

**SENATE MEETING MINUTES  
December 7, 2005**

The 492nd Meeting of the Senate of Saint Mary's University was held on Friday, December 7, 2005 at 2:30 PM in the McNally Boardroom. Dr. Naulls, Chairperson, presided.

**PRESENT:** Dr. Dodds, Dr. Murphy, Dr. Dixon, Dr. Enns, Dr. Richardson, Dr. Vessey, Ms. Lefebvre, Dr. Konopasky, Dr. Russell, Dr. Wicks, Dr. Power, Dr. Pye, Dr. MacKinnon, Dr. Stinson, Dr. Linney, Dr. D. Naulls, Mr. Churchill, Mr. Jarda, Mr. Shaw, and Ms. Bell, Secretary to the Office of Senate.

**REGRETS:** Mr. Lordon, Dr. Bernard, Dr. Beaupre, Dr. McCalla, Dr. Pendse, Dr. Stretton, Dr. Bjornson, Dr. Dostal, Mr. Hotchkiss, Miss Esling, Dr. Deupree,

**05044      CALL TO ORDER**

Dr. Naulls, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 2:39 PM. Members were informed that Charles Beaupre had resigned his seat in Senate and that an election will be initiated to fill the vacancy.

**05045      MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

.01 Minutes of the meeting of November 18, 2005, were *circulated* as **Appendix A**.

Moved by Dr. Dodds, second by Dr. Dixon, **'that the minutes of the meeting of November 18th are approved as circulated.'** Motion carried unanimously.

**05046      BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

None

**05047      OUTSTANDING ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS AGENDA**

None

**05048      REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

.01 Academic Planning

.0101 Strategic Review of the Division of Continuing Education.  
Documents circulated as **Appendix B, C, D and E**.

- Dr. Murphy summarized the process followed during the strategic review. Members were advised that Appendices B and D were reports from two Senate Committees.
- Dr. Murphy commented on the large measure of agreement relative to the recommendations presented in these documents and briefly outlined key areas.
- Members were informed that the Report from the Senate Committee on Continuing Education separated the recommendations into categories; items for Senate action and those that are purely administrative.
- Dr. Dixon asked about the possibility of making the Director of Continuing Education an ex-officio member of Senate. It was stated that the Academic Planning Committee supported this recommendation. Dr. Dodds reminded the members that the membership of Senate is established by Bill 102 also known as Saint Mary's University Act 1970. Dr. Naulls read Article 13 (1) from this Act containing the specific detail of the membership of Senate.

Moved by Dr. Richardson, second by Madeleine Lefebvre, **“that Senate endorses Recommendation 29 of the external review committee’s report as the definition of the core mission of this division.”** *(Recommendation 29 is detailed below)* **Motion carried.**

- 29.** That the following activities be seen as core to the mission of the DCE:
- a. Extension and outreach courses, both non-credit and credit (the latter offered in conjunction with the faculties);
  - b. Credit certificate and diploma programs, offered in partnership with faculties and, where possible, offering students the possibility of laddering these credentials into degree programs;
  - c. Executive and professional development programs; and
  - d. University Preparation.

Moved by Dr. Enns, second by Madeleine Lefebvre, **“that Senate endorse the principle of Recommendations 31 and 33 of the external review committee’s report , with the exception that the coordinating role for Summer Session should be re-assigned to Enrollment Management as soon as is practical.”** *(Recommendation 31 and 33 are detailed below).* **Motion carried.**

- 31.** *That scheduling and room assignments of Summer Session courses be returned to the Registrar’s Office, but that DCE continue to play its coordinating role with respect to Summer Session programming until a new model is in place.*

**33.** *That the Vice-President (Academic), working with and through the Deans, provide clear principles to guide the programming and scheduling of all courses.*

Moved by Dean Enns, seconded by Madeleine Lefebvre, **“that Senate endorses the principle of Recommendation 41 of the external review committee’s report but not necessarily place administrative support with ITSS.”** (*Recommendation 41 is detailed below*). **Motion carried.**

**41.** *That administrative support for WebCT be provided centrally, ideally by ITSS.*

Moved by Madeleine Lefebvre, second by Dr. Richardson, **“that Senate accepts Recommendation 28 of the external review committee’s report.”** (*Recommendation 28 is detailed below*). **Motion carried.**

**28.** *That the terms of reference for the Senate Committee on Continuing Education be re-examined and revised to clarify its membership, mandate, and responsibilities.*

Moved by Madeleine Lefebvre, second by Dr. Wicks **“that Senate accepts Recommendations 8 and 9, excluding however, the call for a task force led by the Vice-President (Academic).”** (*Recommendation 8 and 9 are detailed below*). **Motion carried.**

- 8.** *That the first task of the new director should be to participate in a University-wide consultation around DCE and its role at Saint Mary’s, in light of the recommendation in this Report. It may be desirable that a task force chaired by the Vice-President (Academic) undertake this consultation. From this consultation, it will be essential for the university to establish advisory committees for DCE that represent three key groups: the external community, the university community and students. These committees must be vibrant and listened to;*
- 9.** *That the second task of the new director should be to undertake a strategic planning process with the DCE that results in a five-year plan for the unit. This plan should centre on the questions: What is our mandate? What are our products? How well do all of our products fit with one another (so that we are not spread too thinly)?*

*Further discussion covered the following points:*

- Dr. Dixon advised that the Senate Committee on Continuing Education viewed recommendations 8 to 15 as directly related to the strategic planning process. The Committee recommends a motion that the data gathering process start as soon as possible.
- Dr. Murphy advised that a search is underway for a new Director but that the January/May reporting dates to Senate

would not be possible. It was suggested that the timeframe should start from the hiring date of the new Director.

Moved by Dr. Dixon, second by Madeleine Lefebvre, **“that, six months from the date of appointment of the new Director, a report shall be submitted to Senate presenting the results of the data gathering (as in Recommendations 8 and 12 of the External Reviewer’s report).” Motion carried.**

- Dr. Dixon stated that two issues in financial structure needed a resolution:
  - No other department in the university is required to operate on a cost-recovery model, and
  - The relational issue between the business school and the Division of Continuing Education arising from overlapping programming.
- Dr. MacKinnon noted that page 8 of the external review, recommendation 6, states that the new Director should have the equivalent status of a Dean. The propriety of an Administrative Dean participating on Senate Committees was questioned. Dr. Naulls provided background on the difference between an administrative and academic dean and historic precedent at Saint Mary's.
- Dr. Dodds reiterated that the Saint Mary's University Act specifies “Deans of Faculties” and that under this Act, there would be a problem with giving the new Director of Continuing Education a voting position on Senate. *Recommendation 7 of the External Reviewer’s Report and the subsequent motion to Senate proposed by the Senate Committee on Continuing Education that the Director of Continuing Education be an ex-officio member of the Senate was set aside.*
- It was noted that the position would be a five-year term agreement. The Director of Continuing Education will be an administrative appointment and will not be a member of the faculty.

Moved by Dr. Dixon, second by Dr. MacKinnon, **“that Senate call upon the DCE and the Sobey School of business to present, by the May meeting of Senate, a report on the development of new arrangements for overseeing and coordination of Executive and Professional Development.” Motion carried.**

- Dr. Murphy thanked all the people that participated during the strategic review. He commended the participants for the level of interest shown in this process.

**.0102** Revised Constitution of the Centre for Leadership Excellence circulated as **Appendix F**.

- Dr. Murphy advised members that the establishment of the Centre for Leadership Excellence was approved by Senate. The revisions to the constitution are not a fundamental change

and more clearly define the constitution of the Centre. They incorporate students and a representative from the local business community on the Board and spell out the key activities of the Centre.

- The wording of Article II Governance [b] was questioned in that it specifies the student representatives and states students shall be appointed as Board members by the existing Board. A revision was suggested: "Nominated and elected by the appropriate graduate student organization."

Moved by Dr. Murphy, second by Madeleine Lefebvre, **"that Senate approves the revisions to the Constitution of the Centre for Leadership Excellence with the following amendment:**

**B (iii) One Saint Mary's University Graduate Student in the area of I/O Psychology and one Ph.D. Business Student shall be appointed as Board members by SMUSA in consultation with the appropriate graduate student body." Motion carried.**

## **.02 Academic Regulations**

### **.0201 Academic Calendar of Events circulated as Appendix G**

- Dr. Dixon reviewed the calendar and stated that most dates are driven by other regulations or issues.
- Senate members were advised that faculty do not have a specification in the SMUFU Collective Agreement for alternate holiday days off when holiday dates fall on a weekend day (e.g. Remembrance Day 2006, etc)
- Concern was expressed that the Add/Drop date may fall on a Saturday. It was noted that since this can be done on-line, the presence of the administrative staff is not necessary. Dr. Dixon assured members that the Registrar's Office does process retroactive withdrawals.
- For travel reasons, concern was expressed about starting the semester on a Wednesday immediately after New Years. Dr. Dixon stated that the administrative staff is in and fully functional for a full day before classes begin and that Senate's direction to the Registrar's Office was to maximize teaching days.
- The statement on the bottom of the calendar related to the Summer Sessions for 2007-08 will not appear in the Academic Calendar.

Moved by Dr. Dixon, second by Olivier Jarda, **"that the Academic Calendar of Events is approved as submitted." Motion carried** (one opposed)

### **.0202 Proposed changes to Regulations 4 & 8, circulated as Appendix H.**

- Dr. Dixon summarized the history of these two submissions. Academic Regulations have revised these relative to the

stated Senate concerns documented in the minutes of the Senate meeting of April 22, 2004.

**Regulation 4** – changes summarized were:

- A desire for greater clarity relative to course outlines and marking schemes. It was noted that final grade appeals were arising from the lack of a clear statement of requirements for a passing grade.
- Concerns that students receive notice of any changes to the course outline and grading scheme.
- Changes must be provided to the student and the Dean in writing.
- Members of SMUSA brought forward the following concerns:
  - Professors should provide a clear course outline and grading system (that remained consistent throughout) at the beginning of the course.
  - Professors do not have to follow the published grading scheme. If they are allowed to change this with the permission of the Dean, there would be no way the student would know at the beginning what scheme would be followed at the end.
- Dr. Dixon advised the following:
  - If instructors deviate from the published grading system, the course outline must state that.
  - The only valid grades are letter grades. It was noted that some faculty members evaluate the different components of a course with letters and then use a weighting scheme to determine the final letter grade.
- Suggested changes were:
  - in line 5 of Regulation 4b, after the words 'grading system;' the words 'weighting of assignments' might be added;
  - in the last sentence at the bottom of 4 c. the word scheme should be changed to system;
  - Add a caveat about exceptional circumstances (to be defined). Too much latitude is given otherwise.
- Members suggested that the proposed regulation was still ambiguous and faculty is still free to do whatever they want.
- A summary of the desired change was requested:
  - Consistency must be integral in the way a grade is assigned but flexibility must be built in to allow professors to apply weighting in final grade calculations.
  - Students must have some certainty at the beginning of a course what method of evaluation can be expected. Changes to be allowed only in exceptional circumstances; what constitutes 'exceptional circumstances' to be clearly defined.

- A student must not be disadvantaged by the instructor and a mechanism to ensure consistency must be put in place.
- Dr. Dixon withdrew the motion on Regulation 4. It will be referred back to the Academic Regulations Committee for further revision.

**Regulation 8** – changes summarized were:

- Some professors schedule their final exam during the last 2 weeks of the semester. It is possible for students to have multiple and even back-to-back final exams on the same day . This practice reduces teaching time, compromises the exam period, adversely affects other courses, and places a great amount of pressure on the students. There is no mechanism for scheduling those properly.
  - Students have complained that many assignments and projects fall due dates in the last two weeks of the semester. Exams in that period create hardship.
  - Some professors use low- weighted, weekly tests to evaluate their students. It was suggested to allow tests weighted no higher than 10% in the final weeks.
  - Members of SMUSA brought forward the following suggestions:
    - Students should not have to study for low- weighted tests during this important time. Assignments, essays, projects, and exams during this period that are worth less than 10% take time away from other higher-weighted tasks. SMUSA would rather see a 30% limit imposed during the last two weeks. If this is not achievable, the outright banning of any examinations, including those worth up to 10% would be more appropriate.
    - The exam period should be three weeks to spread out the work.
  - There was an inquiry about exam schedule changes without prior notice. Dr. Dixon responded that changes were posted. There have been a few revisions and all have been prior to end of term.
  - 8c (iii) – It was noted that the Science department will have trouble with labs if this regulation is approved as is. The registrar would have to schedule two exam dates.
- The Chair advised members that the time to adjourn was passed. According to a previous motion in Senate, the membership must vote on whether to continue discussion or adjourn.

Moved by Dr. Wicks, second by Madeleine Lefebvre, **“that Senate continue for another 15 minutes.” Motion carried**

- Discussion revolved around how to spread out the exam period. It was stated that large numbers of students have ended up writing three major exams in a twenty-four hour period.
- SMUSA representatives stated that in the short term this was not in the best interests of all students. The Senate Student Caucus unanimously opposed this motion, and a majority of students questioned also opposed it.
- It was stated that instructors who schedule large tests in the last 2 weeks of classes disrupt other teachers.

Moved by Dr. Dixon, second by Dr. Enns, **“that Regulation 8 is approved.” Motion carried 9 in favor, 5 opposed and 1 abstention.**

Moved by Dr. Stinson, second by Dr. Wicks, **“that Regulation 8 c be amended to make an exception for laboratory examinations. Add 8 c (iv) “Academic Reg 8 c (iii) does not apply to formally scheduled labs.”**

Discussion on this motion exceeded the fifteen minute time allocation.

Moved by Dr. Enns, second by Dr. Murphy, **“that Senate commit this motion to the Academic Regulations Committee for further study.” Motion carried.**

05049

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

Barb Bell,  
Secretary to the Office of Senate