

SENATE MEETING MINUTES November 19, 2021

The 630th meeting of the Senate of Saint Mary's University was held on Friday, November 19, 2021, at 2:00 PM. Dr Takseva Chairperson, presided. This was a hybrid meeting held in the CLARI meeting room, Atrium 340. A zoom link was also available for virtual participation.

PRESENT: Dr Summerby-Murray, Dr Butler, Dr Francis, Dr Ingraham, Dr Sarty, Dr Austin, Dr Bannerjee (2-3 only), Dr Brosseau, Dr Fan, Dr Grandy, Dr Grek-Martin, Dr Higgins, Dr O'Brien, Dr Sanderson, Dr Stinson, Dr Takseva, Dr VanderPlaat, Dr Zhyznomirska, Mr Brophy, (3:30 – 4:30 only), Ms Cadeau, Mr Tumusiime, Mr Kay, and Ms Bell, Secretary to the Office of Senate.

REGRETS: Ms van den Hoogen, Dr Panasian, Dr Crocker, Dr Bhabra, Mr Southwell, Ms Mihika, Mr Sydney,

After technical difficulties, the meeting was called to order at 2:12 pm with the territorial acknowledgement.

22031 REPORT OF AGENDA COMMITTEE

The Agenda Committee report was accepted.

22032 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Posted as ***Appendix A*** for this meeting (10 min).

- Today, there was a successful launch of the Sobey's School of Business speaker series. The premier, an alum of SMU. attended.

Update on Scarborough Charter

- The Standing Committee on the Prevention of Racism will shortly bring forward to Senate recommendations regarding the Charter. It is the hope that the Committee will recommend endorsement of the Charter and a draft Action Plan for implementation of various elements of the Charter's contents and that these recommendations will come forward to the December meeting. Saint Mary's University has the liberty to develop a context specific plan for SMU.
- As of Thursday November 18th, forty (40) institutions have signed the Charter and Universities Canada has endorsed it, subject to individual member discretion. A further 40-50 universities and colleges are considering the implications of the Charter and it is hopeful that many, including Saint Mary's, will sign on. It is important that we, as an institution, have discussions at the Committee, Senate, and Board levels before signing, given the implications and accountabilities outlined in the Charter

- The final version of the charter contains important changes in language which provide flexibility for each institution to reflect local context and provide a basis for action plans in the spirit of the Charter.

Reorganization of Senior Academic Administration

- With Dr. Butler's announcement that he will not seek renewal at the end of his current term as Vice-President Academic and Research (30 June 2022), Dr. Butler and I have worked on a reorganization of the senior levels of academic administration to move Saint Mary's to what is generally called a 'Provost model'. Over many years, Saint Mary's has created a situation of having a high number of direct reports into the VPAR's office, generating an inordinate load on this position. I have shared with the Board of Governors the proposed model for reorganization. It is described in brief below for Senate.
- The current Vice-President Academic and Research position will be renamed 'Provost and Vice-President Academic and Research.
- The provost would continue to have the Deans and the University Librarian as direct reports.
- A net new position would be created for a 'Vice-Provost Student Success' This position would take on the reporting from the various roles that relate to student success.
- The various Associate VP positions related to student success (Student Affairs and Services, Teaching and Learning, Enrolment Management and The Language Centre/International college) will report to the Vice-Provost.
- New appointments (but with existing budget) will be made for (1) an Associate Vice-President Diversity Excellence and (2) an Associate Vice-President Academic and International.
- In collaboration with Human Resources, a Request for Quotations (RFQ) for consulting services to recruit for the Provost and Vice-Provost is in progress with the goal of filling these positions by 1 July 2022.

22033

VICE-PRESIDENT ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH REPORT

Posted as **Appendix B1** for this meeting (10 min).

Requested updates: 1) Review, Dept of Education, 2) Status – position of Director, Academic Learning Services, 3) Update on the Writing Centre, 4) Update on the Studio, 5) Status – Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Key Discussion Points:

- Fall 2021 enrolments have persisted well through the term. This year, Saint Mary's also did well compared to other NS universities in terms of enrolment. SMU enrolment is up over recent years 1.7% for full-time undergraduate and 34.4% for new first-year undergraduate as of Oct 1/2021.
- Saint Mary's has also done well with graduate recruitment, with a few programs seeing significant increases, particularly in the professional programs. For winter 2022 SMU is experiencing persistent and strong registration patterns.
- **Registrations by Faculty.** There are about 15% of registrations remaining to come in for the winter term. The VPAR shared the registration stats with Senate.

- **Faculty of Education** – COVID interrupted work on this and there have been many more pressing priorities requiring attention. There are programmatic and collaborative opportunities in Education (the IMTE program is doing very well, and it may be advantageous to consider opportunities in the Liberal Study of Education given its importance in key social issues such as indigenization, decolonization, addressing systematic racism, and other Equity, Diversity, and inclusion issues). The VPAR is exploring whether an external review would help identify opportunities for the university and provide an arms-length recommendation about how we should structure those opportunities. The Board of Governors would likely want to understand the broader implications and opportunities before considering any recommendation to change how we oversee Education.
- **MPHEC update** – the Master of Business Analytics Program has been approved and will launch in the coming academic year.
- **The Studio for Teaching and Learning** – An Academic Learning Services Advisory Committee has been formed (R. Austin, E. Pancer, E. Kwon, J. Green, S. Murphy and the VP External, SMUSA) to review and reorganize the Studio and the Writing Centre to allow more seamless collaboration between groups like SAS and the Education Developers/Technologists. An external review will be done in conjunction with this activity.
- **Accessibility** – The University Secretary met with the Standing Committee on Accessibility to discuss further the issues with the now revoked policy that was addressed at the October Senate meeting. Key issues are around the scale, scope, and meaning of the duty to accommodate, elements of the Human Rights Act and the Accessibility Act are also conflated. Due to legal requirements, the responsibility to address these issues rests with the University.

An accommodations policy is in development and will apply across the University to faculty, staff, and students. The University Secretary has undertaken this work to prepare a comprehensive policy to address the issues. Once a draft policy is available it will be submitted to Senate for feedback. The University Secretary is also working with the VPAR and VPFA to develop an Accessibility Plan. External consultants are being engaged to assist with the Accessibility Plan. It must be in place by the end of April. Plans are a very high level, and it is the work that goes on after that point that is the issue. The built environment issues are going to become problematic. (Example: an accommodation requiring furniture to be bought because of the needs of an individual and what budget that will come from). The key thing that is needed is consultation with the constituencies on campus that will be using the plan.

- 2020-2021 Annual Report, Animal Care Committee **Appendix B2**
Key Discussion Points:
 - The chair of this committee was commended. The committee is working extremely well.

There being no revisions or objections, the 2020-2021 Annual Report of the Animal Care Committee was accepted into the record of Senate.

- 2020-2021 Annual Report, Research Ethics Board **Appendix B3**
Key Discussion Points:
 - The chair of the REB was commended. The committee is working extremely well.

There being no revisions or objections, the 2020-2021 Annual Report of the Research Ethics Board was accepted into the record of Senate.

22034
Cadeau)

SMUSA PRESIDENT'S REPORT (Academic focus – presented by Amanda

Posted as **Appendix C** for this meeting (5 min).

Key Discussion Points:

Advocacy Week:

- Students Nova Scotia and its partner schools in the province are meeting with the ministers, MLAs, and the caucuses for the main political parties from November 22nd to November 26th during Advocacy Week. Agenda items are more investment in OPED resources, financial aid, and mental health supports.

Women in politics:

- In January 2022, SMUSA is hosting a woman in politics event in partnership with SNS, Equal Voice, and the Department of Political Science. This event will bring people together to discuss the struggles that women have faced in the political sphere.

University budget advisory committee:

- On November 26th SMUSA will provide a presentation to the university budget advisory committee on SMUSA's biggest priorities for where the university should be making investments. Key asks will be around lobbying for the creation of an LGBTQ+ student coordinator and office, expansion of the international centre, particularly around hiring more staff, the creation of common spaces for black, and indigenous students, as well as continuing our push for a predictable tuition model capped at a 3% increase per annum.

Internal Projects and Events

- **Walk in solidarity for reconciliation and community drum awakening**
SMUSA will also be hosting the official awakening ceremony of the new community drum in December. As you are aware, we purchased the community drum which is currently sitting in the President's office.
- **SMUSA Residence Committee**
The SMUSA residence committee met on Thursday November 4th, 2021. Committee composition includes five students from residence, the SMUSA President, Isobel Tyler and Kyle Cook representing SMUSA. The committee established their terms of reference. Students provided general feedback on what they want the committee to focus on and the issues they want addressed.

Wellness week

- November 22nd to 26th 2021 SMUSA will host Wellness week. A calendar of events has been finalized. Kyle Cook and Adrian White worked on organizing Wellness Week.

Residence Holiday Committee:

- Isobel Tyler and Adrian White are working with the residence staff to bring a little holiday cheer to students in residence staying over the holidays. There will be 12 days of programming over the break consisting of games, movies, and fun activities both in person and virtual.

Movember:

- Our team is working with both Student Services and The Gorsebrook Lounge staff to create a Movember fundraiser. Shave off is at the end of the month in The Gorsebrook Lounge.

Pride Positive Space & Women's Center:

- The pride centre has been cleaned out and it is now known as the pride positive space. Hours and purpose are being marketed to students. SMUSA is working with student services to hire a LGBTQ+ Pride coordinator. The university is working on a salary budget. The hope is for a posting by next spring 2022.

Town HALL

- On December 2nd, SMUSA will host a town hall to get some general feedback from students on the Fall term, and how we can improve our services heading into the winter semester.

22035

QUESTION PERIOD (length at discretion of chair based on business volume)

Key Discussion Points:

- Question: The initiation of the review of the Department of Education was a motion in Senate to terminate the Faculty of Education. Is there a timeline for the resolution of this initiative? Answer: The plan is to bring this to a conclusion in the winter. A discussion will be convened in early March. **Action Item: The VPAR** will confirm at a future Senate meeting.
- Question: How is the comprehensive plan going to connect with the work of the Accessibility Committee? Answer: The Plan and the Policy are separate from each other. The Policy included elements that could create risk and the policy must comply with the legislation. In addition, we need to establish what extraordinary hardship involved. The University Secretary is referring to the work of this committee as well as other groups internal and external to the university. The University Secretary has committed to work with the Accessibility Committee going forward.
- Question: Do we have another Director for the Writing Centre? Answer: Amanda Saoud is currently Acting Director.
- Question: Regarding the proposed new senior administrative structure, there is a heavy focus on students and little on research. Concern was expressed related to the message that sends to the researchers at the university. Answer: We have an AVP Research and another role as well. There is another role that is looking at a net new position focused on Research and Innovation.
- Question: What would be the focus of the AVP Diversity Excellence position? Answer: This would be a broad scope looking campus and work very closely with many of the units on campus. This is more a policy position and will be

filled by a faculty member that has the background and experience to the position.

- Question: Could we see the complete reorganization of the senior administrative structure? It is difficult to separate the research & teaching because they go hand in hand, particularly at the graduate level. Answer: Goal is to have the position of Provost on July 1, 2022. Vice-Provost Student Success is planned to be filled at the same time. The AVP Diversity Excellence should be announced in the coming weeks.
- Question: We would like to understand more clearly what is being proposed and what are the downstream implications of these changes. Answer: The President advised that he would update Senate as things move along.

22036

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the meeting of October 15, 2021, were *circulated* as **Appendix E**.

Clarification – Accessibility Committee (Item 1 under (a) revisions. Concerns were expressed that the Fred Smithers Centre ... an edit is needed, as there are two open parentheses and only one closing. Concern was also expressed about the use of the word ‘special’. **Action Item:** Bell to delete it.

In the absence of further revisions, the minutes of the meeting of October 15, 2021, were approved as revised.

22037

BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS AGENDAS

.01 Subsequent to the October Senate meeting, Senate members electronically approved revisions to 8-1016 Senate Policy on Final Exams.

.02 Team Teaching - Forward from April & June 2021 Senate meetings. (What it means and ways we could do that going forward in both an on-campus and remote teaching environment.) Dr Zhyznomirska/Dr Butler.

Key Discussion Points:

- Dr Zhyznomirska prepared a report. **Action Item:** A meeting between Dr Zhyznomirska and Butler will be scheduled soon. An update will be presented in December or January.

22038

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

1. Academic Appeals (Dr Takseva - chair)
2020-2021 Annual Report to Senate, **Appendix E**

Key Discussion Points:

- Question: What is the process for disseminating what the communication process is? Answer: The chair of the appeals committee communicates with the Dean or the designate to advise of the decision of the committee and advise of the next steps.
- Question: Why does the Senate Committee not contact the instructor directly? Answer: If the appeal documentation appears to evidence a personality conflict issue, the Dean and/or Associate Dean is involved. Concern was expressed concerning potential negative impact to the timelines for decisions as stipulated

in the Academic Regulation. **Action Item: Bell** to take this process concern to the Academic Regulations Committee.

There being no revisions or objections, the 2020-2021 annual report of the Academic Appeals Committee was accepted into the record of Senate.

2. Academic Integrity (Dr Takseva - chair)
2020-2021 Annual Report to Senate, **Appendix F**

Key Discussion Points:

- No discussion.

There being no revisions or objections, the 2020-2021 annual report of the Academic Integrity Committee was accepted into the record of Senate.

3. Academic Integrity Appeal Board (Dr Takseva - chair)
2020-2021 Annual Report to Senate, **Appendix G**

Key Discussion Points:

- Question: Is it usual for so many cases to come from science? Answer: There have been certain remote classes that had a large volume of incidents this year. Often a course may have two different academic members that could be forwarding incidents on the same course.
- Thanks were expressed to the AIOs that were handling the incident reports.

There being no revisions or objections, the 2020-2021 annual report of the Academic Integrity Appeals Board was accepted into the record of Senate.

4. Academic Planning (Dr Butler - chair)
2020-2021 Annual Report to Senate, **Appendix H1 Annual Report & Appendix H2 Gap Report**

Key Discussion Points:

- The move to deal with programs reviews through Zoom has been working well. The committee is also doing some development work related to its mandate.

There being no revisions or objections, the 2020-2021 annual report of the Academic Planning Committee was accepted into the record of Senate.

5. Academic Regulations (Dr VanderPlaat)
Procedures related to revisions to UGAR #5 to provide a P/NC grade option, **Appendix I** (deferred from Sept/21).

Key Discussion Points:

- There was some concern about the objective. The first sentence of the process has been simplified and a few other additions further down have been added to provide further direction and clarification.
- Question: For core courses or other program requirements – how do we answer the question of a student in first year that has not declared a major yet? Also, how do we deal with humanities credits – do these not qualify? Answer: Students can have more than one humanities credit. We need to be able to provide students with options and advise. It must be up to the student to go to the advisor to consult with them

- Question: How can the advisor advise students if they have not declared a Major? Answer: If a student is unsure whether they will major in sociology for example, they are probably not going to major in it. If they decide later that they do want to major in sociology, they will just have to go back and take the required course(s).
- Question: What about science, where they require some math courses (like MATH 1210)? Answer: A pass is still a credit. If there is a pass in the required course(s), the student should be able to proceed, but only if it does not require a minimum grade.
- Question: What is the schedule of implementation for this? If it was implemented in the middle of a term, it could be grounds for an appeal. How will this influence the workflow of the academic advisors, who are highly strained at this time? Answer: The intent is to make this retroactive to the beginning of the term. If Senate would prefer this to be implemented as of January 1, we could do this. In September it was the perception that Senate approved this for it to be active this fall. The SSB Advisors need a meeting with the Registrar before this is active on the website. Implementation timing needs to be clarified. We need to be clear that it is not who is eligible but what courses are eligible. Change “Students taking co-op” to “Co-op courses”.
- Question: As this is the middle of November, the timing for this is problematic. We need to be careful to stay close to the regulation itself. Students in FGSR and non-degree students would never be eligible.
- It was suggested that this be effective for the winter 2022. A small change was suggested: Delete “senate policy” and replace with “the website”.
- Concern was expressed related to the messaging regarding students entering courses in which they may not feel they would do well. Students will be making this decision before the last date for withdrawal. Suggested wording: “course choices in disciplinary areas”. It is also up to students to choose what option they want.
- Question: We voted on AR5 and then we have a document that is being translated to a webpage that describes who will qualify for that. Is there a step missing? We do not have a policy or a specific regulation that speaks to those qualifications.
- Anyone who wants this should be able to access it and we should not worry about the reasons. Suggested wording: “as long as it does not impact the student’s GPA or the student trajectory to successful degree completion”.
- There is language in other institutions that address this grade option in a similar fashion by stating an exclusion. For example, the language used by the U of T is: “Degree students may select up to 2.0 credits* of their degree credits offered by the Faculty to be assessed on a Credit/ No Credit basis. Courses with a final status of CR do not affect the GPA. They will count towards Distribution/Breadth Requirements and degree credits but cannot be used to satisfy Program requirements.”
- We need to identify what happens when you have elective restrictions within the core.
- Question: Can’t we just simply create an outline for possible implications for choosing to opt in for the pass/no credit model? Students understand that this might affect their ability to apply for grad school, or awards and scholarships

etc... but at minimum let us just move forward at some point to have the option available for students.

- Question: When do the AR changes take effect in the calendar? Answer: The decision on when an AR takes effect is a Senate decision.
- **Action item: Bell** to add an agenda item for the next meeting of the Academic Regulations Committee to consider when an Academic Regulation revision would take effect and make that part of the motion going forward.
- A Senator noted that at the September Senate meeting it was stated that <The motion was to approve the framework. The operationalization of the framework is worked out by the Registrar's Office. The wording of the Academic Regulation is clear. The process is a separate issue from the regulation.> This sounds like the appropriate place to return the process/guidelines for revision would be to the Registrar.
- It was noted that U of T has an established guideline on this grading option on their website. The following language was provided as an example: "The CR/NCR option was created to encourage you to expand your possible course choices to areas where you think you have interest but may not be confident about how well you will do. With the CR/NCR option, course results don't impact your GPA. And if you find that you're doing better in it than expected, you may still choose to remove the CR/NCR option providing you do so by the deadline to cancel the course without academic penalty."
- A suggestion was made to review what other institutions were using and consult prior to bringing this back to Senate in December. Dr VanderPlaat accepted this task.

Moved by O'Brien and seconded, **"to refer AR #5 b to the Senate Academic Regulations Committee to remove the reference to a Senate Policy."** Motion carried.

6. Accessibility (Dr Brosseau– Senate rep)

- 2020-2021 Annual Report to Senate, **Appendix J**

Key Discussion Points:

- In 2017 an Ad-Hoc Committee was established to review the issue of accessibility in an academic environment and bring suggestions forward to Senate related to addressing the issues identified during the review. This was done in March of 2019, and a Senate Standing Committee was established. The primary mandate of the committee was the development and implementation of a Senate Policy governing student accessibility and accommodations as outlined in the Senate Ad-Hoc Committee's report.
- The initial goal was to address the needs of students who require accommodations. Before this policy was developed, there was nothing protecting students that needed accommodation.
- Fred Smithers staff were directly involved with the development of the existing policy that was rescinded. The intention of the committee was to produce a policy that was as broad as possible to fill a gap that existed. The members of this committee had the best interests of students in mind when they developed the policy.
- Senate was asked to reflect on the mandate of this committee.

- Members were advised that there is work for the committee around academic accommodation.
- The University Secretary can guide the process to ensure the policy meets the legislative requirements, and that we do not overlook anything that might result in someone's needs being overlooked.
- Question: Are we affirming the work of this committee? Answer: The work of this committee includes assessment and other things. We need to look at those things that are under the purview of Senate. Ideally, we would have this committee provide a lens through which a more fulsome approach to academic accommodation is handled.
- The University Secretary will be providing detailed feedback on the policy to the committee. There is a role for this committee, but it may involve more than affirming the Committee's existing mandate.

There being no revisions or objections, the 2020-2021 annual report of the Accessibility Committee was accepted into the record of Senate.

7. Agenda (Dr Stinson)
2020-2021 Agenda Committee Annual Report, **Appendix K** (deferred from Sept mtg)

There being no revisions or objections, the 2020-2021 annual report of the Agenda Committee was accepted into the record of Senate.

8. By-Laws (Dr Grek-Martin)
- 2020-2021 By-Laws Committee Annual Report, **Appendix L1** (deferred from Sept mtg)
Key Discussion Points:
 - The Bylaws Committee is undertaking an overall review of the Bylaws with the perspective of the impact of the Secretariat structure. The Committee is also considering removing the terms of reference of Senate Committees from the Bylaws.

There being no revisions or objections, the 2020-2021 annual report of the Bylaws Committee was accepted into the record of Senate.

- Notice of Motion – Senate Standing Committee review of Terms of Reference (composition), **Appendix L2.**
Key Discussion Points:
 - No discussion.

Moved by O'Brien on behalf of the Bylaws Committee, and seconded, **“that Senate task all the Standing Committees of Senate to review, at their next regular meeting, their terms of reference and the appropriateness of their composition considering the April 16, 2021, approval of Senate Bylaw revision of section 1.2 Election of Academic Staff. This section defines Academic Staff for the purposes of the Senate Bylaws as including all full-time faculty members (including lecturer-stream faculty)**

and professional librarians employed by the University. Senate Committees are asked to report the results of this review to the Senate by the end of February 2022” Motion carried.

Moved by Grandy and seconded, “that the Senate meeting be extended for 10 minutes to continue the business.” Motion defeated.

22039

FACULTY COUNCILS

No reports.

22040

REPORTS OF JOINT COMMITTEES

Honorary Degrees 2020-2021 Annual Report – *Appendix T*

Key Discussion Points:

- Deferred due to time restrictions

22041

NEW BUSINESS FROM

Floor (not involving notice of motion)

- Options for course delivery modes in the 2022-2023 academic year (Dr Grek-Martin)

Key Discussion Points:

- Deferred due to time restrictions

22042

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:35 P.M.

Barb Bell,
Secretary of Senate