

SENATE MEETING MINUTES
February 16, 2024

The 650th meeting of the Senate of Saint Mary's University was held on Friday, February 16, at 2:00 PM, in the CLARI Meeting Room.

PRESENT: Dr. Summerby-Murray, Dr. VanderPlaat, Dr. Veres, Dr. Ingraham, Dr Sarty, Mr. Seneker, Dr. Grek-Martin, Dr. Hlongwane, Dr. Brosseau, Dr. Hare, Dr. Ylijoki, Dr. Kocum, Dr. Barclay, Dr. Grandy, Dr. Sanderson, Dr. Stinson, Dr. Doucet, Dr. Sewell, Dr. Dodge, Mr. Ganapathy, Ms. Tan, Ms. Barrett, Ms. Boudreau, Ms. Shannon Morrison, Secretary to Senate

GUESTS: Mr. Gupta, Dr. McKee, Dr. Morales, Dr. De Fuentes, Ms. Sargeant Greenwood

REGRETS: Ms. Hodge, Dr. Raymond, Dr. Austin, Ms. van den Hoogen, Dr. Samou, Mr Brophy,

The meeting was called to order at 2:03 P.M., Dr. Grandy chaired, and a territorial acknowledgment was provided.

24060 **REPORT OF AGENDA COMMITTEE**

There has been a change to the agenda requested by the student Senators. Under Academic Regulations, Academic Regulation 8 will be discussed first, followed by Academic Regulation 16.

24061 **PRESIDENT'S REPORT** – Posted as **Appendix A** (10 min)

The President referred to the report included with meeting materials and highlighted the following:

- The presence of university leaders and students at the Halifax Business Awards
- Successful convocation ceremonies, including the conferral of three honorary degrees and the President's Award for Exemplary Research
- Continued work on the national advisory committee of the Scarborough Charter
- The important visits to campus of Dr. Marie Battiste focused on decolonizing and indigenizing our processes
- Significant challenges resulting from the federal government's recent policy changes regarding study permit allocations and processing, including potential financial impacts on Saint Mary's
- Implications of the provincial government's announcement of a one-year funding arrangement for universities and the financial challenge this poses for us.

24062 **VICE-PRESIDENT ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH REPORT** –

Posted as **Appendix B** for this meeting. (5 mins)

Dr. Madine VanderPlaat referred to the report included with meeting materials and highlighted the following:

- Dr. Marie Battiste will provide us with a series of recommendations that we will share with the university community on the extent of our commitment to Indigenizing the campus.
- The Dean for the Sobey School of Business public presentation starts next week. These will be taped for anyone who misses the presentation. A long list has been compiled for the Search for Dean of Science.
- There has been an extensive review of Field Courses regarding financial liability.
- The Digital Learning Strategy is well underway, and there will be more consultations with various units on campus.
- We are reviewing the Report on Positive Action to Improve the Employment of Women, Aboriginal Peoples, Visible Minorities, and Peoples with Disabilities at Saint Mary's University. Employment Equity Canada is considering several changes and recommendations that may affect the information we collect. We are focusing on collecting more narrative data from the departments within the university.

24063

SMUSA PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Listed as **Appendix C** (5 min)

- Over the past month, we have heard from the students that heavily weighted final exams cause immense stress and are detrimental to their mental health.
- We are redesigning the SMUSA bulletin boards in Loyola Corridor to increase awareness of what SMUSA is up to. These will have a calendar displaying upcoming events, services and highlight societies.
- SMUSA hosted their first-ever roundtable with society executives to improve transparency with our members. This will become a monthly occurrence.

24064

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

Question: Concerning the safe disclosure policy approved by the Board of Governors in March 2023, the item: Improper Activity (iii) Research misconduct. Why was this not passed by the Senate under this jurisdiction? **President**

Summerby-Murray answered: My understanding is this would concern falsification of results and plagiarism. **Action item:** The President will take this away to work with the Interim Vice-President, Academic, and Research to get a definition of Research misconduct.

Comment: There is a current Policy on Integrity in Research and Scholarship and Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Scholarly Misconduct.

Suggested language: Research misconduct, with the exception of those covered under the university's existing policy.

- **Question:** The Provincial Government announced that students can now apply to an education program after completing only two years of undergraduate study. Has this change been discussed and are there any concerns with losing

SMU students after two years? **President Summerby-Murray answered:** I am aware there was some discussion happening in the Department of Education, but little conversation has occurred between the universities and the Department of Advanced Education. This idea was floated several months ago and gained little traction. None of the universities offering Bachelor of Education programs were consulted directly, to my knowledge. I am concerned that after only two years of undergraduate education, students will not be as well prepared to teach and may opt not to attend a university that does not offer a Bachelor of Education Program. We should consider positive scenarios and other certificates that could be provided with our existing undergraduate degrees. We have a Certificate in Mathematical Science for Education, for example, and there are likely opportunities to offer other certificates in education as embedded credentials in our undergraduate degrees to strengthen the pathway for students.

- **Question:** Is there a timeline for the Black Student Advisor?

Answered by: Interim Vice-President Academic and Research: It is in progress, but I do not have a timeline.

24065

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the meeting of January 19, 2024, were circulated as ***Appendix D***

Strike the first sentence in the answer to the question: What is the update on the search for Provost/VPAR?

With no other amendments or objections, the January 19, 2024, Senate meeting minutes are approved with the above-noted revision.

24066

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS AGENDA

a.) Senate Policy on the Creation of the Academic Calendar of Events (8-1024)

Key Discussions:

- Throughout the policy, updating semester to term to be consistent with the language used at the university.
- **Action item:** In 3.17, change September to Fall
- **Question:** With Fall Convocation happening any period between the first and last day of classes during the Fall term, doesn't that create too much flexibility, especially for students graduating in the Fall? **Answered by: AVP Enrolment Services:** We will ideally hold convocation during the fall reading week. This just gives us the flexibility if needed. We would not change it on a whim. For example, a few years ago, when we had a hurricane, convocation was canceled, so this would make it flexible to reschedule.

- This policy was created in 2018 to set the guidelines to help students and faculty plan. Before this, it was done by tradition rather than a policy. This creates a framework and sets some parameters.

Moved by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Mr. Seneker, **“that Senate approve the revisions to the Senate Policy on the Creation of the Academic Calendar of Events (8-1024)” Motion carried.**

24067

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

1. Academic Planning

a). CME 3–Year Program Report (Dr. Claudia De Fuentes)

Key Discussions:

- We had a faculty retreat in September, and we were able to seek improvement and engagement with faculty from the program.

Moved by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Dr. Veres, **“that Senate approves the three-year follow-up report of the Co-Operative Management Education as meeting the requirements of Section 5 of the Senate Policy on the Review of Programs at Saint Mary’s” Motion carried.**

b). Sustainability Business Certificate (Dr. Miguel Morales)

Key Discussions:

- **Question:** Are there plans to expand this certificate? **Answer:** Yes. We are looking for more data and would like this to be multidisciplinary. There are hopes that the Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Science will be interested and then we could collaborate on making this a stand-alone certificate or major.

Moved by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Dr. McKee, **“that Senate approves the proposal for a Sustainability Business Certificate” Motion carried.**

c). General Business Program Review (Dr. Morales)

Key Discussions:

- **Recommendation 1:** APC concurs with the responses of the Program and Dean for dropping “without majors” and encourages looking at all the low-enrolment majors for optimization.
- **Recommendation 2:** APC concurs with the Dean.
- **Recommendation 3:** While APC acknowledges the response of the Program and the Dean, we strongly support the recommendation of the external reviewer for reasons of accessibility and removing barriers to graduation.
- **Recommendation 4:** APC concurs with the Program and Deans response, particularly with respect to the timing of implementation.
- **Recommendation 5:** APC appreciates the Programs response and the Deans response and that the GBST needs a “home” for the program and ensures that

the BComm Program Coordinator is assigned the task of coordinating the GBST program.

- **Recommendation 6:** APC concurs with the Dean.
- **Recommendation 7:** APC concurs with the Dean, ensuring this continues to receive attention.
- **Recommendation 8:** These resources are available to all students at Saint Mary's, and APC recommends that the Program ensures that this is communicated to increase student awareness.
- **Recommendation 9:** APC concurs with the Program and Deans response and encourages examination of how the PRME goals can be met in all BComm majors.

Moved by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Dr. Ingraham **“that Senate supports the APC recommendations arising from the General Business Studies program review as listed above.” Motion carried.**

Moved as an omnibus motion by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Dr. McKee, **“that 60 days after Senate approval, the General Business Studies program submits an Action Plan, that is based on the preceding recommendations, to the Academic Planning Committee”.**

“that one year after the approval of the Action Plan, the General Business Studies program submit a one-year report to the Academic Planning Committee on the progress made on the Action Plan according to Section 4 of the Senate Policy on the Review of Programs at Saint Mary's University”.

“that three years after Senate approval of the Action Plan, the General Business Studies program submit a three-year report to the Academic Planning Committee on the progress made on the Action Plan according to Section 4 of the Senate Policy on the Review of Programs at Saint Mary's University”.
Motion carried.

d). Centers and Institutes Annual Report due date

Key Discussions:

- This will help remove the barrier for faculty members at the beginning of the term. There is no rationale for why such reports are due at a certain time. The submission date of October was difficult to meet. Having a little extra time in the Fall would make things more tangible.
- **Question:** Why not change the whole policy rather than pursue this exception? **Answer:** The policy will take more time to review and go over.

Moved by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Dr. Sarty, **“that Senate approve the Annual Reports for Centres and Institutes be moved to be due for APC and Senate review in December of each year, rather than October, as an exception to the existing Senate Policy on Centres and Institutes.”**

2. Academic Regulations

a). Revisions to Undergraduate Academic Regulation 8

Key Discussions:

- Students are concerned about the weight of their final exam being too high and affecting their mental health. Having an exam weighted heavily does not help them learn the material better. If a student could be assessed throughout the term, this would better reflect their understanding of the material.

Moved by Dr. Doucet and seconded by Dr. Hlongwane, to amend the original motion as follows: **“striking the phrase after Honours theses “No Single assessment may exceed 50%” Motion carried.**

- One of the reasons for keeping a partial reference as a maximum is to discourage situations where an honors thesis may be worth 100% on the final documents. This has been a historical practice and instead encouraging assessments and milestones along the way.
- In the Faculty of Arts, the thesis course is one program component; students get feedback. However, some theses are worth 100%. The final mark reflects the best possible work.
- Honours theses and field courses do not belong in this regulation, given its focus on final exams.
- There should have been consultation with departments, honors theses coordinators, etc. There are some pedagogical reasons why honors theses are weighted higher than 50%.
- Suggestion that the Academic Regulations Committee consult with groups and departments regarding honors theses.
- Field courses should be removed as they are regular courses.

Moved by Dr. Barclay and seconded by Dr. Ingraham, to amend the original motion as follows: **“striking the entire phrase – Field Courses – No single assessments may exceed 50%” Motion carried.**

- **Question:** What is the evidence you are bringing forward? Why 40% and not 50% as a proportion of the final grade? **Answered by SMUSA President:** There is research on coursework and examination-based appraisal. Why is coursework a better learning method than final examinations? There is not much concrete evidence. We also asked students how a 50% final exam would impact them. Our students are telling us that 40% is the number.
- 40% is too low for the Faculty of Science. It is very common for Math, Physics, and Engineering to be weighted 50% or 60%. This is for a good reason; the instructor for those courses can find that the marking scheme is the best indicator of a student's competency. The current practice is a maximum of 85%, and if we move to 40%, that is a drastic change.

Moved by Dr. Veres and seconded by Dr. McKee, to amend the original motion as follows: **“No final examination or single assessment during the final exam period may exceed 60% of the final course grade.” Motion Defeated.**

- There is research in cognitive science on the forgetting curve. You learn new material, and if you review it within 24 hours, you will remember it longer. By day 30, if you have not reviewed that material, you need to reinvest extra hours to re-learn it. Breaking up evaluations into smaller values is directly linked to a student's wellness plan.
- 60% seems to be the max at other institutions. Thinking about Criminology, instructors prep students for law school, which has high-value examinations for high stakes. There could be a pedagogical reason to prepare students. A policy on the weight limit of a final exam seems quite restrictive. Students need to have some experience with high-stakes examinations.

Moved by Dr. Hare and seconded by Dr. McKee, to amend the original motion as follows: **“Amend the language in h, “In cases where exceptions are required, the above weight limits for single assessments may be increased with prior approval of the Dean of the Faculty in which the course is offered.” Motion carried.**

Moved by Ms. Tan and seconded by Dr. Kocum to amend the original motion as follows: **“amending bullet point I (ii) The re-weighting is applied equally within the instructor's course to all students whose final course grades will be elevated.” Motion carried.**

Moved by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Ms. Tan, **“that Senate approve the revisions, as amended to the Undergraduate Academic Regulation 8 as submitted in appendix K2”.** Motion carried.

b). Revisions to Undergraduate Academic Regulation 16 and Graduate Regulation 11

Key Discussions:

- **Question:** Under notes, number 2 suggests that students who do not meet the stated prerequisites will be deregistered from a course. Does that include students who have been granted a prerequisite waiver by the instructor? **Answer:** If you have a waiver from the instructor, you will not be deregistered from the course.

Moved by Dr. Kocum and seconded by Mr. Gupta, to amend the original motion as follows: **“Students who have been granted a prerequisite waiver are exempt.” Motion carried.**

Moved by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Dr. Hlongwane, **“that Senate approve the revisions as amended to the Undergraduate Academic Regulation 16 and Graduate Regulation 11 as submitted in appendix J2”**. Motion carried.

3. Curriculum Committee
a). Faculty of Business Curriculum Submission

Moved by Mr. Seneker and seconded by Dr. McKee, **“that Senate approves the Curriculum Submissions as presented in Appendix L2 for insertion into the Academic Calendar for 2024-2025.”** Motion carried.

24068

NEW BUSINESS

- b). Floor (involving notice of motion)
(i) International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma

Key Discussions:

- Suggesting a few minor changes to make SMU a leader in IB recognition.
- High Level (HL) is doing 240 hours of coursework compared to a high school class. The Standard Level (SL) students are also doing more work and we would also like to consider them for advanced credits.

Moved by Mr Seneker and seconded by Dr. VanderPlaat, **“that Senate approve the revisions on the Recruitment and Admissions Services Academic Calendar entry and webpage to item c. International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma as listed in appendix M2”** Motion carried.

24069

Cross Faculty Committee to Review ICE (Email voting)

Key Discussion:

- The committee composition is listed as “2 additional faculty members”. Does that mean part-time or full-time or either? It may be best to clarify.
- Specify that 2 and 3 are full-time faculty members and then add a requirement for part-time faculty members on the committee. Including part-time faculty in this is important, given their significant contribution to teaching.
- **Action item:** Amend the membership list to include a part-time faculty member (if available). Update faculties to (Arts, Business, Science)

Moved by Dr. Stinson and seconded by Dr. Ingraham, to amend the original motion as follows: **“that Senate amends the membership list to include 1 full-time faculty member from each Faculty (Arts, Science, Commerce) and 2 additional faculty members, including one part-time faculty member if available.”** Motion carried.

Moved by Dr. Hare and seconded by Mr. Seneker, **“that Senate approve the Terms of Reference and Committee Composition for the Cross-Faculty Committee to Review ICE, as amended.”** Motion carried.

24070

ADJOURNMENT

Moved to adjourn 4:26 p.m.