

SENATE MEETING MINUTES December 17, 2021

The 631st meeting of the Senate of Saint Mary's University was held on Friday, December 17, 2021, at 2:00 PM. Dr Takseva Chairperson, presided. This was a virtual meeting, and a zoom link was provided.

PRESENT: Dr Summerby-Murray, Dr Butler, Dr Bhabra, Dr Francis, Dr Ingraham, Dr Sarty, Dr Austin, Dr Bannerjee (2-3 only), Dr Fan, Dr Grandy, Dr Grek-Martin, Dr Higgins, Dr O'Brien, Dr Panasian, Dr Sanderson, Dr Takseva, Dr VanderPlaat, Dr Zhyznomirska, Mr Brophy, Ms van den Hoogen, Mr Southwell, Ms Cadeau, Ms Mihika, Mr Tumusiime, Dr Smith, Mr Kay, Ms Sargeant-Greenwood, Ms Rafuse-Clarke, and Ms Bell, Secretary to the Office of Senate.

REGRETS: Dr Brosseau, Dr Crocker, Dr Stinson, and Mr Sydney.

The meeting was called to order at 2:02 pm with the territorial acknowledgement.

22043 **REPORT OF AGENDA COMMITTEE**
The Agenda Committee report was accepted.

22044 **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**
Posted as ***Appendix A1-3*** for this meeting (10 min).

Key Discussion Points:

- Reorganization of Senior Academic Administration
 - At the last meeting of Senate, the President outlined verbally a reorganization of the senior levels of academic administration to move Saint Mary's to what is generally called a 'Provost model'. Senators requested organizational charts that provided an overview of that reorganization of administrative offices.
 - Key details:
 - The renaming of the current VPAR position to 'Provost and Vice-President Academic and Research.
 - The creation of a new position of 'Vice-Provost Student Success' (reporting to the provost)
 - The new reporting relationships of the existing Associate Vice-Presidents Academic and Enrolment Management, Teaching and Learning, Student Affairs and Services and the Director of the International College/Language Centre to the Vice-Provost Student Success
 - The maintenance of the direct reporting of the academic deans to the provost
 - The direct reporting of the Associate Vice-President to the Provost

- The direct reporting of the (yet to be appointed) Associate Vice-President International to the Provost
 - And, in phase 2, the creation of a Vice-Provost Research and Innovation
 - The President also commits that the appointment processes for the AVP International and Vice-Provost Research and Innovation will be open searches.
- Recommendation from the Standing Committee on the Prevention of Racism regarding the adoption of the Scarborough Charter, **Appendices A2 & A3.**
 - The final version of the Scarborough Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education is appended to this report
 - Appended also is a draft action plan prepared by the Standing Committee
 - Approximately 55 universities have signed on to this charter.
 - Key will be an action plan. Bannerjee, Southwell, and Brophy were all members of the standing committee.
 - Bannerjee advised her resignation from Senate due to her change of role and title. She requested (if possible) that a members of an equity group that is underrepresented be elected as her replacement.
 - Support was expressed for the charter.
 - The Standing Committee recommends that Saint Mary's University become a signatory to the Scarborough Charter and brings forward the following for Senate's consideration:

Moved by Brophy and seconded, **“that Senate accept the recommendation of the Standing Committee on the Prevention of Racism that Saint Mary's University become a signatory to the Scarborough Charter on Anti Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education and endorse the draft action plan on implementation of the Charter's principles.” Motion carried.**

Moved by Summerby-Murray and seconded, **“that the Standing Committee recommends that Senate convey its resolution to the Governance Committee of the Board of Governors and recommend that the Board similarly approve Saint Mary's becoming signatory to the Charter and direct the President to sign on behalf of the University.” Motion carried.**

22045

VICE-PRESIDENT ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH REPORT

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

Requested updates: 1) Update on meeting with Dr Zhyznomirska concerning team teaching.

Key Discussion Points:

- This data was produced as of Sunday, December 7.
- There are strong new undergraduate enrolments for this term.
- Registrations statistics were presented to members. by Faculty.
- **Faculty of Education**

We expect the draft strategic plan to emerge by March. Discussions will be planned around the Faculty of Education and options for March 2022. This may include a possible external review of the current state and potential future, all to help to guide Senate discussion around the Faculty of Education and appropriate governance and structure.

- **Research Agreements Policy**

There is a new research agreements policy in place through FGSR. You can find more information at

<https://www.smu.ca/fgsr/fgsr/grants-agreements-faq-for-faculty.html>

- **Team Teaching**

Drs. Zhyznomirska and Butler met to discuss her research work on this topic and possible paths forward for Saint Mary's. Dr. Zhyznomirska is working on creating a Community of Practice on this topic and we are reviewing guidelines from other institutions for possible use here. We expect to create time for faculty looking to engage in team teaching to gather and focus on development prior to the next curriculum revision cycle. We will keep Senate updated on the progress of this initiative.

- **Digital Learning Strategy**

It is imperative that we re-engage the campus in consultation on this in January. There is a need for this strategy to guide the needs and plans for the coming years. There are now more examples on campus of technology options, but we need the strategy to inform any future renovations and projects in our classrooms. It is likely that MPHEC will announce new guidelines on technology enabled learning and the impact on what constitutes a program modification in the new reality post-COVID.

- Over the holiday break, there will be Studio supports for faculty.

22046

SMUSA PRESIDENT'S REPORT (Academic)

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

Key Discussion Points:

- **P/NC Model**

Students still face challenges related to the pandemic. SMUSA is proposing a Pass/No Credit Model to be implemented again. This would allow students to opt in, if it is the best option for them or to keep their traditional grades.

- **Winter Term Classes**

With the recent changes in Public Health Protocols and more changes possibly to come, students are concerned what this may mean for their classes. Communicating intended interim plans early and often would help relieve student stress about the upcoming term and help them plan more effectively.

- **Course Concerns**

Students have made the VP Academic aware of their desire for more online course offerings. Specifically, students who are not living in Halifax are concerned about their ability to complete their degree online. Additionally, local mature students who have a non-traditional student experience are concerned that they may not be able to complete their degree. Further, several students are concerned with the quality of their current online courses. One student has

requested a full refund very near the end of the semester. These students have asked that their concerns be brought forward to Senate.

- Events
 - Wellness Week, Nov 22-26 was successful
 - Community Drum Awakening, Dec 1 was well attended and successful.
 - Elevating Indigenous Businesses - collaborated with SSB to plan the Leadership Speaker Series: Elevating Indigenous Businesses. Provided consultation advice for cultural relevance.
 - Winter Welcome Week Planning – this is in process but there is some uncertainty related to the current Omicron variant outbreak.

22047 **QUESTION PERIOD** (length at discretion of chair based on business volume)

Key Discussion Points:

- A senator noted that if students were perceiving the quality of courses as a reason to request the P/NC option or to withdraw from those courses without academic impact, that is not the intent of this option. The P/NC option was intended to be a way for students to explore courses that students may not otherwise attempt.
- No further questions.

22047 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Minutes of the meeting of November 19, 2021, were *circulated* as **Appendix D**.

Remove the motion to extend the meeting which was defeated.

With no objections or further revisions, the minutes of the meeting of November 19, 2021, were considered approved as revised.

22048 **BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS AGENDAS**

1. Academic Regulations (Dr Smith)
Revision to UGAR #5b to provide a P/NC grade option, **Appendix E**.

Key Discussion Points:

- Senators requested the removal of the reference to a Senate Policy on P/NC that does not exist and make this revision effective as of the 2022-2023 Academic Year.
- Question: Will a policy be developed in the future? Answer: VanderPlaat has started the process to create a handbook for this process in the early part of the new year and in consultation with the advisors.

Moved by Smith on behalf of the Academic Regulations Committee and seconded, **“that Senate approves the revisions to Undergraduate Academic Regulation 5 b as submitted in Appendix E.” Motion carried.**

22049 **REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

1. Academic Planning (Dr Butler)
 - a) One-Year Follow-up Report, EGNE Program Review, APC Notice of Motion – **Appendix F1**, and EGNE 1 Year Report – **Appendix F2**

Key Discussion Points:

- No discussion.

Moved by Butler and seconded, “**that Senate approves the one-year report of the EGNE Program as meeting the requirements of Section 5 of the Senate Policy on the Review of Undergraduate Programs at Saint Mary’s.**” Motion carried.

- b) Department Name Change Request, Modern Languages and Classics, APC Notice of Motion - **Appendix G1**, and ML&C change request – **Appendix G2.**
Key Discussion Points:

- No discussion.

Moved by Butler and seconded, “**that Senate approves the Department Name Change Request of Modern Languages and Classics to Languages and Cultures**” Motion carried.

- c) Center for the Study of Sport and Health (CSSH) 2020-2021 Annual Report, APC Notice of Motion, **Appendix H1**, and CSSH Annual Report - **Appendix H2.**

Key Discussion Points:

- No discussion.

In the absence of objections, the annual report from CSSH was accepted into the record of the Senate.

- d) Center for Leadership Excellence (CLE) 2020-2021 Annual Report, APC Notice of Motion - **Appendix I1**, and CLE Annual Report – **Appendix I2**
Key Discussion Points:

- No discussion.

In the absence of objections, the annual report from CLE was accepted into the record of the Senate.

- e) Gorsebrook Research Institute (GRI) 2020-2021 Annual Report, APC Notice of Motion - **Appendix J1** and GRI Annual Report – **Appendix J2.**

Key Discussion Points:

- No discussion.

In the absence of objections, the annual report of the GRI was accepted into the record of the Senate.

- f) The CN Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CNCOHS) 2020-2021 Annual Report, APC Notice of motion - **Appendix K1** and CNCOHS Annual Report – **Appendix K2.**

Key Discussion Points:

- No discussion.

In the absence of objections, the annual report of the CNCOHS was accepted into the record of the Senate.

- g) APC is reviewing the response of the ICA that was placed on a one-year probationary period. APC will likely be bringing forward
2. Curriculum Committee (Dr VanderPlaat - chair)
2020-2021 Annual Report to Senate, **Appendix L**

Key Discussion Points:

- a) 2020-2021 Curriculum Committee Annual Report, **Appendix L** (deferred from Sept mtg)

Key Discussion Points:

- No discussion.

In the absence of objections, the 2020-2021 annual report of the Curriculum Committee was accepted into the record of the Senate.

- b) Annual Academic Calendar Curriculum Report - 2022-2023 Academic Calendar: **Appendix M1** – ARC Notice of Motion, **Appendix M2** – Course Proposals, **Appendix M3** – Course Proposal Reviewer Instructions, **Appendix M4** – Program Proposals, **Appendix M5** – Program Proposal Reviewer Instructions, and **Appendix M6** (a-d) - Additional Calendar Revision Proposals.

Key Discussion Points:

- The assistance of Shelly Rafuse-Clarke and Dave Peters through the curriculum review process was gratefully acknowledged.
- The Curriculum Committee is open to any feedback related to how we might improve the process.
- The curriculum revisions were shared using share screen. Senators were asked to advise if they wished to discuss any revisions.
- Question: Would it be possible to present the information by faculty in the future. Answer Yes. The spreadsheet can be ordered in that fashion.
- Question: Is this the type of report that will come forward to Senate in the future? Answer: Yes, unless senators request something different. The text shown in red is being removed and the text in green is being added.
- Question: Are we all going to have credentials for this program? Answer: You just use your s number.
- Question: The WMST revision was invisible as far as CourseLeaf was concerned. Why? Answer: This is just cleaning up the calendar because the WMST undergraduate program has not existed as a stand-alone program for many years.
- The program text changes are highlighted in yellow.
- Question: What is the blue text? Answer: The blue colour indicates the text that is being pulled into this document from another source. This is just a report of the differences between existing and revised text.
- Question: Is training available? Answer: The senators have been trained and training will be available to new senators every year. This program will become widely used across the campus for faculty to become familiar with it.

- Revisions to the content in the faculty pages were shown on screen for the Bachelor of Science.
- Revisions to the admission to the Diploma in Engineering were made to facilitate the access of new students to the program.
- The B. Comm Major revisions were shown. These revisions arose from the recommendations arising from program reviews. These changes impact other areas of the calendar and because of the way that CourseLeaf functions, those changes are done automatically by the program.
- It was noted that in the text related to humanities courses it references Modern Languages. Response: Any revisions that are necessary due to name changes recently approved by Senate will be made before the system goes live.
- It was noted that this information was presented in different formats and in future years the reporting will be more consistent.
- Question: Will curriculum revisions be done once a year? Answer: A final decision has not been made but it should only be done once a year. If, in the middle of a year, you were to change what students need to be admitted to a course it would create a significant problem in terms of their degree program. This would require a decision of Senate. There are positives and negatives to all options (for example, with more frequent -- rapid resolution of problems being a positive, but uncertainty about which calendar applies to a student's degree being a negative)
- There was no objection to stay with once annual revisions to the academic calendar.
- Thanks was expressed to the team that worked with Dave Peters to implement the CourseLeaf program.

Moved by VanderPlaat and seconded, **“that Senate approves the revised text as presented in the Curriculum Report Appendix M2 through M6 for publication in the 2022-2023 Academic Calendar.” Motion carried.**

3. Elections

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

Key Discussion Points:

- Bell was thanked for effectively carrying the election process through the pandemic period.

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

4. Executive Committee (Dr Takseva -- Chair)

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

Key Discussion Points:

- No discussion.

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

5. Learning and Teaching (Dr De Fuentes -- Chair)
2020-2021 Annual Report to Senate, **Appendix P**.

Key Discussion Points:

- No discussion.

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

6. Library Committee (Dr Fridell – Chair)
• 2020-2021 Annual Report to Senate, **Appendix Q**

Key Discussion Points:

- No discussion.

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

7. Academic Literacy Strategy (Ms van den Hoogen)
2020-2021 Annual Report, **Appendix R**

Key Discussion Points:

- No discussion.

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

8. Student Conduct (Dr Stinson)
2020-2021 Annual Report, **Appendix S**

Key Discussion Points:

- No discussion.

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

22050 FACULTY COUNCILS

No reports.

22051 REPORTS OF JOINT COMMITTEES

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

Key Discussion Points:

- No discussion.

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

22052 NEW BUSINESS FROM

- .1 Floor (not involving notice of motion)

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

Key Discussion Points:

- This issue was raised before the outbreak of the current COVID variant.
- The numbers of enrolments in introductory course sections were a little lower than usual this coming term. There is evidence that some students are still looking for online options. Question: For the next academic year (2022-2023), do we have the option to provide an online version of some courses that have multiple sections? Answer: Discussions have been had in this regard. Faculty are requested to discuss this potential with their Deans and/or Associate Deans.
- Senate was advised that SMU is preserving the WW label that was specifically developed for wholly online courses that were specifically developed for that purpose. We will also be preserving the option for an online model of some courses, and we are going to be reviewing the remote offerings relative to the quality of those offerings. There is room for further discussion related to the purpose for offering online versions of courses.
- Question: Do faculty do this through their Chairs? Answer: The key is that we are asking faculty to be a bit more purposeful about doing this type of thing versus reacting to the current situation. Discussion with chairs is encouraged but particularly discuss this with Deans or Associate Deans.

2. Floor (involving notice of motion)

Senate Agenda Committee notice of motion – TOR Composition revision, **Appendix U.**

Key Discussion Points:

- This is the first response received to a task set by Senate in November.
- In section 5.2.7.4 the committee has simply removed the word faculty and replaced it with the word elected.
- Gratitude was expressed to Sanderson for bringing this issue to the attention of Senate.

Moved by van de Hoogen and seconded, **“that Senate approves the revised composition of the Senate Agenda Committee as submitted in Appendix U.”**
Motion carried.

3. Other items:

- Question: What happens with exams if students strongly request moving exams online? Answer: A notice was just sent out on this. The in-person exam schedule remains as is. There is very low density of students per day on campus to write exams.
- Question: Is there any indication of what Winter term will look like? Answer: The universities are in discussion with Dr Strang and there will be an announcement in this regard before break. CONSUP met with Dr Strang yesterday and our President talked with him this morning. By Monday or Tuesday, we should have a decision for next term. The general trend in Ontario Universities is to begin the term with on-line teaching (anywhere from 2-8 weeks). It has been proposed that a couple of weeks may be enough to work through this outbreak. Case counts continue to rise but the numbers of hospitalizations are flat. Our pattern here in NS is responding well to the levels of vaccinations and protocols.

- A faculty member who is also a Department Chairperson advised that they have received a lot of anguished messages from both parents and students relative to switching exams to online. The faculty members are having difficulty explaining the university policy to parents and students. Response: Our case exposure is low. The situation here at SMU does not support shutting down in-person exams.

22053

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 P.M.

Barb Bell,
Secretary of Senate