



SENATE MEETING MINUTES
September 13, 2024

The 654th meeting of the Senate of Saint Mary's University was held on Friday, September 13, 2024, at 2:00 PM, in CLARI, Atrium room 340. Dr Jason Grek-Martin, chaired.

PRESENT: Dr. Summerby-Murray, Dr. VanderPlaat, Dr. Delorme, Dr. Veres, Dr. Ingraham, Dr. Sarty, Mr. Seneker, Mr. Brophy, Ms. van den Hoogen, Dr. Austin, Dr. Grek-Martin, Dr. Hlongwane, Dr. Brosseau, Dr. Ylijoki, Dr. Kocum, Dr. Barclay, Dr. Grandy, Dr. Sanderson, Dr. Stinson, Dr. Doucet, Mr. Chiunda, Ms. Southwell, Mr. Hutchinson, Ms Kalantri, Ms. Gervase, Ms. Morrison, Secretary to Senate

GUESTS: Ms. Sargeant-Greenwood, Ms. Milton, Dr. Kay, Mr Moffett, Ms Bower, Dr. Giles, Dr. Takseva, Dr. Tabvuma, Dr Bhatia,

REGRETS: Dr. Hare, Prof R. Sewell, Dr. Samou

The meeting was called to order at 2:02 P.M., and a territorial acknowledgment was provided by Dr. Jason Grek-Martin.

25001 REPORT OF AGENDA COMMITTEE

The agenda is accepted as posted.

25002 ELECTION OF PARLIAMENTARIAN

Dr. Roby Austin was nominated as Parliamentarian 2024-2025. There being no other nominations, Dr. Austin was acclaimed as Parliamentarian 2024-2025.

25003 FALL GRADUATION LIST

Documentation presented at the meeting as **Appendix A1**

Key Discussion Points:

- Mr Seneker presents the graduation lists and statistics. There are 331 grads. Of these, 5 are receiving more than one parchment, and 34 are graduating with distinction.

Moved by Mr. Seneker and seconded by Dr. Austin “**to confer degrees and distinctions on those represented on the list (circulated as Appendix A1) at the Fall 2024 Convocation**”. **Motion carried.**

Moved by Mr Seneker and seconded by Dr. Sarty, “**to enable the Registrar to add such graduates as may be identified subsequent to this meeting.**” **Motion carried.**

25004

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

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

- The report reflects on the last several months with an overview of activities, particularly in research and teaching. Two faculty members, Dr. Tony Charles and Dr. Margaret MacDonald have been nominated as Fellows of the Royal Society of Canada.
- The President would like to acknowledge the beginning of the term and the work that has gone in to make it a successful first few weeks.
- The Department of Advanced Education has established three new committees: one on university curriculum, one on finances, and one on research. Saint Mary's is represented on all three.
- The fall term is in a well-managed financial situation, noting the budget is a 5.4-million-dollar deficit. However, the university's cash flow is solid.
- Over the past few months, the university has worked very closely with the Government of Nova Scotia on the development of the Strategic Alignment Proposal.

25005

VICE-PRESIDENT ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH REPORT –

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

The Interim Vice President of Academic and Research referred to the report included with the meeting materials and highlighted the following:

- The report usually includes updates from various departmental groups that report to the VPAR. If any Senator has questions relating to those individual categories, the VPAR offers to answer them.
- The university is in the second stage of the allotment exercise, with reductions planned for 2025/2026. Assurance that no job losses will occur, but positions will not be replaced. SMU has not reduced faculty in about 10 years despite the declining enrolment. Decisions will be finalized by the end of October, with the possibility of revisiting and adjusting allotments throughout the year.
- We have presented a proposal for an Office of Inclusion to the Executive Management Group. This office will replace the Diversity Excellence Office and will provide support for the Black and Indigenous Student Advisors and serve the entire institution.

25006

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

The SMUSA President highlights key items from their monthly report.

- The Student Union has put on a wonderful and highly engaged two weeks of New Student Welcome Weeks, which has been a great opportunity for the new

students. The Student Expo and food trucks were well received and participated in by students, faculty, and staff.

- SMUSA has revamped the Graduate Program Committee and recently held the Grad Student Social, which had great engagement.
- SMUSA has been successful in working with Conference Services to obtain a larger Muslim student prayer room.

25007

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

- Question addressed to the President: When you met with the Government, did you have a chance to talk about the bilateral agreements? Answered by the President: Currently, we are operating under a 1-year agreement, and in the bilateral agreement, there are certain parameters. We are seeking clarity on this. Institutions need to know the support from the province in the coming years. Follow up: Why is the government not giving the 2% grant? Follow-up answer: The 2% grant will only be provided if the Strategic Alignment Proposal is satisfactory to the Minister.
- Question addressed to the President: Regarding the Department of Advanced Education's three new committees, do you have an idea of how the memberships on those will be constituted, and are people already designated? Answered by the President: The composition for those committees has been set by the Department of Advanced Education, and they consist of the appropriate members from each area.
- Question addressed to the Interim Vice President of Academic and Research: What is the review of the Studio? Answered by Interim VPAR: The university has a policy around how we review academic support units, and we are going to start with the Studio. Follow-up question: Will it need to be restructured? Will the AVP of Teaching and Learning position be filled? Follow-up answer: Restructuring is one thing the review is looking at, and regarding the AVP of Teaching and Learning, we will determine whether this role needs to be an AVP or could be a Director or Manager position.
- Question: Have meetings been set for the Board Executive and Senate Executive to maintain communication? Answer: The University Secretary has been talking to the Board Chair about potential meetings between the two groups, and they are eager to continue the engagement between the two bodies to keep the dialogue going.

25008

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the meeting of May 10, 2024, were circulated as **Appendix E**.

There being no other revisions or objections, the minutes of the senate meeting of May 10, 2024, are approved.

25009

MEMBERSHIP ON SENATE COMMITTEES FOR 2024-2025

Academic Appeals

Dr. Jason Grek-Martin (Chair)
Dr. Colleen Barber
Mr. Prajwal Shetty
Mr Simba Chiunda
Ms Hayley Vaz

Academic Integrity

Dr. Jason Grek- Martin
Dr. Adam Spires
Dr. Mark Raymond
Dr. Kai Ylijoki
Ms. Hayley Vaz
Ms Francesca Southwell
Mr Simba Chiunda

Academic Integrity Appeal Board

Dr. Bahareh Mansouri
Dr. Adel Merabet
Mr Prajwal Shetty
Ms Anushka Kalantri

Academic Planning

Mr Tyler Hutchinson
Ms Anushka Kalantri

Academic Regulations

Dr. Karen Grandy
Ms. Francesca Southwell
Mr. Brendan Barrett

Accessibility

Ms Francesca Southwell
Ms Charis Gervase

Curriculum

Dr. Egor Tsedryk
Dr. Kai Ylijoki
Mr Tyler Hutchinson

Ms Anushka Kalantri

Learning and Teaching

Dr. Leanna Closson
Dr. Ramesh Venkat
Dr. Laura Stiles-Clarke
Dr. Wendy Carroll
Ms. Francesca Southwell
Ms. Charis Gervase

Library

Ms. Joyce Thomson
Ms. Francesca Southwell
Mr. Prajwal Shetty

Student Conduct

Dr. Augie Westhaver
Dr. Liqiang Chen
Dr. Veronica Stinson
Mr. Prajwal Shetty
Mr. Simba Chiunda

Section B

Agenda Committee

Dr. Alison Barclay
Ms. Francesca Southwell

Bylaws

Dr. Alexandra Dodge
Ms. Francesca Southwell

Elections

Dr. Heather Sanderson
Dr. Christa Brosseau

Executive

Mr. Simba Chiunda
Ms Francesca Southwell
Dr. Roby Austin

Section C

Honorary Degrees

Dr. Heather Sanderson

Dr. James O'Brien

Joint Committee of the AST and SMU

Dr. Syed Adnan Hussain

Budget Advisory Committee

Action item: Senate Secretary will contact all Academic Staff to request volunteers for this committee.

Moved by Dr. Barclay and seconded by Dr. Stinson, **“that Senate approved the recommendations as presented in Appendix F for membership on the Senate Committees.” Motion carried.**

The outstanding representatives for the committees of sections A and B will be submitted at the October Senate meeting.

25010

PROPOSED DATES FOR SENATE MEETINGS

Moved by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Mr. Seneker, **“that Senate approved the Senate meeting schedule for 2024-2025 as submitted in Appendix H2.” Motion carried.**

Action item: Strike Fall Grads from the focus of the November Senate Executive and Senate meeting as the Fall Graduate list was reviewed at this meeting.

25011

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

1. Academic Planning Committee

a). 2023-2024 Annual Report

The Academic Planning Committee Annual Report is accepted into the record.

b). Geography Program Review (Dr. Giles)

Recommendation 1: The allocation of resources is not in the purview of this committee, but we support the program and Dean's initiative to investigate this recommendation as outlined by the dean.

Recommendation 2: APC supports the recommendation and the program and Deans response. Further, we Encourage collaboration with the Master of Business Analytics program toward certificate development.

Recommendation 3: APC supports the recommendation and the response of the program.

Recommendation 4: APC supports all recruitment retention activities and to increase the profile of the Geography minor and draw attention to the program.

Recommendation 5: APC concurs with the program and Deans response

Recommendation 6: APC concurs with the program and Deans response

Recommendation 7: APC concurs with the program and Deans response

Recommendation 8: APC concurs with the programs and Deans response and encourages the department to work with both faculty advisors and the recruitment office to implement this recommendation.

Recommendation 9: APC concurs with the program and Deans response on the ongoing rejuvenation of the program outreach.

Recommendation 10: APC concurs with the program and Deans response.

Recommendation 11: While APC appreciates the recommendation, SMU functions on a year-by-year budgeting model.

Recommendation 12: APC concurs with the recommendation and encourages the department to explore discipline-specialized experiential learning.

Recommendation 13: APC supports the recommendation and encourages the program to continue working with the dean's office and any institutional opportunities that arise. *****APC wants to highlight to the Senate the importance of this recommendation and of implementing indigenization as an institutional-level priority with appropriate resources.**

Recommendation 14: APC acknowledges the recommendation and recognizes that this is not a program-specific recommendation and that all full-time faculty hiring follows the university inclusion hiring practices.

Recommendation 15: Where metrics are meaningful, we can concur with the recommendation. However, we support the program and Deans responses.

Recommendation 16: APC concurs with the Deans response.

Recommendation 17: APC acknowledges that work has been done and recommends that with future Evergreening, this requirement always be considered.

Moved by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Dr. Ingraham, **“that Senate supports the APC recommendations arising from the Geography Program review as listed above” Motion carried.**

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

And

“that one year after the approval of the Action Plan, the Geography 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.

And

“that three years after Senate approval of the Action Plan, the Geography 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”

c). Economics Program Review

Key Discussion:

- Many recommendations related to a retreat for the program. Support the new faculty, an action plan, and some changes to the curriculum.

Recommendation 1: APC concurs with the program and Dean’s response and is satisfied that this recommendation has been completed.

Recommendation 2: APC concurs with the Dean and would support a program/department retreat to further explore issues related to accessibility and comprehensibility of program progression.

Recommendation 3: APC concurs with the Dean and would support a program/department retreat to further consider the development of an action plan to help accomplish the change in the curriculum.

Recommendation 4: APC concurs with the Dean and would support a program/department retreat to further consider the introduction of a new econometrics course.

Recommendation 5: APC recognizes this is a collective agreement issue, and such, concurs with the Deans response and encourages the department to consult with the Dean to work to identify ways to best support new faculty.

Recommendation 6: APC supports the response of the program.

Recommendation 7: APC concurs with the Dean and supports a program/department retreat

Recommendation 8: APC concurs with the Dean and supports a program/department retreat.

Recommendation 9: APC concurs with the Dean and would support a program/department retreat to further consider enrolment recruiting strategies to attract new students to the university.

Recommendation 10: APC concurs with the Dean and would support a program/department retreat to consider improving the coherence and clarity of the Academic Calendar in Economics.

Recommendation 11: APC concurs with the Dean and would suggest a program/department retreat to further consider reviewing their webpage in order to make the distinction between programs clearer.

Moved by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Dr. Delorme, **“that Senate supports the APC recommendations arising from the Economics Program review as listed above” Motion carried.**

Moved as an omnibus motion by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Dr. Delorme

“that 60 days after Senate approval, the Economics Program submits and Action Plan, that is based on the preceding recommendations, to the Academic Planning Committee”

And

“that one year after the approval of the Action Plan, the Economics 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.

And

“that three years after Senate approval of the Action Plan, the Economics 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”

d). English 1 – Year Report (Dr. Takseva)

Key Discussion:

- Could you clarify why one of the English courses is still in Course Leaf?
Answer: The department is under the impression that it is currently in workflow status.

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

e). Sociology 1-Year Report

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

Moved by Mr. Seneker and seconded by Dr. Ingraham, **“that Senate temporarily adjourns for a 5-minute recess”. Motion carried.**

2. Curriculum Committee

a). 2023-2024 Annual Report

The Curriculum Committee Annual Report is accepted into the record.

b). Senate Policy on Course Outlines (8-1012) & Course Outline Handbook

Key Discussion:

- Student Senator noted the absence of the Indigenous Student Advisor and Black Student Advisor in the Course Outline Handbook.
- Suggestion to ensure that the new regulations are highlighted on the course outline.
- It was raised regarding the importance of having a Brightspace platform for many of this information so that student can easily access it. This could be a solution of a way to share more reliable information.
- Suggestion that when the Policy and Outline do come into effect, that there be a roll-out plan to ensure all faculty is aware of the changes.
- Suggestion that the committee consider a template that all faculty can use to ensure that each course outline is implementing the required information on their course outlines. This would help reduce the risk of a faculty member missing something in the Course Handbook around required versus recommended.
- Suggestion to make sure Academic Integrity is added on the course outline template.
- Question to consider: Should it be a university-wide course outline template or faculty-specific?
- The use of Microsoft Word for accessibility is great, the document will need to be not editable.
- Suggestion to revisit the course delivery mode section. Although these are MPHEC-approved definitions, they are not Senate-approved

Moved by Dr. Grandy and seconded by Dr. Austin, **“that APC sends the Course Outline and Course Handbook back to the Curriculum Committee to consider the above suggestions.” Motion carried.**

25012

NEW BUSINESS FROM

Floor (not involving notice of motion)

1. Advancement Update & \$5000+ gift report (E Sargeant Greenwood)

Key Discussion:

- This is an annual presentation that is required by policy, introduced in 2018, and is a list of all gifts over 5000.
- Gifts are organized by level, prompting insights into donor interest in various areas, including the Arts, Science, Business, Research, Athletics, and student support.
- A Student Senator highlighted significant fluctuations in gift amounts in the fundraising results for FY23. What is the cause of this? Answer: Gift amounts

can swing, and we cannot always control a gift decision. It also takes staff resources to secure a gift, and there are some staff vacancies in the department.

- What is the reason people give to SMU? Answer: The students is the main purpose of the gifts. Some donors have a connection to SMU.

2. Human Resources Policies

a. Code of Conduct and Respectful & Inclusive Workplace Policy

Key Discussion:

- In terms of context over the past 3 years, those policies are a reflection of some things to find a way to influence the culture of the university in general. We have juxtaposed the two policies under the framework of the Santamarian context and code of conduct. There is an emphasis on supporting a respectful workplace and changing recognition of expected conduct. These two policies will work together so that we have a respectful place to work. The scope will apply to all university employees. This will include student staff members.
- The policies align with provincial legislation, the OH & S Act, FOIPOP, Accessibility, and the Human Rights Act.
- There has been ongoing community consultation to ensure members know about the new policies.
- Suggestion from Senator: Could there be a consideration for disruption of antiracism or systemic racism? There should be protection for the person disrupting a racist system. How they are protected is not shown in either policy.
- Has there been thought to consult with the student association? Answer: Yes, we are rolling out the consultation to engage with the student employees.
- Issues that are with a student are dealt with through Student Affairs and Services and employee issues are dealt with through Human Resources.
- Student Senator asks if there is a process for student-to-faculty issues. Again, it is noted that if it is with a student, it goes to Student Affairs and Services.
- There will be a process to get things in place to support the student advisors.

Senators are advised that they can send all comments and questions to Lorri.Bower@smu.ca

b. Discussion item: Committee to Review Instructor Course Evaluation Process

Deferred to the October Senate meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 4:32 p.m.