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Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
B3H 3C3
Senate Office
Tel: 902-420-5412
Web: www.stmarys.ca

SENATE MEETING MINUTES January 12, 2018

The 589th Meeting of the Senate of Saint Mary's University was held on Friday, January 12, 2018, at 2:30 PM, in the Secunda Marine Boardroom. Dr M. VanderPlaat, Chairperson, presided.

PRESENT: Dr Summerby-Murray, Dr Butler, Dr Naulls, Dr Bradshaw, Dr MacDonald, Dr Sarty, Dr Smith, Dr Doucet, Dr Francis, Dr Grandy, Dr Grek-Martin, Dr Hlongwane, Dr Khokar, Dr Loughlin, Dr McCallum, Dr Rahaman, Dr Takseva, Dr VanderPlaat, Dr Warner, Mr Brophy, Mr Nasrallah, Ms Ali, Ms Bhaskar, Ms Caswell, Mr Oshobu, Ms Delorey, and Ms Bell, Secretary of Senate.

REGRETS: Dr Hall, Dr Peckmann, Dr Stinson, Ms Sargeant Greenwood, and Ms DeYoung

Meeting commenced at 2:35 P.M.

17043 **REPORT OF THE AGENDA COMMITTEE**
The report of the Agenda Committee was accepted.

17044 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**
Minutes of the meeting of December 15, 2017, were *circulated* as *Appendix A*.
The following revisions were noted:

- Revise the following sentence to read “For example, Life Sciences tend to have a ~~Biology has a very~~-strong balance in relation to gender representation”

Moved by McCallum, and seconded, “**that the minutes of the meeting of December 15, 2017 are approved as revised.**” **Motion carried.**

17045 **WINTER GRADUATION LIST**

- The listing of graduates was circulated to Deans with a copy for Senate.
- Convocation is next Friday January 19 at 10 AM and 2 PM in the theatre auditorium.
- Undergraduate Programs and Graduate degrees in the Faculty of Graduate Studies for the Sobey School of Business are at 10:00 AM on Friday.
- Undergraduate programs and Graduate degrees in the Faculty of Graduate Studies for the Faculties of Arts and Science are at 2:00 PM on Friday.
- Question: What are duplicates? Answer: There are 23 students graduating with more than one degree.

- 275 graduates from 32 different countries will be presented with 298 credentials. Of these, 21 are graduating with distinctions.

Moved by Dr. Naulls, and seconded, **“to confer degrees and distinctions on those represented on the list (circulated as Appendix B) at the Winter Convocation”**. Motion carried.

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

17046 **BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**
None

17047 **PROFESSOR EMERITUS RECOMMENDATION(S)**
Recommendation for Dr. G Pe-Piper, Department of Geology, *Appendix C*

Key discussion points:

- This is a strong submission for emeritus status.
- Dr Pe-Piper will retain her current research lab space and will continue to supervise undergraduate and graduate students using this space.

Moved by Summery-Murray and seconded, **“that Senate approves the awarding of the rank of Professor Emeritus for Dr G. Pe-Piper, Department of Geology.”** Motion carried.

17048 **REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**
.01 Learning and Teaching Committee – revised terms of reference, *Appendix D1 & 2*

Key Discussion Points:

- This item of business was brought to the attention of Senate at a previous meeting.
- The terms of reference for this Senate standing committee was last updated in 1984. Since then the Studio was established. This revision includes articulation of the relationship between this standing committee and the Studio.
- An opinion was stated this revision still does not clarify the mandate of the Learning and Teaching Committee. The committee was originally established to do the leadership work to enhance the quality of teaching in the University, but it has not functioned in that role for a long time. The revised terms of reference refer to this Committee operating as a peer advisory body in connection with Studio. Perhaps it would be better to create a separate advisory group to the Studio.
- The new sub-article 5.2.13.3 states that the committee leads pedagogical and teaching and learning research initiative, and provides peer support for initiatives undertaken and challenges experienced by faculty and professional librarians. The Studio is currently doing this work.
- Senators were informed that there has been significant discussion between members of the Studio and Committee in this regard. Both groups were clear that there was a need for a link to remain in existence between the Committee and the Studio. The Senate link on this committee is established by the Standing Committee structure.

- It was suggested that a further review should be done.
- The opinion was expressed that the revised terms of reference for this Committee are still tied into what it used to do instead of what it could do. The Studio is the support structure for instructors in terms of Teaching and Learning. In addition, fundamentally, this committee has no mandated influence on the Studio.
- Question: Where should faculty get the information that was previously supplied by this committee? Answer: The Studio provides that support.
- Question: Who does the Studio report to? Answer: It reports through the Senior Advisor, Teaching and Learning to the VPAR. This is a formal administrative reporting path.
- A member stated that Senate is a governance body. Question: By extension, shouldn't a sub-committee of Senate have oversight over the activities of the Studio?
- This discussion should be deferred until Dr Enns has completed the presentations to all of the faculty councils. The presentation to the Faculty of Science Council has been completed. The presentation to the Faculty of Arts is scheduled on January 26th and a Presentation to the Sobey School of Business is pending.
- **Action item: Bell** to check with Bradshaw prior to the March Senate meeting to see if this item is to be added to the March Senate Agenda.

17049

AD-HOC COMMITTEES

01

Follow-up on progress - Ad Hoc Committee to review the student proposal for a two-year pilot project to create a fall break of five business days (including Remembrance Day) for Saint Mary's starting Fall of 2018. (Dr Sarty, Chair)

Key discussion points:

- Committee members met on January 11, 2018 and reviewed the proposed motion from SMUSA regarding a 2-year pilot project for full week Fall Breaks.
- The document containing the guiding criteria for developing the academic calendar that is utilized by the Registrar, and the Academic Regulations Committee was provided to the Ad-Hoc Committee and referred to during discussions. Members reviewed the number of Monday/Wednesday and Tuesday/Thursday teaching days per semester for the current 2017-18 academic year, and Senate-proposed Fall 2018-19 year, and confirmed that numbers presented by SMUSA to Senate in December as not being consistently "24", but varying between 23 and 24.
- There was extensive discussion on a number of additional topics:
 - length of exam period (both the full specified period, and the actually-utilized days),
 - the number to study days prior to exams,
 - the time between end of December exams and university closure date,
 - the potential of writing exams on Sundays and/or the Patronal Feast day,
 - consistency with other Halifax University schedules,
 - consistency from Fall Term to Winter term with respect to the break, and
 - role of the break week for the well-being of student.
- Consensus was not reached on all of these, but it was clear that more investigation, input, thought, and decisions were needed related to many of the topics listed above. Consensus was reached on two points which have resulted in the two recommendations being brought before Senate today.

- **Recommendation #1** – The following motion should be presented to Senate Moved that Senate modify the approved Fall 2018 academic calendar of events such that the first day of classes remains as Sept. 5 but that: the fall break is changed to encompass the full week of Nov 12 (Nov 12-17); the last day of classes is changed from Nov. 29 to Dec 3, the first day of exams is changed from Dec 3 to Dec 5, and the last day of exams is changed from December 17 to Dec 18.”
- **Recommendation #2** – That prior to presentation of the 2019-2020 calendar of events to Senate next academic year, the criteria guiding the development of the academic schedule should be reviewed, debated and clarified by the Academic Regulations Committee with leadership from the VPAR and the Registrar. Clarifications of these criteria should include consideration of regular inclusion of a fall break and the length of such a break, along with other points listed earlier in this update.
- The list of criteria that is being used to generate the academic calendar of events needs to be reviewed.
- A Senator stated the reduction of study days from three to one was concerning. The response was that the ad-hoc committee thought that the trade-off was important enough that the sacrifice was worthwhile.
- Question: Does this revision take into consideration continuation of the observance of the Patronal Feast on December 8? Answer: Yes.
- Concern was expressed about the reduced study time, especially where it concerned the writing of comprehensive exams. It was suggested that is an instructor requested that the Registrar not schedule those comprehensive exams until a couple of days into the Exam Schedule, it would allow sufficient time for study.
- Question: The registrar was asked if it was possible to make a determination, when the exam schedule is being developed, as to whether the scheduling software can make allowances so that they could be an additional study day? Answer: Yes this is possible.
- Senators were advised that when an exam schedule is condensed, the temptation arises to move the exam back into the teaching days. Academic Regulation 8 c. (iii) states that an exam/test contributing more than 10% of the overall course evaluation cannot be held during the last 14 calendar days prior to the last class date. Departments do not police this very well. We should look for a way to ensure that academic regulation 8 c (iii) is enforced.
- Members were advised that there are a number of Dalhousie students that take classes at Saint Mary’s and an equal number of our students that take classes at Dalhousie. This is an effort to be consistent across the two institutions.

Moved by Sarty, and seconded, **“that Senate modify the approved Fall 2018 academic calendar of events such that the first day of classes remains as Sept. 5 but that: the fall break is changed to encompass the full week of Nov 12 (Nov 12-18); the last day of classes is changed from Nov. 29 to Dec 3, the first day of exams is changed from Dec 3 to Dec 5, and the last day of exams is changed from December 17 to Dec 18.”** With only one abstention, **the motion was carried.**

Consensus was to approve recommendation two.

Moved by Sarty and seconded, “that the Senate refer the review of the criteria for creating the Academic Calendar of Events to the VPAR and the Academic Regulations Committee with the following stipulations:

1. that prior to presenting the 2019-2020 calendar of events to Senate, the criteria guiding the development of the academic schedule will be reviewed, debated and clarified by the Academic Regulations Committee with leadership from the VPAR and the Registrar.
2. Clarification of the criteria guiding the development of the academic schedule will include consideration of regular inclusion of a fall break and the length of such a break.
3. In addition, the points as listed in the report from the Ad-Hoc Committee (some of which appear in the text above), will be considered.”

Motion carried.

17050

NEW BUSINESS FROM

a) Floor (not involving notice of motion)

- i) Proposed revision to the 2018-2019 Academic Calendar of Events to change the start of the Winter term 2019 from the current Monday, January 7th, 2019 to the Tuesday, January 8th, 2019.

Key discussion points:

- A number of operational challenges, related to the new student orientation process, are experienced when classes starting the day after the university opens after Christmas Break.
- Naulls advised that the Academic Calendar of Events has already been released to the university community for planning purposes. At the time of circulation, these units were advised that there was a potential for a revision to the length of the fall break, but this suggested change would have to be communicated quickly if Senate approves it.
- A member advised that an early start to classes after the winter break causes a lot of issues for students and administration in terms of gaining access to classes or making schedule changes.
- SMUSA needs the time at the beginning of term to assist the students in terms of orientation and advising students on their classes and benefits.
- Question: How many new students were there in this term? Answer: Approximately 235.
- It was suggested that this was not the place to have a discussion related to specific dates on the Calendar of Events. That is the purview of the Regulations Committee.

Moved by Brophy and seconded, “that Senate revise the 2018-2019 Academic Calendar of Events to change the start of the Winter term 2019 from the current Monday, January 7th, 2019 to the Tuesday, January 8th, 2019. Which also moves the end of term by one day.” **Motion carried.**

17051

PRESIDENT’S REPORT Appendix E (if available)

Summerby-Murray advised members of the following:

- The President noted that his report was posted on SMUport for those that wanted to have more details.
- Senate members were asked to attend Convocation if possible.
- Honorary degrees recipients are Deitz and Boutilier. Both are amazing community leaders.
- Attended a number of Winter Welcome events for new students, including a very successful Santamarian Ceremony.
- Thanked the members of Senate and faculty in general for their perseverance during the recent storm and power outage situations.
- Progress continues in the University Librarian Search, with the three candidates having presented to the University community.
- We are working with consultants as we continue to work through the fundraising priorities, We have had some early successes. A substantial gift was received this morning (five figures). An additional a 7-figure gift will be coming.
- Wishes were expressed to Senate members for all the best for the coming term and thanks for the work that you do.
- Thanks to Brophy and SMUSA for the extremely successful welcome week. The events included catering for 440 people.
- A graduating engineering student stated that he came to SMU because of the sense of community that was being exemplified during the welcome week.

17052

QUESTION PERIOD

Key Discussion Points:

- Question: Whenever there is a storm watch, there used to be a message on the website that the university was monitoring the situation There was no message on the website during the last storm. Why was this practice discontinued? Answer: The Policy on Unscheduled Closure and/or Cancellation of Classes was revised on December 7, 2017. When Environment Canada issues a weather warning, the process is for members of the University's Closure and Cancellation Committee to discuss the potential impact on operations. At that point, the university is already monitoring the situation. It was decided that no notices would be posted to the Closure/Cancellation hotlines or on the SMU web page unless a change in status was necessary. Saint Mary's University remains open until a closure statement is communicated.
- When there is a weather statement, members of the Closure and Cancellation Committee monitor the situation. If the statement has been for weather overnight and early morning, the Committee members are reviewing the situation by 5 AM. The Committee then reports to the President by 5:30 AM. The President makes a decision and if it is to close/partially close and/or cancel classes, the goal is to communicate that decision by 6 AM.
- A student representative advised that during this past storm event, students were concerned and confused by the lack of a message on the website. Response: This was because of a recent revision to the policy. The assumption is that we are monitoring the situation and will provide notice only in the event of a change in status of the university.
- It was suggested that it might be beneficial to reverse that decision and continue to post the notice that the university was monitoring the situation to promote a perception that the university is concerned with the wellbeing of

students, faculty and staff. It was suggested that this could be done through social media (email or twitter).

- Question: Could students and faculty receive an email or text if the university is closed? Answer: This is technically possible if that is the form of communication students would prefer. The concern is that not all students, faculty and staff would see the communication because all do not necessarily communicate through twitter, text or SMU email.
- Members were advised that an alert messaging system is being discussed similar to the emergency messaging system that people need to sign up for. One issue with such systems is that in some weather events, email can be disrupted for hours. In that situation, a text message would have a better chance of getting through.
- Members were advised that there is a new hire in external affairs that might be able to handle such an initiative.
- Question: Are there fixed times for the communication of a closure notice? Answer: Yes. The goal is for the decision to stay open, close/partially close the University or cancel classes to be made by 6 AM for daytime operations and 3 PM for evening operations. During the recent storm, the university closed because of safety concerns related to the power outages and not because of the weather.
- It was noted that there is an issue with communicating with classrooms during a power outage.
- The President will take this feedback and the suggestions back to the University's Closure and Cancellation Committee.

17053

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:39 P.M.

Barb Bell,
Secretary to the Office of Senate