

**SENATE MEETING MINUTES
October 15, 2021**

The 629th meeting of the Senate of Saint Mary's University was held on Friday, October 15, 2021, at 2:00 PM. Dr Takseva Chairperson, presided. This was a hybrid meeting held in the CLARI meeting room, Atrium 340 and virtually via zoom.

PRESENT: Dr Summerby-Murray, Dr Bhabra, Dr Francis, Dr Ingraham, Dr Sarty, Dr Austin, Dr Bannerjee, Dr Brosseau, Dr Fan, Dr Grandy, Dr Grek-Martin, Dr O'Brien, Dr Panasian, Dr Sanderson, Dr Stinson, Dr Takseva, Dr Zhyznomirska, Ms van den Hoogen, Mr Southwell, Ms Mihika, Mr Sydney, Mr Tumusiime, Dr Smith, Mr Kay, Ms Milton, and Ms Bell, Secretary to the Office of Senate.

REGRETS: Dr Butler, Dr Crocker, Dr Higgins, Dr VanderPlaat, Mr Brophy, Ms Cadeau

The meeting was called to order at 2:07 pm with the territorial acknowledgement.

22020 REPORT OF AGENDA COMMITTEE

The Agenda Committee report was accepted. The VPAR was unable to attend. The President will respond to any general questions related to the VPAR role.

22021 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Posted as **Appendix A** for this meeting (10 min).

Discovery and Innovation in a Learning-centred environment

- SMU maintained the #4 position in the primarily undergraduate category of the annual Maclean's ranking, building on strong parameters of financial awards per student, research success of faculty and investments in library acquisitions. We are the only Nova Scotia university (in any category) to have maintained our ranking. There is a low score in the Maclean's rankings for student response which is puzzling since our own surveys indicate otherwise.
- The Fall Convocation at the end of September involved three ceremonies. These were the first in-person ceremonies since January 2020. Chancellor Durland and the President hosted a 'coffee and research meeting' with doctoral candidates, creating an in-person event from an initiative that was piloted online last year
- Thank you to Dr. Adam Sarty and the team in the Faculty of Graduate Studies for hosting the annual 'research celebration'. This year SMU has the largest amount of external research funding for many years and potentially in our history.
- Saint Mary's celebrated World Teacher Day by unveiling a display panel in the Atrium featuring award-winning teachers, including recipients of the Father Stewart, AAU, and 3M National Teaching Fellow awards. Thank you to the Studio for this initiative.

Intercultural Learning

- The President hosted a meeting of the President's Advisory Council on Indigenous Affairs, focusing on plans for the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, questions of Indigenous identity, a process for naming spaces on campus, and the community drum project in association with SMUSA.

- The National Day of Truth and Reconciliation (September 30th) involved the raising of the 'Every Child Matters' flag, a welcoming event in Loyola, and a campus walk to reflect on the path of reconciliation. Thank you to members of faculty, SMUSA, and Student Affairs and Services for your leadership.

Institutional Sustainability

- Our budget forecast for this financial year identifies a strong performance in the Fall term, driven primarily by increases in first year domestic enrolments. These are offset by much lower enrolments from international students, with our proportion of international students now standing at 26% for this term. Work continues with the federal government on visa processing times and a requested extension of the post-graduate work permit beyond 31 December 2021 – this latter is often a key factor in students choosing Canada and Saint Mary's for their studies. Despite positive domestic enrolment forecasts for the Winter term, we must remain very conscious of our budget situation.
- Senators will note the progress being made on the construction project that will link the Sobey Building with Loyola and extend through Loyola to create a further learning commons. A date is being finalized for a public launch of this project. Details will be made available to Senators and the university community as soon as possible. The completion date is projected as late summer 2024.
- Government relations continue to be a central focus of the President's work, with considerable progress being made at the provincial level. There have been meetings with the new Minister of Advanced Education, Brian Wong, and a meeting is scheduled with the Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration, Minister Balsler. We continue to advance our agenda and funding needs with the new government. Similarly, although the new federal cabinet will not be announced until October 26th, we are in conversation with officials, especially with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. Universities Canada brought four university presidents together for a conversation with the Secretary of the Treasury Board last week and CBIE continues to provide a further conduit for our interests in international education. Related, the President meets this week with the new president and CEO of EduNova to outline our priorities for the support of international recruitment and retention to Nova Scotia and Saint Mary's.

22022

VICE-PRESIDENT ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH REPORT

Posted as **Appendix B1** for this meeting (10 min).

Requested updates: 1) Review, Dept of Education, 2) Status – position of Director, Academic Learning Services, 3) Update on the Writing Centre, 4) Update on the Studio, 5) Status – Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Key Discussion Points:

- Report deferred due to the absence of Dr Butler. The President reported on the following:
 - Status – Accessibility Advisory Committee - The EMG discussed this yesterday and is reviewing the legislation.
 - Elements of enrolment were shared yesterday at the Faculty and Staff Update meeting. We are in a strong position with domestic enrolments, but it is still challenging in terms of international student enrolment. We are experiencing a 60% online registration rate which is why the population on campus is still light.
 - Today is the deadline for proof of vaccination. We are getting close to 100%.
 - Senators were advised that non-compliant individuals were contacted on Tuesday and there has been significant response since then. SMUSA has been an incredible partner in the student initiative during the last few weeks.
 - There have been less than 10 requests for exemptions.

22023

SMUSA PRESIDENT'S REPORT (Academic focus)

Posted as **Appendix C** for this meeting (5 min).

Key Discussion Points:

Advocacy

- Micro-credentialing framework, Students Nova Scotia (SNS) & Advocacy Week - SNS is designing a policy around how we will persuade the government to implement this policy while consulting both industry and students in the process. We are also planning our asks for advocacy week, where we will be meeting with all provincial level politicians.
- Women in Politics – In partnership with SNS, SMUSA plans to host an event at SMU.

Internal Projects and Events

- Consent week – SMUSA partnered with student services to host various workshops and initiatives for students.
- Student success week – SMUSA hosted a workshop to provide students with tips and guidance related to transitioning from high school to university, academic success, understanding their degree, and how to get involved on campus.
- Walk in solidarity – reconciliation and community drum – SMUSA participated in the ceremony and walk around campus reflecting on the history of our indigenous community and acknowledging the calls to action to ally with the indigenous community. SMUSA has purchased a community drum which will serve to enhance future indigenous events on campus.
- Barbershop talk - On October 4th, SMUSA and the Counselling centre partnered to host a barbershop talk. Moderated by the Nova Scotia Brotherhood, the event provided an opportunity for the men in our community to talk about the mental challenges stemming from racism.
- Drag Show – In support of the LGBTQ community, on October 12th SMUSA hosted a drag event in the Gorsebrook Pub. This was a concert event. It was well attended.
- October 15 vaccine status deadline - There are still students who have only received one dose of the vaccine, and there are many international students who have been fully vaccinated but have yet to obtain their actual records from either their home country or even from Nova Scotia Health because of all the delays and the backlog in their system. SMUSA asked that SMU consider individual situations prior to taking any action.
- Wellness week – SMUSA is hosting wellness week Nov 22-26.
- Hiring – SMUSA is hiring a Chief Returning Officer (CRO)/Deputy Returning Officer (DRO), a Trivia night host and street team members.

22024

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

Key Discussion Points:

- SMUSA was applauded for their continued work on creating a sense of community within the SMU student body in the first part of the fall term.

22025

ESTABLISHING A UNIVERSITY SECRETARIAT

Structure and Outline, **Appendix D**

Key Discussion Points:

- This item is being brought before the Senate for information and discussion purposes. The creation of a secretariat structure is meant to support bicameral governance at SMU.

- We are proposing to create a University Secretariat. The Secretariate would be headed up by University Secretary Claire Milton. Barb Bell, Secretary of Senate would become the Assistant University Secretary, and Marie Harding will be the administrative support for both Senate and the Board.
- The proposed structure is like structures at other universities in Canada and most appropriate for SMU.
- The University Librarian noted that the library welcomes the transition of the oversight of privacy to the new secretariat structure. This responsibility is primarily related to freedom of information requests but also includes the privacy of confidential records.
- Question: What is the timeline for the hiring of a privacy officer? Answer: Consultation with the University Librarian related to this position will take place asap, and the position will be posted quickly after that.
- Question: Do copywrite concerns remain with the library? Answer: Yes.
- Question: Does this have impact on the Senate Committees? Answer: Yes, there will be some impact. The Bylaws Committee is reviewing the structure and the corresponding appropriateness of the committee structure.
- Question: What is the function of the Academic Integrity Coordinator? Answer: The proposed role will facilitate that whole process. They will act as a resource person to the process. In addition, the support person should never be a committee member because it is an administrative support position.
- Question: Will our university policies on campus become a responsibility of this structure? Answer: The University Secretary already has that oversight. The secretariat will be responsible to ensure that all policies are appropriate to the purpose and structure and that they are reviewed on a regular cycle. This work is already well underway. All recent policies include a 'review by' date in the template. Existing policies will be updated as they come up for revision.
- Question: At the top of page two it states, "Senate is responsible for the educational policy of the University", but it goes beyond that statement immediately afterward. What is intended here? Answer: This quotation is taken directly from Article 5(1), and Article 2(1) and (2)(a) of the University Bylaws. The use of the phrase "education policy" is as intended in the Saint Mary's University Act. It is being used very much as an umbrella phrase. Senate will continue to be responsible for everything it was in the past.
- There is no language in this document that is contradictory to the Act.
- Question: On page two it states, "Maintaining an independent role within the governance system (meaning independent of an administrative unit under the leadership of a Vice President)," How will this function? Answer: The reporting for the University Secretary is to the President but the reporting for the Secretariat would be done in a very different way. We are creating a unit that can apply some sense of objectivity.
- Question: In the current structure, the Secretary of Senate is elected annually which is an anomaly. Will this be removed from the Bylaws? Answer: Yes, that role will be a full-time position reporting to the University Secretary. Professionalizing the role of the Secretary of Senate is crucial. The Bylaws Committee will be reviewing this situation.
- The stakeholders were thanked for their participation in the process that produced this proposal.
- The consensus was that Senate members supported the proposal based on the discussion recorded herein.

22026

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the meeting of September 17, 2021, were *circulated* as **Appendix E**.

In the absence of any objection, the minutes of the meeting of September 17, 2021, were approved.

22027

.01

BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS AGENDAS

MEMBERSHIP ON SENATE COMMITTEES FOR 2021-2022

Section A of the Membership list, **Appendix E1**

SECTION A

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY APPEAL BOARD

Mr Ali Gohari (Graduate Student rep appointed by SA to April 2022 – grad appeals only)

ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Dr. Danielle Tokarz (CHEM/Science)

LEARNING AND TEACHING

Dr Laura Stiles-Clarke (one part-time faculty member nominated by Committee)

LIBRARY

Mr Ali Gohari (Graduate Student rep appointed by SA to April 2022)

.02

Section B of the Membership list (Ad-Hoc, Joint and Presidential Committees) –

Appendix F2

.0201 BYLAWS

- **Dr Karen Grandy** (COMM/Bus) (an elected member of Senate)
- **Dr Jason Grek-Martin** (GEOG/Arts) Parliamentarian (elected annually by Senate) (Chair)

PRESIDENTIAL COMMITTEES

.0210 BUDGET ADVISORY COMMITTEE (2 members of the faculty appointed annually by Senate)

- **Dr. Rahman Khokhar** (FIN/Bus) (alternate)
- **Dr Augie Westhaver** (SOCl/Arts) (alternate)

Moved as an omnibus motion by Grandy and seconded, **“that the nominees for Section A & B of the Membership on Senate Committees 2020-2021 (as shown above), are approved.”** Motion carried.

.03

ELECTION OF PARLIAMENTARIAN

Dr Grek-Martin has served on the Senate Bylaws Committee as an elected faculty member of Senate who shall chair for several years. There is nothing in the Senate Bylaws that stipulates the Parliamentarian cannot be chair of the Bylaws Committee. Dr Grek-Martin has volunteered to serve as Parliamentarian while continuing to chair the Bylaws Committee.

Moved by Grandy and seconded, **“that Dr Jason Grek-Martin be elected for a one-year term as Parliamentarian, commencing immediately.”** Motion carried.

.04

TEAM TEACHING

Forward from April & June 2021 Senate meetings. (What it means and ways we could do team teaching going forward in both an on-campus and remote teaching environment. – Dr Zhyznomirska.

Key Discussion Points:

- The idea was to raise this item in the fall. It arose from the June Senate meeting where Dr Butler stated it would be addressed again in the fall. We were thinking of developing a policy in this regard.
- Deferred to the November Senate meeting. **Action Item: Bell** to add this to November Agenda.

.05 APC - Recommendation 12 from the Biology Program Review, **Appendix G1** – APC Notice of Motion, **Appendix G2** – BIOL Comparison Summary.

Key Discussion Points:

- When APC brought forward the original documentation for this review in the last academic year, the program had concerns regarding the response to Recommendation 12. Senate sent the summary back to APC for a review. APC revisited it and the program agrees with the revised response to Recommendation 12.
- The revised response from APC to Recommendation 12 is as follows:
 - “APC concurs with the Dean’s response and would like to emphasize that for current students as well as prospective students, the department consider the options provided by the external reviewers in Appendix A of the final ERC report”.

Moved by Grek Martin and seconded, **“that Senate supports the revised APC response to recommendation 12 as articulated above.” Motion carried.**

Moved by Francis and seconded, **“that the BIOL Program submit an Action Plan, that is based on the preceding recommendations, to the Academic Planning Committee in time for the January 2022 meeting of the APC”.** Motion carried.

It was suggested that it is very difficult to address the changes related to an action plan within eight months. **Action Item: Bell** to send this to APC for additional review. It was suggested to call this an initial report instead of a one-year report.

Moved by Francis and seconded, **“that in October 2022, the BIOL Program submit a one-year report to the Academic Planning Committee on the progress made on the Action Plan according to Section 5 of the Senate Policy on the Review of Programs at Saint Mary’s University”.** Motion carried.

Moved by Francis and seconded, **“that in October 2024, the BIOL Program submit a three-year report to the Academic Planning Committee on the progress made on the Action Plan according to Section 5 of the Senate Policy on the Review of Programs at Saint Mary’s University”.** Motion carried.

22028 **REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

.01 Academic Planning Committee (Dr Sarty)

a) 8-1015 Senate Policy on the Review of programs at Saint Mary’s University, **Appendix H1** – APC Notice of Motion, **Appendix H2** – Senate Policy

Key Discussion Points:

- The revisions are summarized in the version history. The only question is the timing and language around the action plan and one-year report.
- Question: If we do not have a manager of program review what happens? Answer: There would be someone acting in that role.
- If the report that is expected at the 12-month milestone from the conclusion of the review process is called an interim report, the language and timing is probably fine. However, if it is called a one-year report and it is based on the approval of the action plan, then the timing is not appropriate.

Moved by Grandy and seconded, **“that Senate refers this document back to APC to address the timing of the Action Plan and One-Year Report.” Motion carried.**

b) MPHEC Program Modification Proposal, Department for the Study of Religion, *Appendix H1* – Memo, *Appendix H2* - Proposal

Key Discussion Points:

- There are no changes to the program credentials. This is a name change only with expected future formative content changes to adapt to the evolving trends of the discipline over time. The program name is changing from “Religious Studies” to “Religion Program” and will be offered as the Undergraduate (BA) and Graduate (MA) in Religion.

Moved by Sarty and seconded, **“that Senate approved the Modification Proposal to change the name of the Religious Studies Program is approved for submission to MPHEC.” Motion carried.**

c) PhD Management Program Review documentation, *Appendix J1*- APC Notice of Motion, *Appendix J2* – Recommendation-Comparison summary, *Appendix K* – Self Study Report, *Appendix L* - Self Study appendices (L1-L6), *Appendix M* – Dean’s Response to Self Study, *Appendix N* - External Program Review Committee’s (PRC) Final Report, *Appendix O* - Program Response to ERC Report, *Appendix P* – Dean’s Response to ERC Report / Prog Response

Key Discussion Points:

- Recommendation 1: APC acknowledges the identified resource concerns and with the responses of the Program and the Deans. APC looks forward to the outcome of further discussions.
- Recommendation 2: APC concurs with the responses of the program and the Deans.
- Recommendation 3 - APC concurs with the responses of the program and the Deans.
- Recommendation 4 - APC concurs with the responses of the program and the Deans.
- Recommendation 5 - APC concurs with the responses of the program and the Deans.
- Recommendation 6 - APC concurs with the responses of the program and the Deans.

Moved by Sarty and seconded, **“that Senate supports the APC responses to recommendations arising from the PhD Management program review.” Motion carried.**

An omnibus motion was moved by Sarty and seconded for the following three motions: **“that the PhD Management Program submit an Action Plan, that is based on the preceding recommendations, to the Academic Planning Committee in time for the January 2022 meeting of the APC”.** Motion carried.

“that in October 2022, the PhD Management Program submit a one-year report to the Academic Planning Committee on the progress made on the Action Plan according to Section 5 of the Senate Policy on the Review of Programs at Saint Mary’s University”. Motion carried.

“that in October 2024, the PhD Management Program submit a three-year report to the Academic Planning Committee on the progress made on the Action Plan according to Section 5 of the Senate Policy on the Review of Programs at Saint Mary’s University”.

Motions carried.

- d) CHEM One-year report, **Appendix Q1** APC Memo, **Appendix Q2** – 1-Yr Report
Key Discussion Points:
- APC received this report positively

Consensus was that the CHEM one-year follow-up report was accepted as meeting the requirements of Section 5 of the Senate Policy on the Review of Undergraduate Programs at Saint Mary’s.’

- e) CISO One-year report, **Appendix R1** APC Memo, **Appendix R2** – 1-Yr Report
Key Discussion Points:
- APC received this report positively.

Consensus was that the CISO one-year follow-up report was accepted as meeting the requirements of Section 5 of the Senate Policy on the Review of Undergraduate Programs at Saint Mary’s.’

.02 Academic Regulations Committee (Dr Steve Smith)

- a) Revisions to 8-1016 Senate Policy on Final Exams, ARC Memo -**Appendix S1**, and Policy – **Appendix S2**.

Key Discussion Points:

- The current policy only covered in-person exams and there was no policy for remote exams. These revisions provide guidance in that regard.
- This policy was submitted at the last Senate meeting and feedback was incorporated in the current document.
- The expectation was to submit a marked-up version using track changes in MS Word to indicate where the document was revised.
- A member requested that the revision template for changes to regulations, academic calendar, etc., be used in the future.
- If we were to defer this item to November it would be difficult to get this out to students/faculty in time to be implemented for the fall term final exams.
- Question: If we did not approve this in October, what would happen in timing with the December exams? Answer: There would be significant challenges in relation to the scheduled fall examination period.
- The revisions that were requested by faculty during the last Senate meeting have been included. A clean version can be recirculated by Monday.
- One approach would be to move that Senate supports the policy revision in principle pending the submission of a clean copy.
- There is a practice currently in place for students writing in the Fred Smithers Centre.
- Question: There are a couple of points in the text that are hard to understand. Issues with the formatting on the footers was also noted. Some text that shows as struck out should not be. Answer: These will be addressed in the clean copy.
- Consensus was that members would review and participate in an electronic vote on this item early next week.

Moved by Smith on behalf of the Academic Regulations Committee, and seconded, **“that the revisions to Senate Policy 8-1016 are approved as submitted in Appendix S2 with the provision that an acceptable clean copy will be circulated on Monday for Senator’s review.” Motion withdrawn.**

Moved by Grandy and seconded, **“to refer this item back to ARC for revisions to be brought forward in November in a clean copy.” Motion defeated.**

Moved by Francis and seconded, **“that Senate refers this document back to the Academic Regulations Committee for revision. A clean document to be circulated for an electronic motion at the earliest possible time.” Motion carried.**

.03 Accessibility Committee

a) Revisions – 8-1021 Senate Policy on Academic Accommodations for Students, **Appendix T.**

Key Discussion Points:

- Concern was expressed that the Fred Smithers Centre has been designated as the unit to implement this policy. The legislation covers everything (including individual focused facility modifications), and that moves well beyond the ability and resources within the Fred Smithers Centre.
- Members were advised that the committee discussed this point at length and was concerned that a comprehensive policy was beyond the mandate of the committee. The thinking was that an academic policy was better than no policy.
- Accessibility is a university responsibility. The University Secretary advised that there is another initiative going on at a higher level on campus that might inform this question and the committee.
- There is a gap in oversight of accommodations for students in that such accommodations may not be academic in nature but related to special bathroom facilities or access to an interpreter, etc.
- Concern was expressed that, in its current state, this policy might create a problem with the Community, for the Fred Smithers Centre and the University. Given recent developments, there needs to be a legal review of this policy.
- A Senator vigorously argued that the policy stands in violation of various emerging legislative frameworks and that as such it has potential to cause trouble if enforced as is.
- In addition, because of other developments, there are recommendations coming forward concerning the legislation that will impact this policy.
- **Action Item: Senate Chair** to advise the committee about the outcome of the Senate discussions.

Moved by Brosseau and seconded, **“that the revisions to 8-1021 Senate Policy on Academic Accommodations for Students are approved as submitted in Appendix T.” Motion withdrawn.**

Moved by Grandy and seconded, **“that 8-1021 Senate Policy on Academic Accommodations for Students is referred to the VPAR for consultation with the Secretariat and the University Accessibility Committee in relation to the concerns raised in Senate. The VPAR is asked to provide an update to Senate as soon as possible.” Motion carried.**

Moved by Smith and seconded, **“that the Senate meeting be extended for 15 minutes to complete the business on the agenda”. Motion carried.**

Moved by Francis and seconded, **“that the Senate rescind the 8-1021 Senate Policy on Academic Accommodations for Students that was approved at the Senate meeting of August 21, 2020.” Motion carried** (by a 2/3 majority of participants).

.04 Curriculum Committee (Steve Smith, acting Registrar)

a) Revision to Senate Bylaws section 5.2.9.10 – Committee Terms of Reference, Notice of Motion - **Appendix U1**, and revision – **Appendix U2**

Key Discussion Points:

- The Committee is proposing to add the Manager, Academic Program Development and Review to their membership. This will create the link necessary to ensure the Curriculum Committee receives the program calendar submission when a new program receives MPHEC approval. It also links the program review process and the curriculum development outcomes that happen through the curriculum submission process over a period of years after a program review process concludes. This information is a required component of the institutional self-study during the regularly scheduled MPHEC University Quality Assessment process.

Moved by Smith as Acting Registrar and seconded, **“that the revisions to Senate Bylaws section 5.2.9.10 are approved as submitted in Appendix U2”.** Motion carried.

22029

NEW BUSINESS FROM

Floor (not involving notice of motion)

Floor (involving notice of motion)

Chair

22030

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 P.M.

Barb Bell,
Secretary of Senate