

## SENATE MEETING MINUTES December 18, 2020

The 620<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Senate of Saint Mary's University was held on Friday, December 18, 2020, at 2:00 PM, via Zoom. Dr Takseva, Chairperson presided.

**PRESENT:** Dr Summerby-Murray, Dr Butler, Dr Bhabra, Dr Francis, Dr VanderPlaat, Dr Sarty, Dr Austin, Dr Bannerjee, Dr Brosseau, Dr De Fuentes, Dr Grandy, Dr Grek-Martin, Dr Hanley, Dr Hart, Dr O'Brien, Dr Panasian, Dr Stinson, Dr Takseva, Dr Twohig, Mr Brophy, Ms Killam, Ms van den Hoogen, Mr de Chastelain, Mr Tumusiime, Ms Winters, Dr Smith, Dr Veres, Ms Sergeant-Greenwood, and Ms Bell, Secretary to the Office of Senate.

**REGRETS:** Dr Collins, Dr Power, Ms Nankani, and Mr Zokari

Meeting commenced at 2:01 P.M with the territorial acknowledgement.

**21046**      **REPORT OF AGENDA COMMITTEE**  
The Senate Agenda was approved.

**21047**      **PRESIDENT'S REPORT** *Appendix A* (10 min)  
**Key Discussion Points:**

- The President expressed his thanks to faculty, students and staff for everything they have done and are doing to make the fall and winter terms successful.
- **Discovery and Innovation in a Learning-centred environment**
  - Congratulations to Dr. Linda Campbell who received a significant award on November 26, at the virtual 18th annual Discovery Awards for Science and Technology.
  - Chaired a meeting of the Nova Scotia Post-Secondary Advisory Group on Military-Campus Connections, developing new pathways for recruitment of serving and transitioning forces members to our universities and college and identifying initiatives that support military families and related research.
- **Intercultural Learning**
  - On December 7, there was a virtual session on the Indigenous Education and Reconciliation Survey Update. The report was also presented to the President's Standing Committee on the Prevention of Racism.

- The National Dialogues Advisory Committee on inclusion met twice in recent weeks, including two workshops to develop the ‘Scarborough Charter on Inclusive Education’. The committee expects the draft to be completed by mid January. The President will bring the Charter for the Standing Committee for initial comment at that time.
- The BlackNorth Initiative Education Committee continues to meet, with the most recent meeting hearing from the chair of the Parliamentary Black Caucus (MP Greg Fergus) and outlining examples of successful projects that improve access and pathways for both high school and post-secondary students of African descent.
- **Institutional Sustainability**
  - We continue to have a strong focus on international education and advocacy, ranging from meeting (virtually) with many of our recruitment agents, meeting with the staff of CBIE in Ottawa, through to further work lobbying the federal and provincial governments.
  - The recent SMU Staff & Faculty Virtual Holiday Celebration was very successful. The Giving Tuesday initiative exceeded all expectations, raising over \$30,000 to combat food insecurity for students. In addition, an initiative was launched this week to provide gift bags to students who are here through the holiday period, in residence and beyond. Congratulations to the internal team which had this idea and has implemented it so effectively with the significant sponsorship from Sobeys, Nestle and others.

**21048**

**VICE-PRESIDENT ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH REPORT**

*Appendix B* (10 min)

**Key Discussion Points:**

- Convocation Committee is working on organizing the winter graduation ceremony. Consultation was done regarding revising the date of the convocation to February 13 but this will not affect the January Senate meeting at which the graduate listing will be reviewed.
- Winter Planning – in-person classes will not start until January 18th (pending, of course, further review when the University reopens on January 4th). All classes will run virtually until that time. The number of classes planning in-person activities on campus is modest, so the density will be low.
- Accessibility Advisory Committee Update –The committee will begin meeting in the New Year.
- Ad-hoc committee to review the status of the Faculty of Education – This is delayed due to the need to focus on urgent issues as we adapted to COVID and virtual learning. The concerns of Senate are noted. The VPAR will work to re-convene the committee and have a report back by the end of this Senate session in May 2021.

**21049**

**SMUSA PRESIDENT’S REPORT** *Appendix C* (5 min)

### **Key Discussion Points:**

- Pass/No Credit Model - Students have been particularly affected this semester and it is being reflected in their grades. To mitigate these challenges and provide additional flexibility for students, SMUSA is proposing a Pass/No Credit Model to be implemented again.
- Course Concerns – Feedback on problems and concerns related to testing styles, group work concerns, deadlines and workload during the fall term should be critically examined and addressed to improve course delivery in the second semester.
- Increased Touch Points – students had difficulty during the first term gauging their mastery of course material and receiving feedback before the final drop date was an issue for some. More frequent and earlier feedback is necessary.

21050

### **QUESTION PERIOD**

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

- Question: Would SMU consider a softer/gentle start to the term to ease the stress? This is an approach being taken by other institutions in Nova Scotia and across Canada. Answer: The President and VPAR will discuss this approach and look at possible alternatives.
- Question: What is a soft start? Answer: Dalhousie describes it as actively encouraging faculty to slowly ease into course material. It also includes accommodating isolation issues, providing supports in Brightspace to assist. The Pass/ILL (Neutral and no credit obtained) system and encouraging people to reach out concerning any requirements for flexibility in work hours is also included.
- Question: If adjustments mean that we need to delay assessments there may be an issue. Answer: Yes, this can have impact. It will be a faculty member's individual decision. We are trying to be supportive where possible but not restrict choice.

21051

### **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

.01

Minutes of previous meeting November 20, 2020, *Appendix D*.

The following revisions were noted:

- Page 13 – the word deferential should be differential.  
<<The President advised that it is not unusual for universities to have a 'Patronal' day. This designated day is applied in ~~deferential~~ **different** ways.>>
- Page 12 – Review of the EGNE Program Review documentation – The statement below requires clarification.  
<<Discussion on this with Dalhousie identified that the reality .....>>
  - A senator advised that when SMU students transfer into the Dalhousie program at the end of two years that institution may not be as willing as Saint Mary's to accommodate disabilities. This may have been viewed as an impediment to those students. This was raised to identify a potential source of bias and the possibility of a systemic barrier that potentially exists under the

cohort system. **Action Item: Bell to consult with O'Brien and Austin** to resolve this issue.

- The meeting did not adjourn at 4:30 (We extended it for 15 minutes).

**Moved by Grek Martin and seconded, “that the minutes of the meeting of November 20, 2020 are approved as revised.” Motion carried.**

## **21052**

### **BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

**.01**

Proposed definitions for modes of course delivery (deferred from Nov 2020), *Appendix E*.

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

- Question: Where did this item come from? Answer: These definitions existed on the Studio website and there was confusion related to an inconsistency between this document and what was published on Banner. This discrepancy has since been resolved.

## **21053**

### **REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

**a)**

Academic Planning Committee

1. APC Notice of Motion, *Appendix F1*, Academic Plan, *Appendix F2*.

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

- This submission was delayed by the onset of COVID-19. The Strategic Research Plan is expected to be submitted next month.
- Key points in the plan identify actions to provide resources and seed funding to support development of research and academic programs in addition to interdisciplinary activities in teaching and research.
- In section 2 under Academic Programs, the first bullet point refers to the development of a teaching and learning plan to better support courses and programs. Question: Are there any timelines for this development? Answer: Yesterday the VPAR discussed this with the AVP Teaching and Learning. This process will be renewed in the New Year. An ongoing report on timelines will be made available in the VPAR reports starting in the New Year.
- Question: On page four the Action Item stipulates “work with the Academic Planning Committee and Senate to ensure that ~~new programs proposals~~ **new programs** can be properly reviewed to consider resource needs and ensure that legitimate needs can be confirmed and committed. Can this be revised to include existing programs? Answer: Yes it can. This will include implementing the tools to facilitate the overall review of programs.
- A request to remove the words “new” and “proposals” in the quoted text above was positively received.
- In the action box in #5, Working with Indigenous Communities it states “create a working group to involve and lead the University community on indigenization of curriculum.” Question: For the last year, hasn't there already been a group working with this

community? How does this action work with the plan? Answer: We were working with The Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (CMM) and had discussions on next steps. These discussions stopped because of COVID 19. We are working to start discussions again. We also need to include other groups like the Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey (MK) Schools, and groups beyond the region as well to engage them in these discussions.

- A member advised that the community is approaching SMU concerning access to funding.
- This is a much bigger conversation that will need to include more groups and people. Currently communities are stretched in this regard. We need to look forward and to working collaboratively with these group to make progress on initiatives.
- In section 6, Intercultural Learning, it would be good to add discrimination to this section. In addition, it was suggested to find ways to include that word throughout the section. Mention of prejudice against different types of learning should be incorporated into this language throughout the section. We need to be explicit about taking an anti-racism approach.
- The VPAR will look at adding that feedback. The intent is to be comprehensive in this language.

Moved by Butler and seconded, **“that the Senate approves the Academic Plan as submitted in Appendix F2 for furtherance to the Board of Governance.” Motion carried.**

b) Academic Regulations Committee,

1. Forgiveness Policy Notice of Motion, *Appendix G1*, #8-1019 Senate Policy on Academic Forgiveness, *Appendix G2*

**Key Discussion Points:**

- The revisions are to bring the policy in line with the recent revisions to academic regulations. It was also necessary to clarify that this applies to SMU programs.

**Moved by Smith on behalf of the Academic Regulations Committee and seconded, “that Senate approves the revisions to the Forgiveness Policy #8-1019 as seen in Appendix G2.” Motion carried.**

2. Academic Regulations Notice of Motion - *Appendix H1*, Revision form (Undergraduate Academic Regulations #s 8, 11, 18, 19, and Graduate Academic Regulations 3, 7, 17, 18 and 37 (e) - *Appendix H2*.

**UNDERGRDUATE ACADEMIC REGULATIONS:**

**Academic Regulation 8. Tests, Examinations and Evaluations**

also see Senate Policy on Final Examinations

[www.smu.ca/webfiles/8-1016\\_SenateRescheduleExams.pdf](http://www.smu.ca/webfiles/8-1016_SenateRescheduleExams.pdf)

Students cannot be required to submit or **have work due during a scheduled break week** ~~perform any course-related activities~~ after the end of classes, e.g. on study days or during the final exam period. ~~This rule does not apply to~~ **Written assignments** (e.g., essays, theses) that have been assigned earlier in the term **can be due during the exam period**. Any such assignments must be due no later than the last day of the final exam period.

**Key Discussion Points:**

- Question: What kind of work might not be able to be due? Answer: After the end of term you can have things due but they have to have been assigned earlier in the term and not at the last minute.
- Question: If something is due a week before class and the student asks for an extension, is this still fine? Answer: Yes.
- No further discussion. Revision approved.

**Academic Regulation 11 - Academic Appeals**

Students who have good reason to believe they have been subject to mistaken, improper or unjust treatment with respect to their academic work have the right to appeal to the Committee on Academic Appeals. An appeal must be based on solid evidence and not merely on injured feelings. This Committee's jurisdiction extends only to individuals currently enrolled at the University or enrolled during the previous academic year and dismissed, (i.e., the Committee's jurisdiction does not apply to individuals whose application for admission to a program at the University has not been accepted). Appeals shall be governed by the following procedures:

**a. Appealing of Final Grades**

The only grades that may be appealed are official final grades. Students should be aware that when a grade appeal is launched, the grade can be raised, lowered, or remain unchanged.

(i) Students who wish to appeal a grade must first consult the instructor concerned within one month of receiving the grade and, if unsatisfied, should then consult the ~~appropriate Chairperson and~~ **Associate Dean of the Faculty** in which the course is offered. If informal resolution is not possible and the student wishes to pursue formal appeal, ~~the Associate Dean student shall~~ **the problem is still unresolved, students may forward the student's appeal form and supporting documentation** to the Committee on Academic Appeals ~~through the Registrar.~~ **Academic Appeals** ~~This must be~~ **submitted to done in writing, through the Registrar,** within three months from the last day of the semester in which the course is taken. ~~This~~ **In their appeal documentation, the student** ~~statement must contain~~ provide specifics as to when the instructor, ~~the Chairperson,~~ and the **Associate** Dean were consulted, together with any other

information the student considers relevant. A form to launch an appeal is available from the Service Centre. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the appeal form is submitted within the deadlines stated in this regulation. Appeals that fall outside of the stated deadlines will not be accepted and/or considered.

(ii) It is the responsibility of students to provide the Committee with the completed appeal form, copies of any communication with the instructor related to the appeal, any returned, graded work directly related to the grade you are appealing, and any returned, graded work on which your overall course grades were based.

(iii) It is the responsibility of instructors to provide the Committee with all relevant available material on which the grade was based. A student's course documentation should include grade history and copies of any retained graded materials on which the student's grades were based (i.e. exercises, reports, papers, tests, examinations). This documentation shall be retained on-campus for a minimum of twelve months from the deadline of submission of grades.

(iv) The Committee will review the evidence presented and reconsider the grade. If necessary, the Committee may appoint a qualified examiner to review the grade. The examiners will submit their report and the evidence reviewed to the Committee for a final decision.

(v) On the appeal for a change of grade, the decision of the Committee shall be final.

## **b. Other Appeals**

On appeals other than those for a change of grade (Example: Submissions for LOP and transfer credit), the procedures shall be as follows:

(i) Normally within one month of the event or the decision being received by the student, the student shall first consult the instructor office concerned and, if unsatisfied, should then consult the Associate Dean of the appropriate Faculty. If informal resolution is not possible and the student wishes to pursue formal appeal, the ~~Associated Dean~~ student shall submit the student's appeal form and supporting documentation in writing and direct it to the Committee on Academic Appeals through the Registrar.

(ii) The Chairperson of the Committee on Academic Appeals shall forward a copy of the appeal to the Dean of the appropriate Faculty, and, if relevant, to the Chairperson of the Department and the instructor.

- (ii) On 5 May 1993, the Academic Senate of the University passed an Enabling Motion which reads in part "...that the Executive Committee of Senate [be] empowered to deal with all appeals concerning graduation which may be made prior to Convocation." Procedurally, these appeals are made to the Registrar.

**Key Discussion Points:**

- This revision came to us from the Associate Deans. After discussion it was decided that during the consultation process, the student should go from the instructor to the Associate Dean in the hopes that that may reduce the number of appeals submitted to the committee.
- A senator suggested that by removing the chair from this conversation there is a lost opportunity, especially where mentoring new faculty is concerned. Deep concern was expressed regarding Associate Deans having to submit paperwork and the increased workload related to this.
- It was suggested that reducing the number of official people students must consult will help students engage in this process. If necessary, the Associate Dean can engage the Chair in the appeal process. It may be unwelcome workload, but for students who are feeling intimidated, this may be a kindness. Members were advised that this was the spirit in which the ARC recommended this revision.
- Depending on the nature of the student's concern, speaking directly to the instructor or the chair has resulted in students getting a no at that point. Students have then disengaged from the process. This revision mitigates that issue.
- The revision to who submits the paperwork was thought to have the benefit of being able to eliminate many appeals. The Associate Dean is also the more appropriate person to advise the students on whether the grounds for a successful appeal exist.
- In the existing language of this regulation, it already stipulates that the student submits the appeal. We only need to remove the sentence that the Associate Dean submits the paperwork.
- **Action Item: Bell** – Make the revision above and in section b, change "instructor" to "office" in the following text: "first consult the ~~instructor~~ office concerned"
- No further discussion. The above revisions were accepted as a friendly amendment.

**Academic Regulation 18 - Academic Integrity**

**General Procedures**

**Academic Integrity Officers and Academic Discipline Officer**



Each Dean will appoint ~~an~~ (two – three) academic staff members to serve as the Academic Integrity Officer (AIO) and carry out the responsibilities of this Policy within each Faculty.

When a member of the University community (faculty, staff, or student) believes that an academic offence has been committed, they file an Incident Report within 15 working days from the time the incident has been identified. The Report must identify and provide evidence of the alleged offence. The Incident Report will be forwarded to the Registrar's Office. The Registrar's Office will record the submission, and submit it to the appropriate AIO of the Faculty in which the incident occurred (or alternative given workload/availability).

Reports must be on the form available from the Registrar's office at <https://smu.ca/academics/calendar/dishonesty-incident-report-form.html>. The AIO is responsible for processing the complaint as follows:

Upon receiving an Academic Integrity Incident report the AIO will:

- ~~• notify the Registrar who will advise the AIO as to whether this is the first incident of academic dishonesty for the student or students involved;~~
- collect additional evidence if necessary;
- where an academic dishonesty case involves 2 or more students, it is the responsibility of the AIO to schedule a meeting with all students involved.
- communicate with the student, preferably in person. Students should be encouraged to bring representation in the form of a friend, peer or student advocate. The student(s) should be advised that failure to meet with the AIO will result in the case being referred to the Academic Discipline Officer (ADO). The student(s) will also be advised that they cannot withdraw from the course in which there is an Academic Integrity charge against them.

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## **Procedures**

### **Initiation of the Appeal**

1. The student or instructor may initiate an appeal under this policy by delivering a Notice of Appeal to the Registrar. Appeals will not be accepted without proof of ID. Appeals that fall outside of the stated deadlines will not be accepted and/or considered.
2. The Registrar will forward the Notice of Appeal to:
  - a. Dean of the Faculty (or designate) from which the original complaint emanated;

- b. The Chair of the Department from which the original complaint emanated;
- c. The instructor who initiated the complaint;
- d. The Dean of the Faculty in which the student is enrolled at the date of Notice of Appeal; and
- e. The AIO, ADO or Senate Executive as appropriate.

The Notice of Appeal shall be delivered not later than ten (10) working days from the date the decision being appealed has been sent in writing to the student. Thereafter no appeal may be brought.

..... remains same to end

**Key Discussion Points:**

- The revisions are to highlight the process that is being followed at this time.
- Question: Is work being done to maintain consistency in decision making? Answer: Yes. The AIOs and ADO meet every month to discuss the types of situations that are being submitted and the decisions and rationale for those decisions. The Chair of Senate is involved in these meetings to provide that linkage. In addition, training workshops are being provided biannually.
- Question: Can instructors receive more information related to the rationale on the decisions instead of just receiving the decision letter? Answer: One of the big challenges is the administrative support for this function. We are taking this to heart and will be making improvements to this process as quickly as we are able that will allow for these revisions.
- There is a line in AR 11 that states “The student(s) will also be advised that they cannot withdraw from the course in which there is an Academic Integrity charge against them.” Question: What about incidents that happen earlier in the course, that are discovered at a later date but students have withdrawn before the submission is made. Can this process apply? Answer: We cannot stop students from withdrawing from a course. The penalty will still happen even if the student withdraws. That will be in their record as an F on the course.
- Question: If I accuse the student within the first two weeks in the course, and then they stay in the course because of an appeal – they can impact the ICE result. Is there any way to address that? Answer: We attempt to deal with these situations as quickly as possible. We need to make sure that students have the opportunity to learn from their mistakes. The vast majority of the time it is a mistake made by the student. Unfortunately because of the anonymity of the evaluation process there is nothing that can be done about the ICE situation. Research has shown that impact from such situations is minimal. In small course enrolments the instructor could supply an explanation for the impact.

- Question: Are there instructions to faculty on how to submit grades for students with a case pending a decision by an AIO?  
Answer: There is instruction on the SMU website on this. The grade can be adjusted from the Registrar's Office after the fact.
- No further discussion. Revision approved.

## **Academic Regulation 19. Advanced Standing**

### **a. University and Other Post-Secondary Institutions**

After an official transcript has been received by the Registrar, students transferring from other recognized universities or post-secondary institutions to an academic program at Saint Mary's may be given advanced standing credit hours, if appropriate.

~~Consultation with the Dean's Office is required to ensure transfer credits meet the requirements of the student's intended program.~~

To obtain a first baccalaureate degree or a diploma, the student must successfully complete a minimum of 50% of the credit hours required for their degree, diploma or certificate program at Saint Mary's. Among these credit hours, students must complete a minimum of 50% of the credit hours required for the major, honours or concentration at Saint Mary's. ~~Note that the equivalency of courses conducted at other institutions is at the discretion of the Dean of the Faculty in which the course is offered.~~

#### **Notes:**

**(a)** A request for advanced standing will not be considered after one year from the date of the student's first registration in an academic program at Saint Mary's.

**(b)** Advanced standing will be given only for courses with satisfactory grades as required by the relevant Saint Mary's program. All first and second year courses taken and passed at Canadian universities will be considered for credit. Deans have the discretion to stipulate a minimum grade which must be attained to receive credit for a specific Saint Mary's course, otherwise elective credit may be granted. Advanced standing for third and fourth year courses is at the discretion of the Dean.

**(c)** Credits completed more than ten (10) years prior to the students' admission or readmission to Saint Mary's will be assessed and considered on a case by case basis, in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty in which the student is enrolled.

~~Credit will not automatically be recognized for university courses completed more than ten (10) years prior to the students' return to University study. The Dean of the Faculty, in which the course is offered, may request to have university courses reassessed for credit. The Dean's assessment of the number of credit hours that students must complete to satisfy their academic program is final.~~

**(d)** A re-assessment of advanced standing credit will occur if a student changes Faculty.

~~(d)~~ **(e)** Normally, for courses completed at universities outside Canada, a minimum grade of C is required for advanced standing.

~~(e)~~ **(f)** Advanced standing for courses taken at community or private colleges is granted on a case by case basis, except where formal articulation agreements exist.  
..... remains the same to the end.

**Key Discussion Points:**

- This revision arose from discussions related to having similar processes within the various Faculties.
- No further discussion. Revision approved.

**GRADUATE ACADEMIC REGULATIONS**

**Academic Regulations 3 – Admission as a Visiting or Upgrading Student**

**Admission as a Visiting or Upgrading Student**

Students who are enrolled in a graduate degree program at another university, or who hold an undergraduate or graduate degree but are not currently enrolled in a graduate program, may be admitted to take courses within the FGSR as a Visiting or Upgrading student, respectively. Permission to take graduate courses as a Visiting or Upgrading student in the FGSR requires approval from the relevant Program Coordinator. Prospective students should **apply on-line at the following link: <https://smu.ca/future-students/cs-apply-online.html>**. ~~submit a completed “Application Form for Visiting, Upgrading and Reactivation Students” available on the FGSR website (<http://fgsr.smu.ca/>). If Visiting Students wish to receive credit for a course taken at Saint Mary’s towards their degree at their home institution, they should have a “Letter of Permission” from their home University.~~

**Key Discussion Points:**

- This revision is related to the availability of the new form.
- No further discussion. Revision approved.

**Academic Regulation 17 - Thesis Handling - PhD Dissertations and Master’s Theses**

17. Thesis Handling - PhD Dissertations and Master’s Theses  
a. The thesis/dissertation must be submitted using the formatting requirements found in the “Format Procedures” sheet, available **online at the University Archives web site**, ~~at the Library, at Graduate Studies, and online at the University Archives web site~~. The formatting requirements include but are not limited to:

- i. Typescript: Double spaced

ii. Margins: 1” margins on all sides. All text, including page numbers, images, and charts must be within these margins. ~~hand margin 4cm (1 ½”); all other margins 2.5 cm (1”). All text, including page numbers, images, and charts must be within these margins.~~

iii. Abstract (may be single spaced) must be a maximum of 350 words for doctoral theses, and maximum 150 words for Masters’ theses. Should bear the title Abstract and include the name of the author, the title of the thesis/dissertation, and the date of publication.

iv. The title page must include the names of all advisors/examiners but cannot contain any original signatures. Students must include a separate Signature Page submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research: A page designed to contain the signature of all members of the Examining Committee, including any external examiners, if applicable. Only one paper copy of the Signature Page should be submitted. It will not be bound in any copies of the thesis.

v. The unbound thesis must be printed on good quality paper, measuring 8 ½” x 11” (21.5 cm x 29 cm)

b. The student must meet any other requirements of the Program concerned.

c. Prepare one electronic PDF version of the thesis using the requirements found in the Format Procedures sheet. This version will be submitted as an email attachment, along with all required forms and attachments, to the Graduate Studies Office. The attachments include (see the Format Procedures sheet for details) ~~Print off one unbound paper copies of the thesis and, along with all required forms and attachments, submit them in person to the Graduate Studies Office. The attachments include (see the Format Procedures sheet for details):~~

i. The Thesis or Dissertation Information Sheet, provided online at the University Archives; or include the required information in your cover email, ~~by the Library or online at the University Archives.~~

ii. One signed signature page (see above).

iii. The ~~National Library~~ “Non-Exclusive License to Reproduce” Theses form. This grants permission for the publishing, microfilming or digitization of the thesis by the University, ~~as part of the Theses Canada Portal,~~ including distribution or sale of microfilm or digital reproductions.

iv. Electronic copy of the certificate of approval from the Research Ethics Board, if one was obtained for the theses dissertation.

v. Electronic copies of copyright permission forms, if required.

d. The student must prepare an electronic copy of their thesis/dissertation, in PDF format (see the “Format Procedures” sheet for more information). Prepare one electronic version of the thesis using the requirements found in the Format and Binding Procedures sheet. This version will be submitted as an email attachment sent to fgsr@smu.ca.

e. d. Once submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, the one paper PDF copy and one electronic copy of the thesis or dissertation will be forwarded to the University Archives, where it is checked that it meets all required standards, including formatting requirements, required forms, etc. An unbound copy will remain in the University Archives, and the electronic copy The theses will be made available in the University’s Institutional Repository, where it will may eventually be harvested by the National Library Thesis program. Copies of the student’s Signature Page, as well as any REB forms or copyright letters that contain original signatures will be kept on file at the University and Archives Canada Thesis program.

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

- o No discussion. Revision approved.

### **Academic Regulation 18 – Major Research Project (MRP) Handling**

#### 18. Major Research Project (MRP) Handling

- a. The Major Research Project (MRP) must be submitted using the formatting requirements found in the Format Procedures sheet, available at the Library, at Graduate Studies, and online at the University Archives web site. The Library formatting requirements include but are not limited to:
  - i. Typescript: Double spaced
  - ii. Margins: 1” margins on all sides. All text, including page numbers, images, and charts must be within these margins. Left hand margin 4cm (1 ½”); all other margins 2.5 cm (1”).
  - iii. Abstract (may be single spaced) must be a maximum of 300 words. Should bear the title Abstract and include the name of the author, the title of the MRP, and the date of publication.
  - iv. The title page must include the names of all advisors/examiners but cannot contain any original signatures.
- b. The student must meet any other requirements of the Program concerned.
- c. If a student wishes to have their MRP available on the University’s Institutional Repository, they must prepare an electronic copy of their MRP, in PDF format (see the “Format Procedures” sheet for more information) and submit it as an email attachment sent to theses@smu.ca .
- d. If submitting an MRP for the University’s Institutional Repository, the following forms must be submitted to the Saint Mary’s University Archives as electronic attachments (see the Format and Binding Procedures sheet for details):

- i. Signature page.
  - ii. **Electronic copy of the** certificate of approval from the Research Ethics Board, if one was obtained for the MRP.
  - iii. **Electronic copy of the** copyright permission forms, if required.
- e. Once the forms and electronic copy of the MRP are submitted to the Saint Mary's University Archives, it is checked to ensure it meets all required standards, including formatting requirements, required forms, etc. The electronic copy will be made available in the University's Institutional Repository. ~~Copies of the student's REB forms or copyright letters that contain original signatures will be kept on file at the University Archives.~~
- ~~f. The University does not arrange for the binding of personal copies of MRPs. A list of outside vendors who provide this service can be found on the University Archives web site.~~

**Key Discussion Points:**

- o No discussion. Revision approved.

**Academic Regulation 37 Students' Academic Records and Transcripts (e)**

- e. While the University takes every reasonable precaution to ensure the confidentiality of student records, students should be aware that the University is connected to a number of external electronic systems, and a number of academic and administrative offices have access, at least on a display basis, to the Student Information System (**Banner**). ~~Copies of the "Policy Regarding the Release of Information about Students", as approved by Senate in April 1994, are available from the Registrar. Effective 23 November 2000, all post-secondary institutions in Nova Scotia are also governed by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation (FOI POP).~~

**Key Discussion Points:**

- o No discussion. Revision approved.

Moved by Smith on behalf of the Academic Regulations Committee and seconded, **"that Senate approves the revisions to Academic Regulations as follows: Undergraduate Academic Regulations #s 8, 11, 18, 19, and Graduate Academic Regulations 3, 7, 17, 18 and 37 (e) as revised above."** Motion carried.

- c) Curriculum Committee,
  - 1. SCC Curriculum Notice of Motion – *Appendix 11*, Faculty of Arts Curriculum Report – *Appendix 12*, Faculty of Science Curriculum Report, *Appendix 13*, and Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research Curriculum Report –*Appendix 14*.

**Key Discussion Points:**

- Question: In courses where the prerequisite is "permission of instructor", what is the criteria for the student to be allowed to take that course? Answer: As an example, the public history course has a community placement component. The instructor would need to assess the student's preparedness for this

placement. In other courses they may be different assessments required that are related to background, experience and/or knowledge.

- Question: Has there been conversation related to the potential for this to be a barrier to the student's consideration for taking these courses? Answer: Acknowledged. The review process could be intimidating, but since these are generally upper-level courses, that is mitigated to some degree.
- On page 5 of the Faculty of Science Curriculum report to Senate in the area of the Environmental Science preamble. The word business has been omitted before "social sciences".... **Action Item: Killam** will investigate. This was confirmed and corrected immediately after the Senate meeting (see text below).  
<<The Department of Environmental Science offers a rigorous interdisciplinary program based on core sciences and includes courses in **business**, social sciences and the humanities. This program can lead to a Bachelor of Science degree.>>
- Question: ACST 6301 Community Leadership in Atlantic Canada [HIST 6301] has an addition of 3 hours of lab but does not have increased credit hours. Is this correct? Answer: While a 3-hour lab may be unique within the ACST discipline, it is not unique for a 3 credit hour course to have the class 3 hrs and lab 3 hrs designation. **Action Item: Killam** will investigate and confirm.
- Question: Will the academic calendar still be posted in pdf format? Answer: Each year when the Academic Calendar is archived, it will be a pdf file.
- Question: Is it premature to have an online Academic Calendar? A Senator advised that the online Academic Calendar has a broad problem. Students can link from the calendar through to the course descriptions, but the course titles that are shown are truncated and in some cases do not resemble the actual title. In addition, there are no service courses in any department listed in the on-line calendar. Many departments have courses that are archived and students cannot access the course descriptions for those courses. Answer: It may be an issue with the path that is being taken to access the information. The full information is available in courses listing A-Z. The problem of abbreviating titles is an issue. A solution has been identified for this issue and it will be resolved in three to four weeks.
- Question: CRIM 4542 Serial Murder has a note below the course description as follows: "Note: Students must be able to handle very violent images and crime scene pictures." Is this an appropriate statement to have in a calendar? Answer: A suggestion was to remove the note and incorporate the statement into the course description: <<**Students explore the psychology and pathology of serial murder. Students examine the different behavioral and personality traits of serial killers, utilizing the basic skills of behavioral profiling. The class takes an in-depth**



look at several different serial killers. Course content includes violent images and crime scene photos.>>

- Question: Within the Arts submission for the CRIM Major Program, there is a statement that directs students to the department website for a list of eligible courses. Do we really want to do this? Are we keeping track of courses that are acceptable? Answer: With the implementation of Courseleaf program, this information will be included in the calendar.  
**Action Item: Bell** to remove the following statement from page 42 of the Arts Curriculum report within the CRIM Major Program – <<Please see the Department website for a list of eligible courses>>.

Moved by Killam and seconded, “**that Senate approves the revisions to the 2021-2022 Academic Calendar as submitted Faculty of Arts Curriculum Report - Appendix I2, Faculty of Science Curriculum Report - Appendix I3, and Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research Curriculum Report –Appendix I4 with revisions as noted above.**” Motion carried.

2. Notice of Motion, Policy on Course Outlines – Appendix J1, and 8-1012 Senate Policy on Course Outlines – Appendix J2

**Key Discussion Points:**

- Killam advised that the policy has been reviewed and additions were made related to accessibility, copyright, student supports, etc.
- Question: Are we looking at the final version? It is not clear what components faculty should include in their course outlines.  
Answer: The document shows mark-up text to indicate revisions. Hyperlinks were also inserted to take readers directly to the appropriate academic regulations. These hyperlinks show as mark-up text.
- The Faculty of Arts had an incident where a syllabus had been vetted by the Dean’s Office but it had assessment information imbedded in other elements within the syllabus. This was missed during the review and it caused issues. It has been suggested that we could include a critical date framework at the beginning of every course syllabus. That information would facilitate the assessment in the Dean’s Office. This information could include office hours information.
- Senators were advised that students often experience difficulty because they do not read the syllabus. This problem has been exacerbated over time because syllabi have been getting longer and longer. We need to streamline that information and think more carefully about the flow of information.

- Without diminishing the effort put into revising this policy, could we defer this item to January so that a revised/finalized draft of this policy could be available for Senate to review? In addition, perhaps there could be a suggested "template" for how faculty might incorporate all this information?
- Members were advised that each individual Faculty has their own specific template. The faculty representatives on this committee submitted those during consideration of this policy. The consensus was not to create a generic template.
- Question: Are there other ways to communicate some of these points to faculty before the start of winter term? Answer: Senators were advised that some elements have already been communicated in this regard.
- **Action Item: VPAR** will consider how to communicate this information to faculty before the beginning of the next term.

21054

**NEW BUSINESS FROM**

- a. Floor (not involving notice of motion)
  1. 2020 Report on Positive Action to Improve the Employment of Women, Aboriginal Peoples, Visible minorities, and People with Disabilities at Saint Mary's University, **Appendix K**
    - In consideration of time restrictions, the above item was deferred to January 2021.
- b. Floor (involving notice of motion)
  1. Formal request from SMUSA for Senate to consider implementing the Pass/No Credit option for the fall term as well as the rest of the academic year, **Appendix L and M**

**Key Discussion Points:**

    - SMUSA was commended for their thoughtful approach to this submission. Members were advised that SMUSA undertook significant consultations prior to preparing this report.
    - This P/NC option was provided in the winter semester due to the impact of transition to virtual course delivery.
    - When making decisions related to the (202110) fall term, students did not fully understand the implications of going into a virtual fall semester.
    - The SMUSA report identifies student concerns raised during the fall term. These issues have also been occurring at other universities across Canada.
    - Significant challenges related to increased workload, along with other issues, resulted in a negative impact to their ability to perform at their best. Underperformance in one semester can have significant and long-lasting effects on students' academic careers in addition to other negative impacts.
    - A P/NC option for the 2020-2021 academic year would provide additional flexibility for students.

- A member supported the concept of allowing students to take a specific number of courses within a specific program on a P/NC basis. This may also facilitate students making decisions to take courses that they might not otherwise take. This same member was not in favour of implementing the P/NC grade option for the Fall/Winter terms. Concern was expressed that by allowing such students to persist in their programs, when they would normally be placed on probation or even dismissed, we are placing them at risk of failure and compromising the quality and reputation of the programs and the university. In addition, if we are not appropriately assessing the competence and/or suitability of students to continue at university, we would be populating upper year courses with students who are not properly prepared to take those courses.
- Members were advised that situations also exist where shadow grade lists and assessments are being kept. Decisions related to the suitability of student access to other courses are being made based on those lists.
- Members were advised that at the U of T (at least in Arts and Science Faculty) the P/NC option is for breadth courses only, not core courses. It must be chosen in advance (like Audit), and there is a maximum number of credit hours allowed.
- Senators were advised that in (2020) winter term there were 700 requests for P/NC grade. In the Registrar's Office, these requests are processed manually and constitute a huge workload.
- Concern was expressed related to students being fully informed of the appropriate information needed to make informed decisions about utilizing the P/NC grade option. If over implemented, students will be challenged to be successful. Students must see advisors and/or Associate Deans when making these decisions.
- Feedback on the form proposed in the SMUSA submission established that a checklist on a form is not going to provide students with the direction needed. The Registrar's Office already has a form that is used for submitting these requests. That form can be adjusted if needed.
- It was noted that advisors for professional programs also need to be involved in these decisions.
- Senators were advised that students have actively pursued advising to understand the impact to their degree programs and future path. Students remain challenged in many ways that are exceptional, and in this environment those challenges can still be considered an extenuating circumstance.
- Other universities have placed caps on the number of P/NC grades allowed in degree programs and also the number

allowed in any one academic year. This might be an acceptable approach to the situation.

- Senators were advised that students do not want to over utilize this option. Students are only looking for the flexibility to address that potential one course during their term where the demands were more than they were prepared for. This would help to mitigate the stress.
- Question: How many credit hours would SMU be prepared to allow when considering a grade of P/NC? Suggestion: The U of Ottawa allows one course.

Moved by Grek-Martin and seconded, **“that Senate approve a 15 minute extension to conclude discussion on this agenda item.” Motion carried.**

- Senators were advised that in Science advising, the trend has been for students to want an absolute guarantee that a pass option would not impact their future graduate school admission. When this could not be provided, at least half of the students walked away from this option.
- Even if a graduate program states they will not penalize a student with a P or an N/C on their transcripts, the reality is that, if there are admission limits, by default the student with an actual grade on their transcript may be viewed as a more appropriate candidate. At SMU, transcripts with P may meet the minimum eligibility criteria, but programs all assess independently and how P's will be viewed depends on individual programs both here and around the country. There is no way for SMU to know how others are going to assess the P/NC grade.
- Members were reminded that the AE (Aegrotat standing) grade exists to address extraordinary situations. It allows for a pass decision to be made based on medical or compassionate considerations.
- In the longer term a standing policy about P/NC in the calendar may be desirable. A long-term policy *\*could\** take into account retroactive permissions for P/NC for this term if it were deemed a reasonable step.
- A lot of institutions will not be doing this for the 202110 term. The same perspective will not exist for this term (compared to winter 2020) concerning reviews that will be done for future admission to graduate study programs.
- Question: Can the VPAR develop a communication to students that indicates that university is considering a workable approach to this issue?
- A member expressed concern with this idea, noting that such a communication might give a false expectation of a P/NC

option and impact how students approach their remaining exams and course work.

- Senators were advised that this decision does not have to be made quickly. It could be made in the next term. **Action Item:** **VPAR** will consider how to articulate this in an email to students to be circulated before then end of the current term.
- Question: Could Senate secure more input from faculty members on this issue? Answer: Feedback from all parties is important. As administrators, when an administrator or a Dean raises an issue in Senate, they will already have consulted with and listened to their faculty in this regard. Deans are also talking with the accrediting bodies in this regard. When a Dean raises a point at Senate it is based on feedback from students, faculty and external bodies related to the item under discussion.
- **Action Item: This submission is referred to the Academic Regulations Committee** for further discussion related to a long-term solution.

21055

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 4:50 P.M.

Barb Bell,  
Secretary of Senate