

**SENATE MEETING MINUTES**  
**April 19, 2024**

The 652nd meeting of the Senate of Saint Mary's University was held on Friday, April 19, 2024, at 2:00 PM, in the CLARI Meeting Room.

**PRESENT:** Dr. Summerby-Murray, Dr. VanderPlaat, Dr. Veres, Dr. Sarty, Dr. Raymond, Mr. Brophy, Ms van den Hoogen, Mr. Seneker, Dr. Hlongwane, Dr. Brosseau, Prof Sewell, Dr. Grek-Martin, Dr. Samou, Ms. Hodge, Dr. Hare, Dr. Ylijoki, Dr. Kocum, Dr. Austin, Dr. Barclay, Dr. Grandy, Dr. Sanderson, Dr. Stinson, Dr. Doucet, Dr. Dodge, Mr. Ganapathy, Ms. Tan, Ms. Barrett, Ms. Boudreau, Mr Gupta, Ms. Shannon Morrison, Secretary to Senate

**GUESTS:** Dr. Wang, Dr. Morales, Dr. Lingraas, Dr. Power, Mr. Travis, Ms. Milton, Ms. Southwell, Ms. Chiunda, Mr. Hutchinson, Ms. Kalantri, Ms. Gervase, Dr. Malton

**REGRETS:** Dr. Ingraham, Ms. Hodge

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

**24081**      **REPORT OF AGENDA COMMITTEE**

- Items 4 and 5 will be moved to the beginning of the agenda.
- Request to add an item under section 11, New Business from Floor (Involving Motion)

**Agenda accepted.**

**24082**      **PRESIDENT'S REPORT** – Posted as ***Appendix A*** (10 min)

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

**Key Discussion Points:**

- The University Strategic Plan is complete and will be presented to Senate today.
- The MBA students are taking on an environmental sustainability initiative, led by Dr. Margaret McKee, Sustainability, Tracking and Reporting System (STARS)
- The move and expansion of the Division of Engineering into 960 Tower Road.
- The Faculty of Arts hosted an important guest lecture by a colleague from St. Michaels College on the history of Residential Schools.

- Significant progress has been made on the World Without Limits capital Campaign. This is a 100 million campaign, we are approximately at the 60 million mark.
- The search for Provost Vice President Academic & Research is well underway. The search committee for the Vice President Finance and Administration will be meeting early next week to review a long list of candidates.
- We are in the final process with the Dean of the Sobey School of Business and the process for the Dean of Science is progressing well as presentations are underway.
- There is continued work on the financial situation. We have received the operating grant from the Province of Nova Scotia in a lump sum.

**24083**      **VICE-PRESIDENT ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH REPORT** – Posted as Appendix B (5 mins)

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

- In the process of announcing the new Dean of the Sobey School of Business, followed by the Dean of Science.
- Action for Health update will be included in May's report.
- Clarifying the issues around academic restructuring. EAB is there to provide data points and take things into consideration as we move towards looking at our academic programs. They will respond purely to our requests for information.

**24084**      **SMUSA PRESIDENT'S REPORT** – Listed as *Appendix C* (5 min)

- The AGM held at the beginning of the month had a record-high attendance of approximately 200 students. This meeting highlighted our social impact and the work done, including starting the ZTC course list, the wellness weeks, and implementing a 40% grade cap on single assessments.
- SMUSA President welcomes the incoming student Senators.
- Senate Chair thanks the Student Senators for contributing to the 2023-2024 Academic Senate year.

**24085**      **QUESTION PERIOD** (length at the discretion of chair based on business volume)

- **Question:** What is Senate's role in the review of Academic Programs?  
**Answered by Interim VPAR:** It will start at the Department level, then the Faculty Curriculum Committees, Senate Curriculum, and then the Senate. We will not be skipping any steps.

- **Question:** The President sent an email on April 3<sup>rd</sup> mentioning the sustainability of programs. What are the criteria and standards to establish a program that connects the Saint Mary's learning experience? **Answered by President:** A few key parts are having a sense of academic viability of programs and their overall financial components as we need to recognize that we need to be financially stable. There are different paths that provide that overall distinct learning experience. The Deans, Department Chairs, and Vice President of Academic & Research will be engaged. We will need to look at the revenue from three sources (Government Grants, Tuition, and Endowments).
- **Question:** There has been a vote on No Confidence from the Saint Mary's Faculty Union, and the Board of Governors has not provided a response. Will you be providing Senate a response to the vote? **Answered by President:** Senators are aware that SMUFU has passed a vote of No Confidence in the President and the Board Chair, which has no structural impact in terms of governance. I responded to the SMUFU President when the results were shared. **Question:** The faculty has expressed itself; it is an overwhelming vote. The Senate is responsible for the Academic Policy of the University, and the faculty is responsible for what comes out of that policy. What steps are being taken in terms of the leadership of the university, with respect to this vote of no confidence, from the Board and the President's Office? **Answered by the President:** The Board passed a motion in support of the President and leadership team of the university.
- **Question:** Will programs be cut as part of the financial strategy? Is there an expectation that the programs will be cut? **Answered by Interim VPAR:** We are going to identify programs that are in trouble financially and ask faculty and departments within a reasonable time frame to discuss how they can reorganize themselves to reduce administrative costs.
- **Question:** How is EAB going to be used in this process? Will they be collecting the data and making recommendations? **Answered by Interim VPAR:** EAB already collects the data. I have made a list of things that I think are critical data points that I think faculty should consider in how we could restructure. EAB will be able to provide us with more sophisticated ways to link the data points together. They provide qualitative data. They are here to make sure that when a faculty makes a recommendation on how they want to restructure, they have to look at all of the data to ensure this is a good idea.

- **Question:** Can you remind me what the World Without Limits Campaign money is being raised for? **Answered by President:** The Capital Campaign began in 2015/ 2016 to create a stronger endowment fund. It sits in four key areas: student success and support, scholarships and bursaries, support for research, and infrastructure.

24086

### **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Minutes of the meeting of March 15, 2024, were circulated as **Appendix D**

#### ***SMUSA President clarifies SMUSA AGM date.***

The March 15, 2024 minutes are accepted with the above-suggested amendment.

24087

### **REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

#### **1. Academic Planning**

a). CISO – MISA MPHEC Name Change Program Proposal (Dr. Hai Wang)

##### **Key Discussion Points:**

- External reviewers suggested a name change as part of a rebrand.

Moved by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Dr. Stinson, “ **that Senate approve the program name change of Computing and Information Systems (CISO) to Management Information Systems and Analytics (MISA) for submission to MPHEC” Motion carried.**

b). BComm Core – 3 Year Report (Dr. Miguel Morales)

##### **Key Discussion Points:**

- This is the first time the Program has been reviewed and we are making great progress.
- W. Kay clarifies that MPHEC mandates universities to review at the Program level, not at the overall and encompassing Degree program level (as was done in this case when reviewing the BComm core program).
- Question: The external recommendation 4.1 states students, parents, and alumni want to explore the removal of the Major in Entrepreneurship. Answer: We discussed this with students and the community, and we considered it not appropriate to remove this major, as one of our university's missions is entrepreneurship. It would be contradictory to remove it. We will not be acting on that recommendation.

- There is now a framework for the next three years, which meets the challenges coming up to determine the most efficient way to run the program.

Moved by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Dr. Stinson, “**that Senate approve the three-year follow-up report of the Bachelor of Commerce Core Program as meeting the requirements of Section 5 of the Senate Policy on the Review of Undergraduate Programs at Saint Mary’s.**” Motion carried.

c). MSc Computing & Data Analytics – 1 Year Report ( Dr. Pawan Lingras)

**Key Discussion Points:**

- All of the action items were addressed. There have been a lot of changes in the program, and there will be more challenges where we may modify the program later.

Moved by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Dr. Stinson, “**that Senate approve the one-year follow-up report of the Master of Science in Computing and Data Analytics Program as meeting the requirements of Section 5 of the Senate Policy on the Review of Graduate Programs at Saint Mary’s.**” Motion carried.

d). Accounting Program Review (Dr. Jeff Power)

**Recommendation 1:** APC concurs with the response of the Program and Dean but would encourage consideration of a Graduate Diploma Credential instead of a post-baccalaureate certificate.

**Recommendation 2:** APC concurs with the Deans response.

**Recommendation 3:** APC concurs with the Program and Deans response.

**Recommendation 4:** APC concurs with the Program and Deans response.

**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 Deans response.

**Recommendation 8:** APC concurs with the Deans response.

**Recommendation 9:** APC concurs with the Department and the Dean but would encourage the department to use the Sobey School of Business Academic Advisors.

**Recommendation 10:** APC concurs with the Program and Dean but would suggest consultation with the Studio for Teaching and Learning to look at the overall Faculty award ecosystem on campus.

Moved by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Ms. van den Hoogen, “**that Senate supports the APC recommendations arising from the Accounting program review, as listed above.**” Motion carried.

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

and

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

e). PhD Applied Science (Dr. Kai Ylijoki)

**Key Discussion Points:**

- There will be a lot of work over the next year as there is a lot going on within this program.

**Recommendation 1:** APC Concurs with the Program response.

**Recommendation 2:** APC concurs with the Deans response.

**Recommendation 3:** APC defers to Recommendation 16 response.

**Recommendation 4:** APC concurs with the Dean and Program response.

**Recommendation 5:** APC concurs Deans response.

**Recommendation 6:** APC concurs with the Dean and Program response.

**Recommendation 7:** APC concurs with the Dean and Program response.

**Recommendation 8:** APC concurs with the Deans response.

**Recommendation 9:** APC concurs with the Dean and Program response.

**Recommendation 10:** APC concurs with the Dean and Program response.

**Recommendation 11:** APC concurs with the Dean and Program response.

**Recommendation 12:** APC concurs with the Deans response.

**Recommendation 13:** APC defers to Recommendation 5 response.

**Recommendation 14:** APC concurs with the Deans response.

**Recommendation 15:** APC concurs with the Dean and Program response.

**Recommendation 16:** APC concurs with the Deans response.

**Recommendation 17:** APC concurs with the Program response.

Moved by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Dr. Veres, **“that Senate supports the APC recommendations arising from the PhD Applied Science program review, as listed above.” Motion carried.**

Moved as an omnibus motion by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Dr. Sarty, **“that 60 days after Senate approval, the PhD Applied Science Program submits an 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 PhD Applied Science 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 PhD Applied Science 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.**

f). Institute for Computational Astrophysics Probationary Period

**Key Discussion Points:**

- After reviewing the Research Centers and Institutes, it was thought that the activities were inconsistent with what they should be doing. There was a point raised by the department to put them on notice.
- The institute has reviewed its procedures and effectively addressed the concern.

Moved by Dr. VanderPlaat and seconded by Dr. Sarty , **“that Senate approves that the Institute for Computational Astrophysics is to be removed from probationary status.” Motion carried.**

Moved by Ms. Tan and seconded by Mr. Gupta, **“ that Senate temporarily adjourn for a 5-minute recess.” Motion carried.**

**2. Senate Academic Literacy Strategy Committee**

a) Senate Academic Literacy Strategy Committee Memo

**Key Discussion Points:**

- When the committee was first struck, it had great value, focusing mainly on developing the Writing Center.

- It was discussed to merge the Senate Committee on Learning and Teaching with the Senate Academic Literacy Strategy Committee, but it was not the right time to combine them.
- When the Studio for Teaching and Learning was established, the committee's work was no longer needed.
- In March 2023, the Committee reviewed the ToR and determined it was no longer relevant. One of the points in the ToR was that the committee should coordinate with the Academic Departments in relation to Academic Literacy. But this does not happen, so there is no action for this committee.
- There have been many challenges over the past 6 years in trying to determine the purpose of this committee.
- It was unanimously decided to dissolve this committee as it served its original purpose by establishing a Writing Centre.

Moved by Dr. Summerby-Murray and seconded by Ms. van den Hoogen “ **that Senate amend the original motion to read, “that Senate revoke the terms of reference and dissolve the Senate Academic Literacy Strategy Committee.” Motion carried.**

Moved by Ms. van den Hoogen and seconded by Ms. Tan, “**that Senate revoke the terms of reference and dissolve the Senate Academic Literacy Strategy Committee.” Motion carried.**

### 3. Accessibility Committee (Dr. Brosseau & Mr. Travis)

#### a). Academic Accommodations Policy

##### **Key Discussion Points**

- The policy was approved in 2020 and rescinded in 2021. The committee has sought and received feedback. In Spring 2023, the committee began implementing the feedback into the policy.
- The committee reviewed policies across Canada, and Saint Mary’s University is the only academic institution in Nova Scotia that does not have a policy.
- This policy focuses solely on academic accommodations.
- Students with disabilities are struggling, and there is no clearly published path for them. We need to have a policy in place, and if this policy is part of a larger university accessibility policy, the committee supports it.
- Committee to update bullet point 7.2.5 to include “that a student has the option to move to a formal process outlined below.”



- **Question:** When Senate rescinded the original policy, perhaps things were included under the legislation. Has that been fully resolved?  
**Answer:** The committee received council from the University General Counsel and language was removed. We are focusing solely on an academic policy.
- **Question:** Should the policy title read as, Saint Mary’s University, **Senate** Policy on Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities?

Moved by Dr. Stinson and seconded by Dr. Brosseau, “**to amend the policy name to read Saint Mary’s University, Senate Policy on Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities.**” Motion carried.

- University Secretary – I have provided consistent advice to the committee since the policy was rescinded in 2021. The current draft does not reflect the advice I have given. The advice was provided in my capacity as General Counsel. With respect to the name, this policy is not an educational policy. This is a policy to address the legal duty to accommodate. This policy will need to be approved by the Board of Governors. Senate has a role to play and assist the university in fulfilling the duty to accommodate. This will not be a Senate Policy. The Accessibility Committee has done great work and could do a lot of valuable work on promoting accessibility in learning design, course outline, and instructor training.
- **Question:** Does the General Counsel have the power to stop this from going to the Board? **Answer:** My role as General Counsel is to ensure the areas of legal compliance, which is my legal duty to the university. My professional obligation is that the university manage that risk. There is a policy on creating policies – there are requirements and guidelines on how university policies are developed, and I see risks from a legal perspective.
- The University Secretary left the meeting.
- Comment: This policy provides guidance and has components similar to those of other universities currently in place.

Moved by Dr. Brosseau and seconded by Dr. Stinson, “**that Senate approve the Saint Mary’s University Senate Policy on Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities.**” Motion carried.

24088

**REPORTS FROM JOINT COMMITTEES**

Honorary Degree Committee

a). Honorary Degree Recommendation M

**Key Discussion Points:**

- Significant public service in the Province, senior council, advisory council, leadership team, and former Board member of Saint Mary's University.
- **Question:** Is this becoming a trend to award a previous Board Chair an Honorary Degree? **Answer by President:** There has been significant discussion that this is not a trend. If a nomination comes forward, it must stand on its own merits. The committee reviews the package and has plenty of discussions, as this is not an automatic recruitment tactic when searching for a Board Chair.

Moved by Dr. Summerby-Murray and seconded by Dr. Sanderson, **BE IT RESOLVED THAT Senate accepts the recommendation of the Honorary Degrees Committee that the Board of Governors award the degree of Doctor of Civil Law, Honoris Causa, to Lawrence (Larry) Freeman and hereby makes such recommendation to the Board of Governors."** Motion carried.

b). Honorary Degree Recommendation N

**Key Discussion Points:**

- Her leadership has been recognized and has helped develop the math curriculum in Nova Scotia. She is also a leading volunteer in the community.
- Community engagement for African Nova Scotia students. She is a vibrant member of the community.

Moved by Dr. Summerby-Murray and seconded by Dr. Stinson, **BE IT RESOLVED THAT Senate accepts the recommendation of the Honorary Degrees Committee that the Board of Governors award the degree of Doctor of Civil Law, Honoris Causa, to Karen Hudson and hereby makes such recommendation to the Board of Governors."** Motion carried.

**24089**

**NEW BUSINESS FROM:**

1. Floor (involving notice of motion)

a). Motion brought forward by Dr. Doucet and seconded by Dr. Stinson,

- In recognition of the impacts that the University's financial position has on Senate's ability to administer educational policy, and in light of the vote of no confidence that was held by the Faculty Union on Tuesday, April 9, 2024, the University Senate moves to request from the Board of Governors the following action items:
  1. By Wednesday, May 8, 2024, a report on the specific actions taken and planned in response to the University's financial position and the vote of no confidence;

2. By Monday, April 29, 2024, an acknowledgment of receipt and initial response to this request.

Key Discussions:

- **Comment:** I do not understand point 1. Under the actions of the university with respect to the financials of the university. I don't know why there is a request, as there have been communications, and there has already been a long list provided. **Answer:** I am asking for a response from the Board of Governors on actions that the Board is taking.
- **Question:** To clarify, you are looking for a response from the Board, to Senate?
- **Comment:** This is a significant motion to be brought to the floor, this should have been something brought forward sooner.
- **Comment:** I would like a report that will spell out the financial position of the university and the vote of no confidence.
- **Question:** I understand the financial aspect; why is the Senate asking about the No-Confidence? And are we inflating a union response and issue versus a Senate response? **Answer:** This is the expression of the faculty through the union. There has not been a response from the Board.

Moved by Dr. Stinson and seconded by Dr. Malton, **that Senate will vote on this motion via secret ballot.” – Motion carried.**

Moved by Ms Barrett and seconded by Mr Gupta, **“ to extend Senate by 15 minutes.” Motion carried.**

- **Comment:** There are several indicators that the university is in a tough situation. The budget is delayed. There are reasons for concern. To remain silent would be inappropriate.

Moved by Dr. Stinson and seconded by Ms. van den Hoogen, **“ to amend the motion to read, By Wednesday, May 8, 2024, a report on the specific actions taken in place in light of the university’s financial position and the vote of no confidence.” Motion carried.**

Moved by Ms. Tan and seconded by Ms. Barrett, **“ to amend the motion to read, By Friday, May 31, a report on the specific actions in response to the university’s financials, By May 8, a response from the Board of Governors on**

**the vote of no confidence and By April 29, Acknowledgment of receipt.”  
Motion defeated.**

Moved by Ms. Barrett and seconded by Mr Gupta, “ **to extend Senate by 15 additional minutes.” Motion carried.**

Moved by Dr. Doucet and seconded by Dr. Stinson, “ **that Senate requests from the Board of Governors the following action items, By Wednesday, May 8, 2024, a report on the specific actions taken and planned in light of the University’s financial position and the vote of no confidence and By Monday, April 29, 2024, an acknowledgement of receipt and initial response to this request.” Motion carried.**

2. Floor (not involving notice of motion)
  - a). University Strategic Plan Update ( President Summerby-Murray)

Item deferred to May Senate.

**24090**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:08 p.m.