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## SENATE MEETING MINUTES March 19, 2021

The 624th Meeting of the Senate of Saint Mary's University was held via Zoom on Friday, March 19, 2021, at 2:00 PM. Dr Takseva, Chairperson, presided.

**PRESENT:** 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 O'Brien, Dr Panasian, Dr Power, Dr Stinson, Dr Takseva, Dr Twohig, Mr Brophy, Ms van den Hoogen, Mr de Chastelain, Ms Nankani, Ms Winters, Dr Smith, Ms Sergeant-Greenwood, Dr Morales (B.Comm), Dr Novkovic, Dr Kay, Ms Graham, Ms Lorencz, Ms Brothers-Scott, and Ms Bell, Secretary to the Office of Senate.

**REGRETS:** Dr Summerby-Murray, Dr Collins, Dr Hanley, Dr Hart, Ms Killam, Mr Tumusiime, and Mr Zokari.

Meeting commenced at 2:03 P.M. with the territorial acknowledgement.

**21081**      **REPORT OF AGENDA COMMITTEE**  
The Agenda Committee report was accepted.

**21082**      **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**  
Posted as *Appendix A* for this meeting (10 min).

**Key Discussion Points:**

- The President was unable to attend. His report is posted on SMUport and Dr Butler will respond to any questions. The President will respond further after the meeting as needed.

**21083**      **VICE-PRESIDENT ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH REPORT**  
Posted as *Appendix B* for this meeting (10 min).

**Key Discussion Points:**

- We initiated conversations around Digital Learning Strategy. We are working to define what we are going to do and how to put the supports in place to accomplish that.
- HyFlex is a very specialized case. This is a model where the class is running virtually and in person, synchronous and asynchronous. This is not being done without support and there are some faculty already doing this on campus.

- Basically, the model can be whatever you want it to be. I think the difference they're trying to convey between Hybrid and Hyflex is that in Hybrid all students participate in all facets (online and in-person) of the course (and this would be designed to relieve density on campus and in the classroom), while in Hyflex students select from the smorgasbord (this is designed to accommodate students who cannot be on campus). The most important thing is that, since this kind of teaching takes much more work and coordination, they're willing to give it more resources (for example in FCEs -- a Hyflex could count for 0.75). The idea of a “smorgasbord” does not seem to be very clear
- **Digital Learning Technology:** Faculty, programs, and departments have a choice to make concerning what to do with digital learning technologies. The University needs to ensure that both the tools and the supports are available for those who make a choice to use these technologies, so that they do so in a way that can be sustained. We want faculty to be confident that their efforts will not be wasted.
- We conducted an initial faculty consultation, primarily focused on listening to concerns, needs, and thoughts about possible directions.
- SMUSA was also contacted about setting up student consultations. A second round of consultations will begin in a few weeks' time, where examples for support structures and directions can be provided, based on this first round of feedback and the many examples that are available from other Canadian Universities and globally.
- Next week, consultations will begin on the Diversity Strategy. Deborah Brothers-Scott will be working with Butler on this. The first round will be focused on listening to faculty, staff, and students as to their thoughts, concerns, and ideas.
- The next faculty and staff updates are being shifted one week to March 29<sup>th</sup>, April 9<sup>th</sup> and April 13<sup>th</sup>.
- A website has been created for the teaching innovation awards: <https://studio.smu.ca/teaching-innovation-awards>. The application deadline is October 1st for the first round of awards.
- **Accessibility Advisory Committee Update** - The committee met and confirmed its terms of reference.
- **Spring Convocation** – Spring Convocation will be virtual. The virtual ceremony will be broadcast on May 28<sup>th</sup> to allow extra time for coordinating the graduation video and presenting the graduates.
- **Dean Searches** - Representatives from Arts have been identified through an election process, and Science representatives will be identified after elections close today (Friday). A search firm has been identified and we will be moving quickly to identify candidates.
- **Mask Protocols** - The university is moving to implement a mask requirement for students starting May 1st. We did not find that other universities were planning to do this but we decided that this could help support more activity on campus and allow a bit more flexibility on density. Details of this new protocol will be distributed to the university community.

21084

**SMUSA PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

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

**Key Discussion Points:**

- **2021 Election results:**
  - In-coming President: Franklyn Southwell
  - 5 members were elected to the Board of Directors: Mihika Mihika, Miyah Basden, Alex Wilson, Joshua Lafond, and Adam Snow.
- Over the next few weeks, SMUSA will be hiring a new executive team and will report concerning the new team at the April Senate meeting.
- **Semester Plans:** Delay of Registrations – Students were confused by the recent announcement of delaying fall registration. More consistent and clear communications from the university were requested.
- **Semester Plans:** Fall Semester Announcement – Student continue to ask about the proposed delivery model for fall. This information is needed at the soonest possible date to facilitate students’ fall planning regarding housing and travel.
- **University Budget:** Increased tuition and fees resulted in requests for a more transparent University Budget process (earlier notice of increases with rationale). Communications are requested as early as possible related to what these increases will be for the next year
- **Digital Transformation Announcement:** Students are unsure what this means for their degrees. Students are concerned they may not be able to return to campus.
- **Extending Library Hours:** Students would like extended library hours to help them prepare for the end of the semester.

21085

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

**Key Discussion Points:**

- None.

21086

**MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Minutes of the meeting of February 12, 2021, were *circulated* as *Appendix D1*.

Minutes of the meeting of March 2, 2021, were circulated as *Appendix D2*

- The summary report from the B. Comm review provides APC recommendations. In the minutes it records those recommendations replacing the word “APC” with “Senate”. An objection was made to this because there is no motion recorded, indicating that Senators concurred with those recommendations.
- It was noted that in the November Senate minutes in the section related to the Quality Assurance Monitoring Process, Senate moved to accept the action plan on the quality assessors’ recommendations. The specific item of concern is Recommendation 2 – To consider how formal communications between Senate and Board can be improved, to facilitate decision making, together with ensuring appropriate

representation from Faculty and Academic Support Units. Action was going to happen before the end of the academic year, and we are getting close to that time. Response: Butler advised a status update will be provided at the April Senate meeting.

There being no further objections or revisions, **the minutes of the meeting of February 12 and March 2, 2021 are approved as revised.**

**21087**

.01

**BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Proposal for a 1000-level special topics course in Arts to facilitate the piloting of a first-year seminar program, (Smith/VanderPlaat), *Appendix E*.

**Key Discussion Points:**

- This is a 6-credit interdisciplinary First Year Experience (FYE) course that will be delivered by a team of four faculty members from across the social sciences and humanities. The course will only be open to incoming first year Arts students who will complete the course as a cohort regardless of their chosen program.
- The objective is to prepare first year students for university learning. The course integrates key skill development components (library research, study skills, etc.) and encourages students to think about the potential future outcomes of an Arts degree.
- The course will count towards the Arts breadth requirements (components C and D, in consultation with Arts advising) but would not be a replacement for required 1000 level courses in any program.
- Question: Was this submission approved by Arts Council? Answer: No, but an emergency meeting will be called next week to do this.
- Question: Is the plan for parallel courses to have the same grading scheme? Answer: The course will have a single syllabus.
- Question: How will this be handled administratively in terms of FCEs? What Department will be home for this course? Answer: Faculty are going to be able to do this as part of their regular teaching load and if not, it will be done as overload teaching with a stipend attached.
- Question: Who teaches the course? Who is in charge? Answer: The Dean will decide that. This has been done in Science before and the Dean signed the contracts.
- The teaching team will determine the theme, readings, and weekly topics, which can change with each iteration of the course. Each lesson/unit will introduce multiple approaches and methods in relation to the broad course theme. Workshops on essential university skills components (e.g. time management, study skills) will be incorporated into the course.
- It will be scheduled in two standard 75-minute scheduling blocks; 1 weekly large group lecture with 100 students (75 minutes) and 4 weekly small group seminar meetings of 25 students each (75 minutes).
- The desire is to make this course available for April enrolment.

- Question: Would Senators consider an electronic vote on this after Arts Council approves this? Answer. Yes
- Senate meets April 16 and registration starts April 23. Theoretically it could come forward again in April.

Moved by Smith and seconded, “**that predicated on the approval of Arts Council, the proposed course be approved as a regular course for a term of three-year starting in the fall 2021, with the understanding that it would be submitted through the proper curriculum process.**”  
**This motion was withdrawn by the mover.**

21088

**REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

.01

Academic Planning Committee

i. MMCCU & Diploma Review Documentation

*Appendix F* – APC Notice of Motion, *Appendix G - Recommendation-Comparison summary*, *Appendix H*- Self Study Report, *Appendix I* - Self Study appendices (I1-I10), *Appendix J* – Dean’s Response to Self Study, *Appendix K* - External Program Review Committee’s (PRC) Final Report, *Appendix L* - Program Response to ERC Report, *Appendix M*– Deans Response to ERC Report / Prog Response.

**Key Discussion Points:**

- **Recommendation 1:** APC concurs with the response of the Dean. APC applauds the Committee for their proactive approach in exploring possible synergies between programs in addressing this recommendation.
- **Recommendation 2:** APC concurs with the Dean’s response. APC encourages the Committee to continue to leverage the lessons learned from online delivery of courses in 2020, any short-term challenges notwithstanding.
- **Recommendation 3:** APC concurs with the Dean’s response. APC supports the program’s engagement efforts with the Library.
- **Recommendation 4:** APC concurs with the Dean’s response. APC supports the program’s response in re-examining content at an appropriate time.
- **Recommendation 5:** APC concurs with the Dean’s response. APC supports the program’s efforts in identifying appropriate areas in enhancing academic supports within the curriculum.
- **Recommendation 6:** APC concurs with the Dean’s response. APC applauds the program’s engagement strategies with faculty and the Studio.
- **Recommendation 7:** APC concurs with the Dean’s response. APC supports the program’s continued efforts in addressing EDID as recommended by the reviewers.
- **Recommendation 8:** APC concurs with the Dean’s response. APC supports the program’s efforts in exploring options recommended by the reviewers noting the program’s observation that the one

course at a time mode has not been received well by students nor faculty in the past.

- **Recommendation 9:** APC concurs with the Dean’s response. APC encourages the program to develop a recruitment strategy that incorporates the suggestions made by the external reviewers.
- The members of the Academic Planning Committee recommended the following motions for the consideration of Senate members:

Moved by Butler and seconded, **“that the MMCCU Program submit an Action Plan that is based on the preceding recommendations to the Academic Planning Committee in time for the May 2021 meeting of the APC”**. Motion carried.

Moved by Butler and seconded, **“that in March 2022, the MMCCU 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”**. Motion carried.

and

Moved by Butler and seconded, **“that in March 2024, the MMCCU 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.

- i. Proposal to change the name of the “Department of Religious Studies” to **“*Department* for the Study of Religion”**, *Appendix N1* – APC Notice of Motion, *Appendix N2* - Proposal.

**Key Discussion Points:**

- The department is interested in the study “of” religion and not the study of how to be religious.
- This revision brings the Department in line with the trends in the field and avoids using the term “religious”, which tends to have negative anti-intellectual implications.
- Question: Most of the examples given were for a Department for Religion versus a Department for the Study of Religion. Why have they used the word ‘for’ and not ‘of’? Will this be a new trend for all Departments? Answer: APC had similar concerns, but the Department is adamant in their proposal.

Moved by Butler and seconded, **“that Senate approved the department name change from the Department of Religious Studies” to “Department for the Study of Religion”**. Motion carried.

- .02 Academic Integrity Appeal Board  
Revision to composition of committee circulated as *Appendix O1*- Notice of Motion, *Appendix O2*- Revision form. (Takseva)

### **Key Discussion Points:**

- Dr Takseva relinquished the position of Chair, which was taken up by Vice Chair Dr Bannerjee.
- The proposal is to revise the membership of the Academic Integrity Appeals Board to add the Secretary of Senate in the position of administrative support to the committee.
- This position is identified in the AI Handbook as being filled by someone else. The AI Handbook would need to be revised if this revision is approved.
- In the undergraduate calendar there is mention of an appeal hearing panel. In that section it says that it includes the person providing administrative support. This is not aligned with the Bylaws which will need to be updated with the next revision.
- Question: How do these changes impact the related documents? Answer: Bylaws revisions are done by the Bylaws Committee. The AI Handbook is connected to AR 18 and is overseen by the Academic Regulations Committee.
- Are there consequences if this motion passes? Answer: There have been many administrative challenges impacting this group. It was suggested that the master document is the Senate Bylaws. If this revision passes, all related documents reflecting this information would subsequently be revised.
- Members were advised that the Academic Regulation takes priority in this case. Everything about the AI process was developed after significant discussion at that level. The administration for this committee can be significant at times. Adding this to the already significant workload of the Secretary of Senate is not a sustainable option.
- The workload involved is different and requires access to records within the Registrar's Office. These are both issues impacting this request. In addition, this is not the work of a governance administrator.
- It was recommended that this request and a review of the implications be tasked to the Academic Regulations Committee.
- From a Bylaws perspective, the revision seems in keeping with other committees, but the element of workload is currently an unknown.
- The issue is that the Academic Regulations outlines the composition of the committee, and any changes should come through that route.

Moved by Takseva and seconded, **“that Senate approve the revision to the composition of the Academic Appeals Board”**. Motion defeated.

Secondary motion: Moved by Panasian and seconded, **“that the motion be deferred to the April Senate meeting”**. Motion defeated.

Secondary motion: Moved by Sarty and seconded, **“that the question be referred to the Academic Regulations Committee for review”**. Motion carried.

21089

**NEW BUSINESS FROM**

a) Floor (not involving notice of motion)

.01

Presentation to share the good work with Atlantic OER and its impacts on SMU – 20 min plus 10 min Q&A (Samantha Graham, SMUSA and Amy Lorencz, Library).

**Key Discussion Points:**

- Topics covered were: 1. What is an OER? 2. What are the benefits of OER? 3. How do I create and OER? 4. What is AtlanticOER and how can I get involved? And 5. Questions/Comments/Concerns.
- Open Educational Resources (OER) are free to use and openly licensed teaching and learning materials. “Open content” describes a copyrightable work that is licensed in a way that provides users with the free and perpetual permission to engage in the 5R activities, which are retain, reuse, revise, remix and redistribute.
- Types of Open Educational Resources are: Textbooks, Curricula + Materials, and Audiovisual.
- OER enables flexible course design and delivery, including the ability to build tailored resources that incorporate new relevant content in real time to contextualize important social, economic, and political developments. Educators can increase student engagement by incorporating elements of open pedagogy into their course design, providing students with experiential learning opportunities, where they may contribute to the design and development of an OER as part of their course assignments.
- Student finances can be a concern when buying commercial textbooks. OERs are one way in which educators can help students gain free, full access to course materials. Students often opt to not purchase classroom materials because of their sticker price. One study showed that 54% of students did not purchase textbooks and 30% suffered academically as a result. OERs bring equity to classroom learning.
- Through the Atlantic Open Educational Resources initiative, CAUL-CBUA provides access to Pressbooks, a digital authoring and publishing platform that enables educators to create/adopt open textbooks for their courses.
- There are many ways an OER can be created. Faculty can link to an existing open textbook. They can clone an existing open textbook into the AtlanticOER Pressbooks network and adapt the content for the needs of their course. They can migrate a commercial textbook for use under an open (Creative Commons) license (this may require acquiring copyright permissions from the copyright holder). They can create an open textbook from scratch, or they can import multiple open textbooks into the AtlanticOER Pressbooks network and remix the content to create one textbook.
- An unlimited number of collaborators can work on a common textbook using Pressbooks. Pressbooks supports integration with many plugins (Hypothesis, MathJax, TablePress) as well as the creation of interactive content through H5P and tracking of usage through Google Analytics.

- Cloning an existing textbook can take minutes. Adaptation or remixing or creating a new book will take longer depending on the educator's timeline.
- When creating a new open textbook, creators choose which Creative Commons License they wish to apply to their work. Educators should speak to their institutional copyright specialist to discuss any concerns.
- AtlanticOER launched the Development Grant Fund which closed on March 1. These grants were up to \$2000 each awarded to support individuals or groups. These grants operate on an annual basis subject to long-term funding. Beyond the initial year, funding is supported by lobbying efforts from New Brunswick Student Alliance, UPEI Student Union, and Students Nova Scotia.
- If there are questions, please reach out to Amy Lorencz in the Library.
- Question: How long does it take to create an OER? Answer: Quite a bit of time. Faculty should anticipate starting approximately 6 months ahead of when you want it to be available.
- The link to those resources that are already created follows: [caul-cbua.pressbooks.pub/catalog](http://caul-cbua.pressbooks.pub/catalog).
- Question: What does Students Nova Scotia want to see out of this development? Answer: We have been advocating at a provincial level for year-by-year funding to support these developments. We can easily link to OERs that exist. We are looking at securing funding year-by-year to encourage educators to develop their own OERs.
- We have been promoting the Atlantic OERs for months now. By bringing this subject to Senate, we are hoping to spread the word further.
- The Canadian Association of Research Libraries has been discussing this.
- It suggested multi-department committees to address this issue. Sometimes the bookstore and print centre are also involved. These member institutions have been successful with this approach.

**.02** Presentation of the Scarborough National Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion, *Appendix P* (the final version now being distributed for consultation and to gather feedback from institutional partners - Deborah Brothers-Scott)

**Key Discussion Points:**

- The Scarborough National Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education: Principles, Actions and Accountability (Scarborough National Charter) sets out the principles, commitments to action and accountability measures that should guide the letter and spirit of governance at universities and colleges across Canada.
- In October 2020, members of the community joined other universities and colleges across the country to discuss this topic. As a result, a national committee was formed to consider future developments. After this a letter was sent to all colleges and universities in Ontario to remind them of their responsibilities under the new legislation. These actions

resulted in the post-secondary institutions introspectively considering / discovering the existence of this issue within their own institution. The Charter was created and is now being sent out for feedback.

- We would like all institutions to commit to the principles set out in this charter.
- The Academic Senate is the first group at Saint Mary's to see this document. Responses are requested by April 2. The Deans and the Senior Management Group will be seeing this document next week. The Senate Chairperson committed to send feedback to Brothers-Scott.
- It was suggested that Senators consider endorsing this statement. We should encourage Senior Management and EMG to consider how they will action and create concrete plans so that this can be a transformative initiative.
- Senators were reminded that this document is still at the formative stage. Once a final document has been created, that suggested action would be appropriate. Resources will also have to be committed to this initiative.
- EMG recently approved a new Employment Equity and Diversity Policy for the university and that will help to put some of these actions in place (see link below). A communication will come soon on this.  
<https://www.smu.ca/webfiles/SMUEmploymentEquityandDiversityPolicy.pdf>

**.03** Discussion: How will the partnership with D2L and Ellucian improve the learner experience at Saint Mary's?

**Key Discussion Points:**

- In the VPAR's report, there was an appendix that addresses this item.

**Digital Learning at Saint Mary's**

- In early 2020, Saint Mary's considered upgrading administrative systems, based on the Ellucian Banner system. As the university went "virtual" due to the pandemic, and IT services were reorganized, it was realized that there was an opportunity to link acquiring the services needed for course delivery, student support, and administrative upgrades into a coordinated package.
- The goal was not to direct how these services would be used, but to provide a toolkit that faculty and staff could draw upon according to their needs and wishes, and readily find the supports they need – in contrast to our past history.
- There are several packages and services now available. A decision on when/how to implement them is needed. The Digital Learning Strategy consultations will inform some of these, where they relate to the classroom experience. Others that relate more to student services are being reviewed with key offices on campus working in relevant areas. Some specific examples are:
  - Brightspace
    - Gamification/Interactivity
    - Insights
    - Student Success

- LEaP
- and
- Ellucian Banner/ERPS
  - CRM Advise
  - Workflow
  - Document Management
  - Student Financial Aid
  - Student Account Receivable
  - CRM Recruit phases 2 & 3
  - Degree Works phase 2
  - Courseleaf
  - Intelligent Learning Platform
  - Reporting and Analytics (e.g., Ethos)

**21090**

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 4:23 P.M.

Barb Bell,  
Secretary of Senate