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SENATE MEETING MINUTES January 18, 2019

The 598th Meeting of the Senate of Saint Mary's University was held on Friday, January 18, 2019, at 2:00 PM, in the Secunda Marine Boardroom. Dr VanderPlaat, Chairperson, presided.

PRESENT: Dr Summerby-Murray, Dr Butler, Dr Smith, Dr Bhabra, Dr MacDonald, Dr Sarty, Dr Doucet, Dr Francis, Dr Grandy, Dr Grek-Martin, Dr Kehoe, Dr Khokar, Dr McCallum, Dr Power, Dr Rahaman, Dr Twohig, Dr VanderPlaat, Dr Warner, Mr Brophy, Ms van den Hoogen, Mr Nasrallah, Mr Mahmudur Rahman Shovon, Mr Archibald, Mr Oshobu, Ms Milton, Dr Day (CN Centre), Dr Krishnamurti & Dr Campbell (Accessibility Ad Hoc Committee), and Ms Bell, Secretary to the Office of Senate.

REGRETS: Dr Hall, Dr Loughlin, Dr Stinson, Dr Takseva, and Mr Southwell,

Meeting commenced at 2:05 P.M.

18043

REPORT OF THE AGENDA COMMITTEE

- Members were advised that the following agenda items would be addressed first and second to allow representatives to depart to attend to other commitments:
 - 1) CNCOHS Notice of Motion and Self-Study, and
 - 2) Report of the Ad-Hoc Committee to Review Accessibility.
- Members accepted the report of the Agenda Committee as revised.

18044

PRESIDENT'S REPORT - posted as Appendix A (10 min)

Key Discussion Points:

- A full report is posted on SMUport.
- **Tentative Agreement**
A tentative agreement, on contract negotiations, between the Saint Mary's University Faculty Union and the University has been reached. The President thanked the bargaining committees for their work.
- **Canada – China Relations**
We continue to monitor the ongoing situation in China. We are intending to hold to a business as usual approach. The educational links are vitally important but we need to ensure we are clear on documental process to ensure they are correct. In-person biometric information must be received for Visa applications and we are working with the Embassy to see if we can get a mobile biometric function with SMU and there seems to be some interest in developing that.

The University is taking appropriate steps to mitigate any risk to our students, staff, faculty and educational partnerships in China. We presently have a small number of faculty and staff at Beijing Normal University Zhuhai associated with the joint program in Commerce. We have spoken with all faculty and staff currently in China either through email or directly through our special advisor. Some are concerned but are not feeling threatened at this time. We will ensure communication is undertaken with faculty scheduled to travel for the start of the February term in China to ensure that they are aware and are assured of our support. This includes increasing our attention to the issuing of appropriate visas for employees and students travelling to China.

While no students from Saint Mary's are currently in China on official programs, there are students scheduled to travel in February. Again, we will ensure communication is undertaken with outbound students to determine the appropriate course of action. Similarly, we continue to work closely with our recruitment team and our recruitment agents in China to decrease risk for Saint Mary's. We continue to monitor travel advisories from Global Affairs Canada.

In further due diligence, I have personally contacted the First Secretaries/Trade Commissioners with responsibility for educational programming at the Canadian Embassy in Beijing and the consulate in Shanghai to seek their advice as we work to uphold the educational programming that we have in place. In responding, they advise that they have seen no indication that education relationships are significantly affected, while noting that Canadian stakeholders should – as always – listen actively to their Chinese counterparts and consider any adjustments that may be proposed. I am advised also that the approach from 'likeminded embassies' (some of which have had similar periods of difficulty in their bilateral relationship to varying degrees in past years) has been to maintain working level education sector relationships. We have to play the long game here. I will continue to monitor this situation and to keep members of Senate apprised.

- **Intercultural Learning**

On December 20, 2018, Saint Mary's University formally created an advisory council on Indigenous affairs. This marks another stage in Saint Mary's commitment to reconciliation and the university's response to the federal report by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. The Council will provide an external viewpoint for Indigenous supports on campus, and Indigenous issues facing the post-secondary sector – we anticipate a quarterly meeting schedule.

- **Institutional Sustainability**

Forward progress continues on our MOU with Government, with positive commentary on our submission received from both the Minister and the Deputy Minister. CONSUP's MOU proposal is going through the internal (government) budget process at present.

The MOU negotiations have been positive overall and I am confident in a positive report. A decision is expected by the end of the month and I look forward to updating you further once formal response to the MOU Funding Proposal has been received.

18045

VICE-PRESIDENT ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH REPORT – posted as Appendix B (10 min) (update on Indigenization Working Group)

Key Discussion Points:

Experiential Learning:

- We had hoped to have the Senate Committee on Experiential Learning appear at this meeting to speak to their report and engage with Senate. That proved to have scheduling challenges, but we have confirmed this for the February meeting.

Enrolment Management and Registrar:

- I can confirm that I will be able to provide specifics on the search for the Registrar at the February meeting. There are a few steps remaining in finalizing a re-organization that would shape the search, but they will be completed in the next few weeks.

Indigenous Working Group:

- I spoke to Dr. Takseva early in this New Year about faculty who had expressed interest in this working group, and have spoken in more detail to one of the two leads. I am working now to form the working group and want to link them immediately into the Academic Plan process.

Academic Plan Update:

- With a few other matters taking priority in the first half of January, and the matter of the working group, I have held off a bit but will be framing the next call for consultations this weekend, and you will see that on Monday. Faculty participation will be encouraged.

Academic Integrity

- There has been a steady stream of academic integrity issues raised over the past two years. This has been a concern and there have been a number of activities pursued around this issue.
- There was a very productive workshop given to parties involved in Academic Integrity last fall. It was well-attended and very informative. The Dalhousie Manager of Discipline and Appeals led the workshop. He proved to be an excellent resource and challenged many perspectives.
- Many issues and concerns were identified around Academic Integrity during the last eighteen months. This is an area of Senate policy that should have continued and active review. Some time ago, I asked Academic Regulations to look at this, and I understand that they will be bringing thoughts back to Senate for discussion in February.
- I imagine this review will look at everything from reporting, through decision and appeals. The issues around academic technology, both external, and ours are also of importance to address (e.g. CourseHero and other sharing websites). Policies have to be living in order to address these developments.
- There is continued work with key external partners, particular with the Mi'kmaw Community. This is in relation to support for students and the faculty that are working with these students. It also speaks to the broader question in terms of training to faculty to address the key issues in this area. We may need a deeper discussion about all of the activities occurring on campus and how they conform.

18046

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

Key Discussion Points:

- A Senator asked if there is any indication from the external stakeholders that the China situation might escalate into something similar to the Saudi situation. Answer: We continue to base much of our strategies on the approach of our Canadian Government. We do not have a sense that this type of situation will occur here. The Chinese government reached out to us last week to ensure us that the relationship with the Universities was unchanged. There is no indication that withdrawal of education supports was being considered. We currently have 720 full time Chinese students enrolled. This is down from previous years but we have been diversifying to address this situation.
- A Senator asked the VPAR about the presentation from the Committee on Experiential Learning. Answer: The VPAR advised that Senators made a clear call for the committee to present the context surrounding the creation of those recommendations, as a starting point for developing a new (and hopefully more effective) set of recommendations.
- Question: Will the SMU Indigenization working group have indigenous students as members? Answer: VPAR advised that this working group was more a faculty-focused group that is being formed around curriculum. Consultation will be done with key parties.
- SMUSA advised that they have been doing academic integrity workshops during orientation. They recommended that this be integrated into the on-line orientation for all students. The VPAR advised this is a good recommendation.
- A Senator advised that recently during the organization of an exchange initiative to China, faculty were made aware of a travel advisory and asked to reconsider participating in the exchange. The President advised that there are many levels of travel advisories. When the Canadian Government gets to the level of stating Canadians should not travel, the University would not allow travel to occur.
- Question: The SMUSA President asked how the authority had been assigned in terms of using the Atrium space for events. SMUSA wanted access during the organization of the welcome week and was denied. Answer: The VPAR advised that the group, chaired by the University Librarian, was formed at the time the Atrium was opened. The reason it is not allowed to be booked like other spaces is that it is the learning commons and an extension of the learning space. The group in oversight was formed to protect the interests of students. It is a delicate balance. The space must be conserved for the use of the students. We need to be very careful how much usage is okay and when that line is crossed and it becomes not okay. Response: SMUSA sees it being used only once or twice a year in the support of students.
- Dr Sarty advised that there has been a SMUSA rep on that committee for most of its existence. In general, SMUSA has been on side with the committee's decision. This is a very difficult space to protect in terms of leakage of other demands being placed on the space. We are hoping that the next building on campus will have space designed into it to do all of the kinds of activities that are of interest to SMUSA.
- The President gave kudos to the Library for opening up the spaces for the use of students.

18047

WINTER GRADUATION LIST

Hard copy documentation was circulated at the meeting by the Registrar (Deans and Senate copies only) as *Appendix C*.

Key Discussion Points:

- Friday is convocation day.
- There are 298 designations being awarded to 281 graduates. A summary was circulated to all members. Honorary Degrees are being awarded to Scott McCrea, Doctor of Commerce, Honoris Causa during the morning ceremonies and to Hope Swinimer, Doctor of Science, Honoris Causa during the ceremonies in the afternoon.

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

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

18048

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the meeting of December 14, 2018, were *circulated* as *Appendix D*.

Moved by Grek-Martin, and seconded, **“that the minutes of the meeting of December 14, 2018 are approved as posted.”** Motion carried.

18049

OUTSTANDING ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS AGENDAS

Presentation on the Committee on Experiential Learning (Dr Enns) deferred to Feb.

Key Discussion Points:

- VPAR addressed this item during his report.

18050

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

.01

Academic Planning

a) CNCOHS Notice of Motion, *Appendix E1*, Self-Study, *Appendix E*)

Key Discussion Points:

- APC was very pleased with the activities of this Centre. It continues to be very active.
- Question: page 24 issues and concerns – 3rd issue: the current level of activity is not sustainable without additional funding. What is being done to address that concern? Answer: The VPAR advised that there are active discussions on resourcing. This concern is not being ignored. The President advised that conversations of further investments are underway.

Moved by Butler and seconded that, **“that the Senate accept the self-study Report of the CN Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CNCOHS) as meeting the requirement of section 3.3 of the Senate Policy 8-1009, Senate By-Laws Governing the Establishment, Reporting and Review of Research Institutes and Centres at Saint Mary’s and that CNCOHS be authorized to continue for a further period of five years from the date of review”.** Motion carried.

REPORTS OF AD-HOC COMMITTEES**.01**

Senate Ad-Hoc Committee to Review Accessibility in an Academic Environment, *Appendix F*

Key Discussion Points:

- We need to think proactively in terms of the changes needed in our academic environment.
- It was noted that a previous audit was done of the facilities but it was not carried out by a specialist in this area and will need to be done again.
- We need to make the University accessible to the broadest number of people.
- Recommendations:
 1. We recommend the creation of a Senate/BOG joint Steering Committee to develop an Accessibility Framework for the institution as a whole (in all learning spaces).
 - a. This committee should include representation from across campus, including faculty, staff, students, and senior administrators, and should be representative of the SMU community.
 - b. The committee should identify existing capacities and areas of expertise among faculty, staff, and administrators
 - c. The committee will collect and manage information about previous and current changes/renovations to campus
 - d. An accessibility officer should be hired. This person will work with senior admin to manage the items above. The scope of this position goes beyond staffing/human resource concerns and includes facilities management, ITSS, research, and teaching and learning. Therefore, we recommend that the accessibility officer report to a senior administrator rather than HR. This person would be responsible for:
 - a. Liaising with Fred Smithers Centre
 - b. Liaising with community on/off campus
 - c. Keeping up to date with legislation and policy changes
 - d. Researching actions taken by other universities across Canada
 - e. An accessibility office should be established as a central location for accessing resources and information, and for tracking changes and renovations happening around campus.
 2. We recommend the creation of a standing committee of Senate.
 - a. Members of this committee should also sit on the joint committee discussed in 1) above.
 - b. A priority for the standing committee should be the development of a Senate Policy governing student accessibility and accommodations. We have included in the Appendix a link to the 2011 draft policy that was not passed by Senate.
 - c. Build a web-based resource with support for teachers and researchers; training for instructors. The ad-hoc committee has begun discussion with the Studio about developing this resource.
 - d. Identify and prioritize issues of accessibility with regard to all aspects of teaching and learning.
 - e. Identify benchmarks and timelines for implementation of these changes necessary for compliance with provincial and federal legislation.

3. We recommend that the University should conduct a full Accessibility Audit of all aspects of campus space (built environment, communications, and virtual spaces).
 - a. The audit should be conducted by a qualified consultant who specializes in inclusive and accessible design and should include:
 - b. A full campus-wide survey of students, faculty, and staff to identify areas of concern not captured in a physical audit (e.g. availability of services, adequacy of training, and navigation)
 - c. A cost assessment of all necessary renovations, equipment upgrades, and service changes

4. Additional resources are required by our offices supporting teaching and learning: the Fred Smithers Centre, the Studio, and the Patrick Power Library. Requested resources include:

Fred Smithers/Studio

 - a. An educational developer specializing in inclusive and accessible technology and pedagogy
 - b. Creation of a joint committee of Fred Smithers, Library, and Studio to share knowledge and resources around accessibility
 - c. Support for training for faculty and students on existing tools and resources
 - d. Support for the creation of screen-readable documents, video captioning and other resources for teaching

Library:

 - a. Software acquisition and ongoing support
 - b. Staff training and professional development
 - c. Student and staff computer workstations that are adjustable
 - d. Furniture for students and staff (ergonomic chairs/seating, adjustable height tables)

- The President commended the committee for a fabulous piece of work. The timelines are not far away in terms of compliance by the Universities. The government have to put in place a committee similar to that being recommended here today. There will be two standards committees created to provide oversight into the process of implementing the legislation. We may want to look at not having too many committees working on this initiative and consider whether we should bring these activities together under the oversight of just one group.
- There are already examples in Ontario and other provinces that we can use to assist us in our development. The best way to do that is to have an accessible framework in place to facilitate the start of this process.
- The President advised that the comparison with the Ontario Legislation is very important. The legislation in Ontario was introduced without any provincial financial assistance for the institutions affected. We are hopeful that the new MOU with the government will generate some funding that will assist the Universities with this requirement.
- The President advised that the University added 50% permanent money in our budget last year, to what was already in place, to support these types of initiatives.
- A member advised that we must consult those with the expertise to ensure that the money we have to spend now has the most impact.

- A SMUSA rep stated that the students would like to see a Senate Policy on this as well as one on Academic Resources to assist with this.
- The Chair of the Ad Hoc Group supported this request and advised that an attempt to create a policy was made in 2011. Consideration of that work should be the first priority for the new standing committee.

18052

NEW BUSINESS FROM

a. Floor (not involving notice of motion)

i) Senate By-Laws section 3.1.1. - timing of the election. (Jason Grek-Martin)

Moved by Grek-Martin and seconded, **“that Senate revise clause 3.1.1 of the Senate By-Laws regarding Duties and Responsibilities of Officers, to state: “The Senate shall annually, at the last meeting of the academic year, elect one member of its academic staff as Chair of Senate. The Chair of Senate is elected for a term of one (1) year and may be re-elected for a maximum of two (2) more consecutive ~~successive~~ terms. The outgoing Chair or, in his/her absence, the Vice-Chair of Senate shall preside at the election.”**

Key Discussion Points:

- The current text of the Senate By-Laws Section 3.1.1 states: *“The Senate shall annually **at its initial meeting of the academic year** elect one of its members Chairperson of Senate. The outgoing Chairperson or, in his/her absence, the Vice-Chairperson of Senate shall preside at the election. An incumbent Chairperson may be re-elected.”*
- This is an effort to allow more time for the Chairperson to prepare for the position. The election would be during the last meeting of the Senate in the Academic year.
- In order to encourage more rotation through the position of chair, we would impose a three-year limit on consecutive term that could be served.
- We also want to impose a limitation that the chair must be a full-time faculty member of the Senate.
- Did the By-Laws committee look at what other universities do in this regard? Answer: No. This request came out of discussions of the faculty on Senate.
- Members were advised that the term most frequently used when referring to terms on a group was ‘consecutive’ instead of ‘successive’.
- It was suggested that Senate task the By-Laws committee to investigate this requested By-Law revisions further. Support was given for a delay in responding to the motion until the February meeting of Senate.
- Question: When is the outcome of elections known? Elections are initiated in March. The results are known by the end of the election process. Before May Senate meeting.
- The University Secretary offered to do a national survey of answers (How the role of Chair is structured at other Universities). **Action Item: University Secretary.**

Moved by McCallum, and seconded, **“that the question is referred to the By-Laws Committee for further investigation.” Motion carried.**

- ii) Senate By-Laws section 1.10.5 of the Senate By-Laws regarding Election Procedures. (Jason Grek-Martin)

Moved by Grek-Martin and seconded, **“that Senate revise clause 1.10.5 of the Senate By-Laws regarding Election Procedures, to state: “1.10.5 The Election Committee shall post the list of the Electorate and indicate those eligible for nomination (no later than) one week prior to the issuance of Nomination Forms. All corrections must be made known to the Election Committee within this week and no later. The Election Committee shall identify in the posted list significant imbalances in terms of Senate representation across the three faculties, Arts, Science and the Sobey School of Business.”**

Key Discussion Points:

- The current text of the Senate By-Laws Section states: The Election Committee shall post the list of the Electorate and indicate those eligible for nomination (no later than) one week prior to the issuance of Nomination Forms. All corrections must be made known to the Election Committee within this week and no later.
- The spirit of this suggestion is to encourage a balance in the faculty representation on Senate. Discussion related to how we would address this: 1) provide a note regarding the deficiencies, or 2) to silo the voting capacity to address this situation, which was not supported by faculty requesting these revisions.
- The University Secretary offered to do a national survey looking at what other universities are doing. **Action Item: University Secretary.**
- On the ballots, there is no reference to department and faculty. It was suggested that this practice be revised to include that information.

Moved by McCallum, and seconded, **“that the question is referred to the By-Laws Committee for further investigation.” Motion carried.**

iii) Floor (involving notice of motion)

SMUSA motion for creation of a Senate Academic Suspension Appeals Committee, **Appendix G**

Key Discussion Points:

- We have asked for this before. Now that the Academic Regulation revision has been approved to allow for this, we are bringing forward this motion.
- Most universities have suspension appeals committees. The following examples were provided:
 - St FX – Senate Appeals Committee and Committee of Studies
 - Dalhousie – Senate Appeals Committee
 - MUN – Academic Appeals Committee
 - Acadia – Admission and Academic Standing Appeals Committee
 - UPEI – Senate Committee on Academic Appeals

- All faculties should approach this in the same way and that is why SMUSA does not support creating Suspension Appeals Committees in each faculty. We are asking for a Senate Academic Suspensions Appeal Committee that is structured in the same fashion as other appeals committees at SMU.
- Members were advised that the revisions to Academic Regulation 19 on Academic Integrity would be addressing this.
- Question: Could this request be included in the mandate of any of the other Appeals Committees that currently exist. Answer: The scope is significantly larger and requires a different type of structure.
- The way Academic Regulation 19 is currently being revised provides for a committee within each of the Faculties. It was suggested that Senate could refer it back to the Faculties to come up with a way to address the concerns being raised. Members were advised that if it were just one committee addressing this issue, it would constitute a huge time commitment for those members every May and that might impact the ability to populate that committee.
- While acknowledging the request being made by SMUSA, there was support expressed for the development of committees within the individual Faculties. Arts already has an ad-hoc committee to do just this. They work toward bringing students back after one academic term in the absence of a course offered at SMU to help with this.
- Question: In relation to the concern that was expressed on the workload, what are the numbers of students that are suspended in an academic year? Answer: The Registrar advised that there would likely be 20-30 per academic year and it is only done in May.
- Question: A Senator asked if there was data on how many students that face suspension, return to Saint Mary's. Response: That information was not available for this meeting.
- Question: Are you specifically looking for a new type of appeal committee, versus an academic grade appeal committee? Answer: A grade appeal would not capture all the nuances of why a student might want to appeal. Special representation from the faculty (Associate Dean) would be needed.
- SMUSA is asking to have a consistent process. This does not currently exist with the individual Faculties dealing with this individually. There would be consistency with a Senate Committee.
- Question: Could Senate Executive Committee handle these appeals? Answer: This would add to the increased duties of the Executive given the increased duties being assigned in the integrity policy.
- Support was giving to having a consistent policy that the Faculty Committees could follow.
- The Registrar suggested that the three faculties should develop a process and those could be submitted for review and merged into one process that all faculties would follow.
- The SMUSA President advised that the reason this is being submitted is due to inconsistencies experienced by students up to now. Some decisions were arrived at extremely quickly. So quickly that it was not evident to the student or to SMUSA how there would have been time to follow any type of a process.

- The President cautioned that very well defined grounds for appeal would be needed. Second runs at a case appeal would not be appropriate.
- Members were advised that in the past, a decision in the Faculty of Science might have been made quickly because of certain criteria that were being followed but that those decisions would most likely not have changed if there had been a meeting with the student.
- A SMUSA Representative advised that their goal is to ensure that all students are being treated the same across all faculties. Tasking the faculties to create their process and send it back to Senate is a concern because the faculties already have that capacity.
- The Director, Student Services advised that he chaired such a committee in a past position. There were many challenges related to this structure. They had a system where a faculty representative could recuse themselves from deliberations if the appeal came from their faculty. This ensured fresh eyes but robbed the discussion of potentially valuable insights from the person most familiar with the context. In terms of the ultimate success of students whose appeals were successful, these were often at-risk students who often struggled when readmitted.
- A SMUSA Representative advised that the student's voice should be heard and they should be able to tell their story. We need a formalized process.
- Question: The Acting Dean of Science asked if this action would be an appeal of a decision of an appeal committee. Do you wish that any student that wishes to appeal could? Answer: SMUSA would like the Academic Suspensions Appeal committee to deal with the initial appeal, but St. FX has a system where they also have a committee to deal with appeals of the initial appeal decision.
- Question: A Senator asked if the students were looking to have a hearing. Answer: Yes.
- The Associate Dean of Arts advised that if a student was within a specific range, they would be considered for an appeal but only those that fell within that tolerance range would be considered. Below that, we would reject an appeal.
- A Senator advised that the current structure allow students a chance to speak and supported faculty groups doing this.
- Another Senator support this approach. The Faculty has a history of the student and knows their strengths and weaknesses. It is better to leave it in the Faculty. They have been dealing with the student for a long period. At times, the best way to help the student is for the Faculty advisor to engage with the student before the point of suspension. As a University we cannot get into a continuous loop of appealing. There is a point where we have to draw the line.
- The President asked the Associate Dean of Arts what the actual appeal mechanism was for a student to follow in Arts. Answer: In the Faculty of Arts – the letter that goes out to the student prompts the appeal. There is no criterion under which we hear appeals. The Faculty of Arts has recently developed some criteria. They have a tolerance below which they will not consider a student appeal.
- A SMUSA Representative advised that faculty are aware of the student's situation. SMUSA's concern is that there is no formalized process.

There may be extenuating circumstances that should be heard and considered.

- It was noted that in previous calendars there was no mechanism to appeal suspensions. With the recent revision of the Academic Regulation, we need a consistent process for all faculties to follow.
- Registrar – the 2019-2020 calendar will stipulate that the Faculty committee would deal with these. The intent would be for the Faculties to create similar processes to be fair.
- A Senator supported this position of the Registrar. There needs to be a clear process. We need to decide how this will be arrived at.
- **Action Item: Senate tasks the Deans** to assure the development of a Faculty process to be submitted to the Academic Regulations Committee no later than the end of February.
- **Action Item: Senate tasks the Academic Regulations Committee** with reviewing the policies from the Faculties of Arts, Science and Sobey School of Business to create one consistent policy that all Faculties will follow. This policy will be submitted to the Academic Senate no later than the April meeting.

18053

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 P.M.

Barb Bell,
Secretary to the Office of Senate