



One University. One World. Yours.

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

SENATE MEETING MINUTES April 25, 2016

The 575th Meeting of the Senate of Saint Mary's University was held on Friday, April 25, 2016, at 10:00 AM, in the Secunda Marine Boardroom and was designated as a special meeting. Dr D. Naulls, Chairperson, presided.

PRESENT: Dr Summerby-Murray, Dr Gauthier, Dr Dixon, Dr MacDonald, Dr Smith, Dr Naulls, Dr Austin, Dr Campbell, Dr Gilin-Oore, Dr Grandy, Dr Grek-Martin, Dr Henry, Dr Hlongwane, Dr Kozloski, Dr Peckmann, Mr Hotchkiss, Mr Michael, Mr Algermozi, Mr Rakotandrafara, Mr Rice, Ms Robert, Ms. Murphy and Ms Bell, Secretary to the Office of Senate.

REGRETS: Dr Bjornson, Dr Bradshaw, Dr Conrad, Dr Stinson, Dr Takseva, Dr Vessey, Dr VanderPlaat, Ms DeYoung, Mr Armoni,

Meeting commenced at 10:06 A.M.

15074 **REPORT OF THE AGENDA COMMITTEE**

The report was accepted as circulated.

15075 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Special meeting – no previous minutes

15076 **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION – INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN**

President provided the following information:

- The report circulated for this meeting is a draft document. There is room for revision through further consultation.
- The goal of this presentation to Senate is to inform and request two motions from the Senate: 1) to approve, in principle the themes and directions outlined in the draft plan and 2) to establish an Ad Hoc Committee to contribute to the further development of the Institutional Strategic Plan.
- In July 2015 Saint Mary's embarked on a process to help inform the University's overall strategic direction for the next ten years and beyond.
- Since then, we have been engaged in dialogues with many groups about the future success of the University through town hall meetings, 'table top' discussions, presentations, and one-on-one meetings. Sessions have involved students, faculty, staff, alumni, the University Senate, and our Board of Governors.

- The goal of these sessions was to provide an organized forum in which to inform and engage members of the University community on key strategic priority areas, seek their involvement and input, and mobilize understanding and support.
- Through this consultative process, four high-level themes resonated:
 - The Value and Values of Saint Mary's University
 - Learning-Centered
 - Internationalization/Intercultural Development
 - Financial Sustainability

1. Value and Values

- We have heard that Saint Mary's has a commitment to excellence, and in creating life-long learners. The true value of a university education is realized when it also instills in all members of the University community a strong sense of personal worth, a sense of community, concern for social justice issues and a commitment to social responsibility.
- Saint Mary's is also playing a leading role in a number of the themes in the One Nova Scotia Coalition Report. We are being called upon to participate in a number of initiatives related to the international community.
- At Saint Mary's we embrace the importance of respect for diversity, respect for different cultures and building stronger relationships within the Nova Scotia cultural fabric, particularly First Nations peoples, African Nova Scotians, and the growing number of immigrant cultures.

Goals and Objectives

- Define the scope of and embrace this scholarly community and create a distinctive identity by asking: what is the nature of the Santamarian? We need to create a distinctive identity.
- We need to expand our role and help to transform the Nova Scotia economy. We will demonstrate our value in the critical role we play in enhancing the prosperity of the region.
- Values of respect include rules of engagement: nature of academic freedom and responsible inquiry; accommodation of the celebration of diversity; codes of conduct; policies for prevention of sexualized violence, etc.
- We will celebrate our value and Santamarian values and strengthen our 'scholarly community brand' around these.
- Values of diversity: avoid discrimination, celebrate difference, embrace other cultures, including those of Canada's First Nations and northern peoples, African-Nova Scotians, and all global cultures who make up our scholarly community.

2. Discovery and Innovation in a Learning-Centered Environment

- Being learning-centered means that we place a high value on the process of research and innovation, as a student, as a professor, as a researcher, ensuring that we are not simply transferring knowledge but creating it – the distinguishing feature of a high-quality university. Everything that we do should be about discovery.
- Some possible strategic directions are: Community-engaged research, student experience, entrepreneurial university-all faculties, experiential active learning, living and learning spaces, program offerings and curriculum.
- Institutional support for research has been greatly strengthened and significantly more external funding has become available. Saint Mary's has taken a leading place among research active universities of a similar size.

Goals and Objectives

- To continue to develop research programs that are valued by, relevant to, and engage communities, locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.

- Invest in undergrad research and seek philanthropic support for this in addition to allocations from the operating budget
- Enhance support for research awards
- Increase our support for faculty grants success
- Enhance our spaces for collaborative student learning, innovation and co-operation.
- Extend the learning environment into the wider community, encouraging the expansion of course delivery at the Central Library, the Mi'kmaw Friendship Centre and elsewhere.

A comprehensive Learning Experience Program

- At Saint Mary's University, student success is understood as the ability of our students to make successful transitions into University, through their academic programs, and into the larger community as knowledgeable citizens of the world.
- Key to this success is creating cohort communities and recognizing the importance of those learning experience opportunities.
- The development of academic learning communities, a peer mentorship program, university-wide academic orientation, and new workshops specific to the needs of students in information literacy, academic communication, and numeracy are all beneficial to students transitioning into our university environment.

Community-Engaged Research

- Our goal is disseminating and translating the outcomes of our research to receptor communities who can best benefit. This ties directly to the articulated vision of Saint Mary's as having a focus on accessibility, community engagement and global citizenry – a local to global engagement.

Experiential Learning

- Enhance learning that takes various forms – co-ops, internships, research, community engaged service learning, and other educational activities that encourage students to learn by doing.

3. Internationalization/Intercultural Development

- Saint Mary's University has been pursuing a deliberate strategy of internationalization for many years. There is also extensive international outreach by way of institutional linkages with universities around the world, and in many cases active inter-institutional collaboration is established and growing.
- 35% of our student body comes from someplace else with 119 countries represented on campus.
- Saint Mary's is known for its excellent support services for international students in Canada and for international research collaborations, ranking first in Canada last year with our students and professors working with colleagues from Halifax to Helsinki, Antigua to Zimbabwe.

Goals and Objectives

- Our distinct advantage - and one in which we are taking national leadership perhaps without really knowing it - is in interculturality. No other university is really getting this right yet and we are well advanced.
- We are poised also to create much greater recognition of intercultural learning through the indigenization of our curriculum and student experience.
- We will maintain and enhance our commitment to international students, exploring ways of overcoming financial obstacles.
- We will continue to be an innovation hub in development of human capital for the region.
- Across the country only 4% of the student body get an international experience during their academic studies.

Goals and Objectives:

- Saint Mary's will continue to identify ways to increase engagement, and we will celebrate and nurture the success of our international students.
- We will focus on studying abroad and giving our students an international experience.
- We will increase our commitment to indigenization of our learning environments, creating spaces for dialogue around interculturality.
- We will have resources in place to support intercultural training and foster cross-cultural collaboration.

4. Financial Stability

- To be financially sustainable we will need to rebalance our three major revenue resources (Tuition, Provincial Grant and Philanthropy). The tuition piece of this revenue stream is of immense importance. The provincial grant is equal to 29% of our budget. If you count Tri Council Funding and other sources of government revenue this is pushed up to 35%.
- We will undertake major fundraising initiatives to build endowments and available expendable funds.
- We continue to track in the top half of universities in our category in areas of student support. We must continually assess our policies and practices to ensure that we are not compromising the quality of education we can afford to offer.
- We will continue to invest in campus infrastructure and build new space for the innovative enterprises and discoveries.

Goals and Objectives

- Increase the revenue stream from more engaged alumni and donors.
- Continue to invest in recruitment (Canada and international)
- Maintain strong fiscal practices

Next Steps

- Establish a series of working committees to initiate some of our priorities. Approximately six working groups are being proposed: Comprehensive Learning Experience Program, Community-Engaged Research, Entrepreneurship, Experiential Learning, Intercultural Development, and Financial Sustainability. We already have many good plans at various levels within our university. These working committees will not be reaching down into those plans but will be staying at a higher level

Question Period

- Real diversity includes accessibility. True accessibility does not necessarily mean accommodations. We think of a disabled group as having limitations but they have their own ways to reach their goals. We recommend thinking about diversity and set up an Accessibility Committee under the President's Office or Senate because of those difference of perspectives.
- Question: An assessment of strategic risk is usually included as a part of such plans. How does a risk assessment fit into this document? An example might be the sudden loss of our students from Saudi Arabia. Answer: We were thinking about adding that but we didn't want the documents to dwell on risks or negatives. There are three key risks: fluctuations in enrolments overall, changes in the demographic (60% locally based), International student enrolments, relationship with our second biggest source of funding (Government). We have addressed this through our budgeting, diversification, and working at maintaining positive relationships with our Government.
- It was noted that our second highest international student body comes from Bangladesh.
- It was suggested that we need assessments of both risk and opportunity in other sectors of our national community.

- Members were advised that Saint Mary's needs to differentiate itself. We need to articulate that clearly to the community at large.
- Question: We have first generation (university-attending) Nova Scotia students that are unique and we also have our international population. There is intermingling and also some separation happening within these communities. Do we have any information on how we are being perceived by Nova Scotian students through our marketing initiatives? Have we had any success changing the negative perception that has existed in previous years? Answer: In the last few months, we have seen a report from a marketing company reporting on these perceptions. The report is a broad perceptual analysis and we must be careful about how we interpret that information.
- Members were advised that most of our students are taking a course load of 4. They are working to support themselves and their education. It was suggested that we need to play on this as a strength.
- Question: We have a low number of students who study abroad, but this requires resources that may not be available to our provincial students. Are we doing anything to support those students? Answer: We have tried to provide financial support for our students wishing to study abroad. We are trying to reformulate how we approach study abroad. Students may not see study abroad as a worthwhile initiative.
- Members were advised that 900 students in Arts were contacted with information about studying abroad. Of those, 50 or 60 responded, but only 12 or 15 are actually going to participate. The transformation of learning is what has to take place.
- Question: Quality of Learning – Saint Mary's has strength in teaching and the professors here are accessible. Caution was expressed that we don't create a situation where there is quality in the classroom but we lose the quality of the on-line resources. Answer: Saint Mary's has the largest number of courses taught by full-time faculty. We also need part-time instructors that are engaged and working in the community so they can bring their real-life experiences into the classroom.
- If we want to create an environment where students have the opportunity to learn in a number of different ways, we have to consider investing in our approach to on-line learning. It has to be done right. Members were advised that there is a committee looking at on-line courses. The recommendations coming out of that committee will include a review every three years of the courses being offered. Also best practices will be identified and followed.
- Discussion revolved around students with disabilities and access to on-line courses, which are typically not accessible. For example, the videos are not captioned. Also, the way that you move around on the screen may also limit the participation of some students with disabilities.
- Question: Theme #2 - Discovery and Innovation in a Learning-Centered Environment - Recently there were 20 grants available across the country for this area and Saint Mary's was successful in securing two of those grants. We are considering resources to support these learning communities. Caution was urged in terms of creating work-load crunches for faculty. It was acknowledged that there is only a one-course release no matter how much funding/grant monies you receive. The cumulative work-load is still significant. A grant facilitator would be helpful but there are limits to the capacity of faculty members.
- It was requested that there be a friendly amendment to ensure that accessibility was built into the guiding principles. Members were advised that there will be a second motion to establish an Ad Hoc Committee to work to further develop the aspects of the strategic plan.

Moved by Kozloski and seconded, **“that the Senate endorse, in principle, the Institutional Strategic Plan.” Motion carried.**

Moved by Austin and seconded, **“that the Senate establish an Ad Hoc Committee to contribute to the further development of the Institutional Strategic Plan.” Motion carried.**

The Senate Executive Committee will meet on May 11th to discuss establishing an Ad Hoc Committee membership and a proposed terms of reference for that committee.

15077

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 A.M.

Barb Bell,
Secretary to the Office of Senate