, Dr Smith, Dr Vessey, Dr Naulls, Dr Austin, Dr Campbell, Dr Bjornson, Dr Gilin-Oore, Dr Grek-Martin, Dr Hlongwane, Dr Kozloski, Dr Peckmann, Dr Stinson, Dr Suteanu, Dr Takseva, Dr VanderPlaat, Dr Warner, Ms DeYoung, Mr Algermozi, Mr Sisk, Mr Rajnis, Mr Beckett and Ms Murphy and Ms Bell, Secretary to the Office of Senate.

**REGRETS:** Dr Conrad, Mr Hotchkiss, Mr Michael, Mr Rice, Mr Armony, Ms Robert, and Ms Bhayani.

Meeting commenced at 2:34 P.M.

**15030**      **REPORT OF THE AGENDA COMMITTEE**  
The report was accepted as circulated.

**15031**      **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**  
Minutes of the meeting of November 6, 2015, were *circulated* as *Appendix A*.

Moved by Smith and seconded, “**that the minutes of the meeting of November 6, 2015 are approved as circulated.**” **Motion carried.**

**15032**      **BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTE**  
**.01**      **Senate Sub-Committee on the University Website** report and discussion (to include participation by the Saint Mary's University Web Steering Committee) - report circulated as *Appendix B*

**Key discussion points:**

- The Senate Sub-Committee thanked the Web Steering Committee for their participation and cooperation in this process.
- **Recommendation 1:** The creation of a working template (geared to smartphone and desktop use) that would be consistent from a ‘brand standard’ University level but would allow the Departments to develop and implement individualized content. The consistency of look and the branding standards are all well accepted. It is believed that control of the content needs to evolve to academic units in collaboration with ITSS. With the recent redesign, the pendulum has swung too far in the other direction in

terms of content control. There are whole sections of the site that are not under the control of the academic units. A template might alleviate the ITSS concerns in regard to consistency, but it would allow the academic units to be proactive and action changes right away.

- There is varying degrees of control over the web pages content within Faculties. It appears that the Sobey School of Business Communication Officer has more control over their content. We know that the Faculty of Science is working on a similar arrangement. We need to have these opportunities fairly and evenly available across the university.
- Response ITSS: You mention a template for instant update. Most of the current template allows for instance updates now. The whole website is templated. Response Sub-Committee: We are talking about the areas that are controlled by the ticket system. There is a roadblock between the Communications Officer and his/her ability to communicate. The misunderstanding seems to arise from the lack of vocabulary/terms. Consensus was that it is the architecture that needs revision.
- Members were advised that at Queens University, they provide more control that is devolved to the academic units.
- One consistent comment was the issue of duplicate pages. These pages often included different links, even though the content is similar or the same. The key words for these pages are also different. This is confusing within a search function. The two to four different program pages should merge into one. Often these pages even have the same heading.
- **Recommendation 2:** The elimination of the parallel but unequal Department and Program pages, amalgamating the ‘best of’ the two pages into one menu per program. The current website was reduced from its previous unwieldy incarnation of 75,000 pages to a much more streamlined 15,000 pages. This would help further reduce the number of pages. A new Site Map would need to be created and better links to facilitate searches.
- **Recommendation 3:** Formally including the Communication Officers and Faculty representatives from all 3 Faculties (Science, Business and Arts) on the Web Steering Committee. This would be part of a move towards decentralization of website control of Department, School and Faculty pages to the actual ‘content owners’. Having those folks involved would keep any operational issues front and centre. With full respect to the standards and consistency in look and approach, there needs to be more access.
- **Recommendation 4:** Regularly invite Faculty / School representatives and student representatives to key Web Steering Committee meetings for review and feedback of issues and successes. This would keep the rhetoric and communication open. There was an inability for academic units to put up graphics appropriate to the disciplines. This turned out to be a matter of communication. Issues like this would be resolved quicker with this involvement on the steering committee.
- **Recommendation 5:** Documenting and making more visible responsibility for page maintenance and page problem troubleshooting and assistance, publish it, and keep it current. A Site Map with the SMU contact responsible for each page could be published and accessible within the university, perhaps through SMUport.
- **Recommendation 6:** Establishing a web module for the campus community including web design guidelines, a ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ page, and a specific email address (e.g.

[SMUWebHelp@smu.ca](mailto:SMUWebHelp@smu.ca)) for both self-directed and assisted guidance in solving website problems and issues.

**Recommendation 7:** A reassessment of the Content Management System and the structure of the current directory system. Can the CMS and the directory system be made more user-friendly? Can the CMS have better AutoSaved features, allow the establishment of an image gallery and allow for easier directory navigation? Secretaries and web page administrators consistently find the system unwieldy. There is a need to make it more user friendly. There is no auto save function and if someone is working on updates and is called away from the job all of their work is lost. This must be addressed. An image gallery would be a great addition. In Science, the content management system cannot take a formula or equation so that has to be imaged and posted.

- **Recommendation 8:** Establish annual website training workshops for those who must design and maintain key webpages (departments, library, etc.) to provide design guidelines and technical training. There is nowhere to go for that, which is a major gap.
- **Recommendation 9:** Using SMU CV to create pdfs for posting on Faculty Profile webpages rather than to create the long, detailed webpages. Improving the functionality to allow Faculty members to decide & edit which sections go onto their profile page. The SMU CV is currently being used to generate faculty profiles which are very long, overly detailed and the Faculty has no control over what is included or not included. Faculty would prefer a brief profile page with key data and then a link to the vitae with the detail. A Senator advised that he had tried the new system. Initially a personal page was entered correctly but sometime later there were a lot of issues with it. There are issues with the professional appearance and the functionality. Editing is somewhat problematic in terms of correcting punctuation, etc.
- Question: One of the gaps around SMU CV is a search portal. If we want to find someone with a particular research field using a key word search it is an issue. The functionality of the website is also an issue in this regard.  
Answer: It was always the plan to provide this functionality.
- **Recommendation 10:** The formation of focus groups for purposes of continuing the exploration of difficulties and concerns that University stakeholders are experiencing and helping with the evolution of the site. Focus groups could be organized around faculty and staff (especially Department Chairs / Program Coordinators), Communication Officers, webpage administrators, and undergraduate students and graduate students. This should be a regular / routine occurrence.
- Question: Who would we organize this initiative through? Answer: Perhaps CAID. Perhaps we could incorporate it into regular Arts Council meetings.
- Question: Who would the information go to from these meetings? Answer: One of our recommendations is to expand the WSC. With an expanded committee, they could look at this issue.
- Members were advised that the WSC evolved to revise and develop a section of the old website that would communicate and interface with future students. There was a reorganization of the existing website to group things that were of interest to future students. Program pages were developed to answer specific questions that prospective students ask. The interests of the

academic interest were focused elsewhere. Their content was developed as if they were speaking to other individuals in their discipline and not to students coming out of high school. At that time there was a debate in the committee about program pages versus department pages. When the departments build their pages, they are not necessarily talking to future students who do not know how everything works within the university and the programs. The bigger question is; who are the Departments speaking to and who are they devolving the responsibility of developing that content to.

- Members were also advised that there was a huge discrepancy in interest in the website around the university. Some Departments were and are very interested, while others did not appear to be interested at all. This is an ongoing issue that needs to be considered.
- The terminology is an issue in these communications; for example: program pages versus department pages. The program pages were specifically targeted at new potential students.
- This report demonstrates engagement in the working of the web and a constant desire to improve the content of the website. The WSC will meet next week to discuss this report. The involvement of super users has already been considered and maybe it would be useful to also have faculty representation on this committee. We also believe that the users need to get together to help evolve the web forward. The desire appears to be for a more rapid deployment, for more flexibility and responsiveness.

Moved by Warner, and seconded, ``**that Senate accept the 10 recommendations of the Web Site Sub-Committee of the Senate (to include the revisions in the power point), and requests that the WSC respond back to Senate by the February 12 Senate Meeting``. Motion carried.**

.02 **Honorary Degrees Committee** response to Senate's request (Sept 2015) that the Joint Committee review their TOR and draft the criteria used when considering submissions for honorary degrees - report circulated as *Appendix C*.

**Key discussion points:**

- The committee met on 30 October 2015 and corresponded subsequently by email. The key item of attention was to review the committee terms of reference, including criteria used to evaluate nominations for honorary degrees and the timing of calls for nominations.
- The committee concurred that the current terms are appropriate, and will be reorganizing the presentation of those criteria so they are expressed more clearly.
- The committee also agreed on a time frame for nomination calls and has issued a call for nominations to the university. Nominations are to be received by 31 January 2016. The intention is to move the process to an annualized cycle. While this is not intended to remove the opportunity for members of the university community to nominate candidates at other times of the year, it will concentrate the work of the committee and make the engagement with the university community more obvious.

- The committee will report further on its work, to Senate and the Board, as required.
- Question: Is it possible to make this information available on the SMU website? Response: We will find a way.

15033

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

**a. Academic Regulations Committee**

2016-2017 Academic Calendar of Events, circulated as *Appendix D1&2*.

**Key discussion points:**

- There are a number of changes from the previous Academic Calendar. The fall convocation is being moved to Sept 30<sup>th</sup>. Other Convocations are roughly a month after exams and for that reason we are bringing the fall convocation in line with that practice.
- A Fall Break and Study Days are being scheduled as they were last year.
- The January convocation is being moving to Friday to cut down on the overtime requirement for our staff.
- The May convocation is being brought back to campus. We are proposing a week of celebration of student success. The schedule is up on the website (<http://www.smu.ca/academics/spring-graduation.html>) and will run from Wednesday, 18 May through Friday afternoon, 20 May. This affords us the opportunity to have a reception after each of the ceremonies.
- Question: Is there any logic to keeping whole programs together? Answer: We have that issue currently. Most students have friends in multiple faculties. Dalhousie has run convocation like this for a long time.
- Question: Is there a reception after each morning and afternoon or one after all? Answer: There is a reception after each ceremony. There are also localized events that might also take place separate from the Convocation ceremony.
- Question: Does everyone only get two tickets? Answer: We have not had issues with this but we have to limit our number of tickets in direct relation to the size of our venue. We have been able to accommodate requests for extra tickets up to this point because not all students need all of their tickets.
- It was suggested that students will want to have the other half of their class in the audience to see them graduate. That will increase the pressure on ticket availability. Response: This may or may not cause an issue but up until now we have been able to accommodate it.
- Question: The rumour among students of the limit of two tickets to Convocation has been an issue. Also, from the students' perspective; that is the last day you are ever going to see that class. It would be better if those students could graduate together.
- Question: Perhaps an approach would be to keep departments together? Answer: If you open it up to choice we will have an issue. One third of graduates do not show up for graduation. That is how/why we came up with the alphabetic split. There are a lot of good reasons to have the event on our campus. When the event is at the Metro Centre, the individuals disperse quickly and there is no

collegiality and saying goodbyes after the ceremony. If the ceremony is held on campus this does happen.

- It was suggested that this was a potential burden on faculty if they can only attend one ceremony. Response: The amount of your day that will be consumed will be less even if you attend two ceremonies instead of one.
- Concern was expressed regarding the alphabetic division within programs and departments instead of graduating students by program. Senate asked that the Registrar's Office review their decision.
- The President advised that the idea of being 'student-centered' had been the focus of the redesign of convocation. The thoughts expressed today will be considered. The schedule for the May Convocation has already been publicized, but we will consider these suggestions for future convocations.
- Question: Is there enough time being allowed to verify the graduation list for the January convocation? Answer: The Registrar advised that it would not be an issue.
- A suggestion for the academic calendar of events was that the summer sessions should be a part of the date-line. It was noted that graduate students work on a three semester system. It would help if that was stated in the calendar of events.
- Members were advised that the Convocation booklet will show the names of the members of the Senate and Board of Governors.

Moved by Dixon, and seconded, **“that the Senate approves the 2016-2017 Academic Calendar of Events as revised.” Motion carried.**

**b.** Curriculum Committee, Semi-annual report circulated as *Appendix E* (Dr. P. Dixon)

**Key discussion points:**

- There has been significant changes in Geography and the Committee may not have those changes represented correctly/completely in the report. The part of the submission specific to the BES Program (page 43-45) is being withdrawn until the January curriculum report to Senate.
- The part of the submission on the Forensic Science Program (bottom page 20 – top page 22) is also being withdrawn.
- The committee is still working on material and will be making a submission for the January Senate meeting.
- Question: When will program pages be made available for review? Answer: We are not publishing the academic calendar in hard copy. There will be time to review content.

Moved by Dixon, and seconded, **“that the Senate approves the curriculum report as revised for publication in the 2016-2017 Academic Calendar.” Motion carried.**

**NEW BUSINESS FROM**

a. Floor (not involving notice of motion)

i) 2015 Report on Positive Action to Improve the Employment of Women, Aboriginal Peoples, Visible Minorities, and People with Disabilities at Saint Mary's University, circulated as *Appendix F*.

**Key discussion points:**

- The interpretation and presentation of information is not clear. For example: Page 2, table 1 a. In this section it states that the number of full-time and regular part-time employees is 914. Question: What does regular part-time employees mean and how does that compare to the labour market expectation?
- In this table it shows that at SMU the percentage of Women employees is 37.2% versus the labour market expectation of 48.2%. The percentage of aboriginal employees is 1.2% versus an expectation of 3.5%. It also shows the percentage of employees with a disability as 4.2% versus an expectation of 4.9% and a percentage of visible minorities is 8.1% versus an expectation of 17.8%. In all four groups there is a significant discrepancy. This data is comparative with the 2014 report. The data in Table 1 b only represents the survey respondents. This table appears to interpret that same data much differently. There is a congratulatory tone that is not supported by data in Table 1 a. The data appears to be represented in such a way that would lead us to think we have less work to do on this than we actually have. Question: Who can speak to how this report was created and how the data was interpreted? (The report was generated by HR)
- Members were advised that two issues appear to have been identified by the faculty: 1) better clarity of the terms is needed. An appendix may be helpful in this regard. 2) There should also be a representation for the total population.
- Members were advised that there are two ways to represent the data. There is a requirement to report to Senate annually in December in compliance with Article 10.4.8 of the Saint Mary's University Faculty Union Collective Agreement. There is also the reporting requirements of the Federal Contractors Program (FCP). This program requires provincially regulated employers with 100 or more employees to certify that they will implement employment equity measures. Saint Mary's submitted an Employment Equity Work plan to the Federal Government in relation to our successful bid on a contract involving our residences. When Senate initially considered these reports it was believed that some information should be represented in this way. If it is the wish of Senate to represent the data as a representation of the total SMU population, this suggestion can be forwarded to HR.
- 659 employees supplied information out of 914. That means that 255 employees were not represented in the numbers but their responses would be significant within the context of Saint Mary's.
- Senators thought Table 1a was completely misleading and should be deleted from the report.

- Concern was expressed that if Senate only received Table 1b as it is in this report with a congratulatory tone, it would be misleading and inappropriate. It was suggested that the whole report needs to be revised.
- On page 5 at the bottom of the page it states that there are significant gaps identified in the Faculties of Science (women and Visible Minorities). On page 8 under Positive Action Taken, item #4 – it says there were no serious imbalances of the four groups specified in Article 10.4 of the Collective Agreement within the Faculty of Science. These statements are in direct conflict.  
Response: The Departments have to identify the imbalances and then the report is created. There is also the context of the labour market expectation which is not the same over the various disciplines.
- It was suggested that Departments and Programs should be asked to examine themselves in a different view.
- Members were advised that within the new SMUFU Collective Agreement the Employer and Union have agreed to bring together a joint committee with the purpose to examine how best to improve the hiring and retention of individuals as defined within Article 10.4.1. The committee has not yet been created. Senate could recommend that this committee look at how improvements could be made to this report.
- It was suggested that this information could be considered during the program review process. This may be a more objective benchmark.
- It was noted that the report is missing retention statistics.  
Question: Is Saint Mary's University managing to hire the individuals that are covered by this documents and are they able to retain them? How many of these individuals have left and why did they leave? We have no exit interview information.  
Response: There are confidentiality issues regarding voluntary self-declarations. We do exit interviews and this information is available. It could be addressed within this report.
- In terms of program reviews and the data that may flow out of those reviews; an example would be the Biology review where the external reviewers identified an inequity. With this in mind, the Department looked at the makeup of the student community. Biology students are currently primarily female. Question: What does the fact that there are only two female department faculty members say about the University? Does this communicate to those female students that there are no jobs for them?
- The consensus was that Senate ask the committee as defined in the new SMUFU Collective Agreement to look at ways of revising this report.

ii) Update on the test/exam copying issue

**Key discussion points:**

- A working committee has been formed and one meeting has been held. The committee is looking at student involvement. They



are working with print centre in terms of technology improvements. More information to come.

- iii) Student recommendation – It was suggested that Senate appoint a working group composed of students, faculty from Arts/Science/SSB and a staff member from the BDC who works with Enactus, to prepare a report on active and experiential learning opportunities that currently exist for all SMU students. This committee will suggest recommendations on how to better implement and expand such opportunities at the university. A recent report stated that Enactus students are more employable than students from other institutions across the country. The student representatives would like to see this success rate expanded to include all SMU students.

**Key discussion points:**

- Clarification: This initiative would be focused on identifying what is available for students, and would find ways to make students aware of these opportunities. The group would also find ways to facilitate student access to this information.
- Other universities have interdisciplinary courses to address this.
- It was noted that this is going to be a very big and complex task. Reflection would be needed on the membership of such a working group. It was suggested that CAID should be involved.
- The committee would need to define the term “service-learning” and “experiential-learning” within the Saint Mary’s context.
- It was acknowledged that there may be value in forming an ad-hoc committee of Senate to review this area across the faculties. The investigation could identify some areas for action.
- Deferred until the January 15<sup>th</sup> Senate meeting and referred to the January 6<sup>th</sup> Academic Planning meeting for discussion and to propose options to the Senate. SMUSA will be invited to send a representative to attend the January APC meeting.

15035

**PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

Key Points:

- The President travelled to China to meet with partners and reinforce relations.
- There was a meeting with alumni to provide information regarding what we are doing now and to facilitate fund raising opportunities.
- The President attended a Conference on Digital Technologies with a focus on disruptive technologies in the workplace. The Conference was hosted by Brightspace.
- Negotiations continue on the new MOU.
- The Board of Governors Advancement Committee is working on a fund raising campaign. In the development of this initiative there will be consultation done with all members of the University community.
- In the area of strategic planning we are organizing two tabletop events; one in January and one with the Board of Governors in February.

- A \$2 million gift from The Joyce Foundation will be used to create bursaries which will support students with demonstrated financial need. The majority of the Joyce Foundation gift will be endowed so as to provide a sustaining source of funds. When fully implemented, The Joyce Foundation Bursary will provide eight bursaries of approximately \$5000 annually to Nova Scotia students. The Joyce Foundation Opportunities Bursary will provide 10 awards of approximately \$2000 annually for Atlantic Canadian students attending the Fred Smithers Centre of Support for Students with Disabilities.
- A thank you was expressed for all the work faculty and staff do at the end of the term.
- Best wishes for the holiday period were extended to Senate members.

**15036**

**QUESTION PERIOD**

- None.

**15037**

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 4:35 P.M.

Barb Bell,  
Secretary to the Office of Senate