

SENATE MEETING MINUTES June 11, 2021

The 627th meeting of the Senate of Saint Mary's University was held on Friday, June 11, 2021, at 2:00 PM, in the Secunda Marine Boardroom. 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 Higgins, Dr O'Brien, Dr Panasian, Dr Power, Dr Stinson, Dr Takseva, Mr Brophy, Ms van den Hoogen, Mr Southwell, Ms Cadeau, Ms Mihika, Mr Sydney, Mr Tumusiime, Dr Smith, Dr Fridell, Dr Zhyznomirska, Mr Kay, Ms Milton, Ms Sergeant-Greenwood, and Ms Bell, Secretary to the Office of Senate.

REGRETS: Dr Twohig, Dr Hart, and Ms Killam.

Due to connectivity issues the meeting commenced at 2:15 P.M. with the territorial acknowledgement. Senate acknowledged and expressed sincere regrets and sympathies regarding the residential school tragedy that has recently been reported.

21112 REPORT OF AGENDA COMMITTEE

Question: Can we have an update on the status of Recommendation 12 from the Biology Program Review. Answer: This was covered during the June APC meeting but because of the short window between the meetings of APC and Senate and the necessity to review the revised response with the Biology Chair, this item was deferred to July. The Agenda Committee report was accepted.

21113 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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

Discovery and Innovation in a Learning-centred environment

- The President continues to (virtually) attend meetings with colleagues across Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the US and the UK on Military, Veterans and Families Wellbeing. This has included recent meetings with colleagues at the University of Alberta whose model for 'veteran friendly campuses' may be a good fit for Saint Mary's and other universities in Nova Scotia.
- The President attended a (virtual) meeting of the Rectors' Council for member universities of the University of the Arctic consortium, initiating from Reykjavik, Iceland, at which continued opportunities for northern and circumpolar research were identified.

Intercultural Learning

- The President participated in a session on the prevention of Anti-Asian racism and related topics. Members of the standing Committee on the Prevention of Racism and other Saint Mary's colleagues have been attending a forum on anti-Asian racism over the past two days, organized by the University of British Columbia.
- The National Dialogues Advisory Committee on the Scarborough Charter met again last week to identify a strategy of engagement with Universities Canada and to further refine the Charter itself based on continuing feedback from universities and colleges across Canada.
- The President attended a panel session on 'Gender, Interculturality, and Inclusion' as part of the Congress of University Policies on Gender, Interculturality and Inclusion hosted by Universidad Veracruzana.

Institutional Sustainability

- Work continues to be done on access for international students to Canada and to Saint Mary's. Key issues include lobbying (through Universities Canada, CBIE, IRCC and the AAU) for improvements in visa processing times, public health and quarantine regulations, vaccination policies, and the continuation of the post-graduate work permit for students studying online but outside Canada.
- Universities Canada continues its series of 'leadership discussions'; Last week, the President participated in a discussion with Right Honourable Brian Mulroney
- The government relations file continues to be very active. In the past month, the President's meetings have included discussions with Ambassador Cong of the Chinese Embassy, conversations with Minister Tony Ince on diversity strategies, Councillor Wayne Mason, and along with the president of the Nova Scotia Community College, participating in the Mayor of Halifax's 'Mike Drop' podcast.
- A key element of government relations has been the constant engagement with Labour and Advanced Education and Public Health on changing guidelines and requirements. The Return to Campus Committee, colleagues in Facilities Management and many others have been working as we prepare for a full return to campus. Senators will have seen the announcement made to all members of the Saint Mary's community this week. Continued commitment to public health measures will be the focus as the return to campus takes place and your support of these measures is requested.
- The President has been engaged with the newly formed NS Economic Growth Council with its focus on identifying and overcoming obstacles for economic, social, and cultural growth in our province.
- The past month has seen various annual and quarterly meetings of Universities Canada, Atlantic Universities Sports, CONSUP, and CBIE and continued work with EduNova, the BlackNorth Initiative Education Committee, the Canada-China Business Council, and the National Dialogues committee (as noted earlier)
- In the past month also, we have held meetings of the David Sobey Centre for Retail Innovation committee and the Sobey Endowment &

Scholarship Endowment, along with continued discussions with prospective donors.

- Ms. Jodi Hirtle joined SMU on June 7th as Executive Assistant to the President. She joins us from Nova Scotia Health and brings considerable experience to her new role.

21114

VICE-PRESIDENT ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH REPORT

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

Key Discussion Points:

- Public Health approved the university framework for return to campus in the Fall. EIT is working to review and update technology in classrooms where required, and the Studio (SAS in particular) is ready to assist faculty with any further assistance needed for course delivery in the Fall.
- Following up on the diversity and inclusion subject, we recently joined the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion. Faculty and staff can use their SMU email to access 30 minute “Onboarding” sessions offered for any interested faculty and staff - <https://ccdi.ca/new-employer-partner-onboarding/> Their knowledge repository is accessible by registering at: <https://ccdi.ca/knowledge-repository-registration/>
- Once the decanal searches are nearer completion, we will return to the consultations around the diversity strategy. We will also address the oversight of the strategy and various related initiatives (such as our engagement with the Scarborough Charter and the Black North Initiative) at that time. Earlier this year the Department of Labour and Advanced Education (LAE) provided us with \$1.3 million, intended to support initiatives to increase the numbers of BIPOC students studying computer science. There will be a public announcement next week related to the partnership with the Tribe Network. We are deploying a substantial fraction of these funds to open more pathways to post-secondary education by partnering with the Tribe Network. We will work with the Tribe Network’s Brilliant Creators Fellowship Program, that is available to youth ages 15-18 in Nova Scotia who identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour, and are interested in developing skills in computer science and technology, leadership, and sustainable development. This fraction of the funding will provide the ability for mentoring students through high school and beyond. It will provide programming support and some travel support so students can engage in the program. Some of the funding will provide internships to provide student with experience related to their programs. The remainder of the funds will address access to relevant graduate programs at SMU.

21115

SMUSA PRESIDENT’S REPORT (Academic focus)

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

Key Discussion Points:

- **Advocacy and External Update – Students NS** 1) SNS has hired a new Executive Director (Lydia Houck). The SMUSA team has met with her to begin establishing a relationship. 2) The SMUSA VP External Affairs and the SMUSA VP Advocacy have both been elected to serve on the SNS Board. Adrian White, SMUSA VP External was elected Chair for the Policy

Committee. Kyle Cook, SMUSA VP Advocacy was elected Chair of the Membership Committee. These members have been meeting with the SNS Executive Director, the Department of Labour and Advanced Education, and the deputy minister on student needs related to the pandemic.

- **Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA)** – 1) Kyle Cook, SMUSA VP Advocacy is a member of the Board of CASA and was elected as Director of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. This year, his focus is to work with CASA’s National Indigenous Advisory Committee and the Governance and Internal Review Committee to ensure the revitalization of Indigenous knowledge and that equitable governance policies are established.
- **Continuing to Address Student Concerns** – Over the summer SMUSA will be gathering student feedback about concerns around affordability, transparency, and the quality of education. In addition, SMUSA will identify some expectations and concerns related to returning to campus in the fall.
- **Upcoming Fall Semester Planning** – 1) International Students have concerns about travel restrictions for the upcoming fall semester. The exorbitant costs of quarantine measures are a major concern and impediment for these students and would like the university to advocate for a lessening of these measures or subsidization for students. 2) Return to Campus – Students still feel the return to campus plan is unclear and want an outline for what to expect for the fall semester in terms of social distance requirements, mask mandate policy, on campus events, or any action plan on what the university is going to do in the event of an outbreak on campus.
- **Welcome Week** – SMUSA is working with Student Services to prepare for on campus events for the fall. Ideas and expectations at other universities are being reviewed.
- **Academic Appeals Process** – SMUSA has been dealing with an extensive number of academic integrity and academic grade appeals. The volume is concerning. The executive is strategizing ideas to increase student awareness related to avoiding making these academic mistakes.
- **Internal Affairs** – SMUSA has hired Miss Allison Banfield as a full time new Marketing and Communications Manager. Miss Banfield will be responsible for managing all SMUSA social media platforms, creating and posting content, and managing the SMUSA website.
- **New Health Plan Coordinator** – Miss Valerie Lively, Health Plan Coordinator is retiring this July. An open application process was initiated, and candidates are being reviewed pending the interview process.
- **Husky Vans** – Due to age and increasing maintenance issues, two new vans have been purchased to replace the older vehicles and provide husky services.

21116

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

Key Discussion Points:

- Question: Please provide a status update regarding changes to the University Act. Answer: No further progress has been made due to the pandemic. There

have been reports of a possible pending election. It is unlikely that the changes to the University Act will be put forward to the current legislature.

- Question. The Hub has been referred to as the EDI Hub. Are we going to rename this development? Answer: Yes. We started this project with the name 'The Entrepreneurship, Development and Innovation Hub'. Due to the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) initiative, we have been working to develop an alternative concept name and to name the various sections of the development appropriately. The proposed name for the piece of the construction that is attached to the Sobey Building is with the donor for consideration.
- Concern was expressed regarding the expected issues related to the return to campus. Response: Public Health approved the university framework for a return to campus in the fall. There will be an update next week to inform students of the plan. There is a new model coming in relation to the quarantine requirements and we are waiting for confirmation of approval of that model.
- The President advised that there is continued discussion with and lobbying of the government offices in this regard. Clarity is emerging. There is a difference in quarantine requirements depending on the offices and provincial requirements across the country. International students are being allowed to enter the province, but domestic students are not allowed to enter the province to study online. The dynamic has flipped somewhat. The President asked Senators to emphasize the importance of vaccinations in this regard.
- Members were advised that LAE asked SMU to delay communicating to students pending the government announcements from Dr Strang which will be coming soon.

21117

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the meeting of May 14, 2021, were *circulated* as **Appendix D**.

In the absence of any objections, the minutes of the meeting of May 14, 2021, are approved as circulated.

21118

BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

.01

QAM report – Recommendation 2 and 9, **Appendix J**

Key Discussion Points:

- The action plan was approved in the fall and submitted to MPHEC. They responded asking for more clarity on our responses to recommendations 2 and 9.
- The consent of the assembly was requested to consider a motion without the stipulated notice.
- Concern was expressed regarding the short timeframe provided to members to review this documentation and consider the motion. Response: The short timeframe is directly related to there being only two days between the APC and Senate meetings this month. In addition, MPHEC expected a response by June 18. If necessary, we can address this with MPHEC and defer this proposal to the July Senate meeting.
- Question: Should there be revisions to the University Act to respond to Recommendation 2? Answer: The University Secretary advised that this was

not something that the Board would consider. We were looking at potential solutions short of changes to the Act to address this recommendation.

- There is a statement in the last paragraph “Senate has an opportunity to consider how it can equip its board faculty representatives to engage or initiate conversations at the board table related to program quality.” The faculty members elected to the Board of Governors are not necessarily members of the Academic Senate. Consequently, Senate does not have Board faculty representatives. Answer: This section was referring to the fact that those faculty members could be a conduit between the Board and Senate.
- Question: Would there be an opportunity to liaise with faculty members on the Board in this regard? Answer: We would need to do this carefully in full consideration of the governance restrictions of both bodies.
- An error was noted in the last paragraph of Recommendation 2: The Budget Steering Committee is to be corrected to be the Budget Advisory Committee.
- Suggestion: Since the Board is still deliberating their governance structure, perhaps it is a good time to have the Board consider having a Senate member sitting on the Board?
- The Chair advised that the University Secretary invited her to discuss opportunities in this regard. The Chair will communicate the suggestion of adding a Senate member in her discussion with the Board.

.02 Academic Integrity Foundations course update – Ms van den Hoogen (from May 2021), **Appendix K**

Key Discussion Points:

- SMUSA raised a recommendation that these modules be made mandatory for students. This has been considered a supportive acknowledgement of this course by the students.
- The workshop is 75 minutes and involves members from the library, studio and SMUSA. All students are welcome to take this course, but the course seems to have taken on a remedial aspect. This is because students that have an AI incident are encouraged to or are required to take this course.
- Most students have indicated they are able to take this course in a shorter period of time than is suggested. It is meant to be educational and preventative, and not necessarily remedial.
- Feedback has indicated that taking this course has decreased the number of AI accidental incidents. This indicates there are benefits within this course.
- We have made this course available for all faculty to use in their courses. We would like to proceed with promoting the course to all faculty so that they may incorporate it into their classes. We seek the endorsement of the Academic Senate in this regard to raise awareness about this tool.
- The library is more than happy to provide guest access to the AI modules if Senate members would like to review the modules.
- Although SMUSA has recommended that this course be required, there are a lot of policies and regulation changes that would be required. We would rather encourage faculty to raise awareness of these tools and then assess how we can implement this module.

- Cindy Harrigan and Heather Sanderson were thanked for all their work on this course.
- Question: Have there been situations at other universities where students have been required to complete this training as part of a course and could not gain access to their course materials on Brightspace or to their final grades until they completed this AI Foundations course? Answer: We contacted Memorial University because they use this approach. It appears in every student's Brightspace account, and they must complete it to advance.
- Senators were advised that a motion may be brought before Senate, but there is no such thing as an endorsement. A motion is included within Appendix K.
- Concern was expressed to be sure that whatever is approved includes graduate students.

Moved by Van de Hoogen and seconded, **“that the library continue to the make Academic Integrity Foundations course available to all faculty who wish to use it in their courses, and begin conversations with necessary individuals/departments to explore the opportunity to create a mandatory offering for all Saint Mary's students.” Motion carried.**

.03 Team Teaching - What it means and how we could support team teaching going forward in both an on-campus and remote teaching environment (April 2021) (presenting the results of the faculty survey on team teaching experiences at Saint Mary's – Dr Veronica Stinson; presenting the results of a study on collaborative team teaching in the Faculty of Arts - Dr Lyubov Zhyznomirska). Survey results –

Appendix I

Key Discussion Points:

- The survey results of faculty members with the experience of team teaching are available in Appendix I. During the April Senate meeting, the Agenda Committee was tasked to survey the faculty involved in team teaching and ask them to talk to Senate about their experience. This turned into a significant task.
- Dr Stinson created a survey and from the survey results it appears there is an appetite for teaching in teams. Members were advised that the views expressed in the survey are only the views of the people who chose to share those with us. Ten faculty members responded to an anonymous survey.
- Senators were advised that Dr Lyubov Zhyznomirska has done research in this area with a particular focus on the Faculty of Arts. **Action Item: Zhyznomirska** will share that research with Butler.
- Dr Zhyznomirska's research included surveying the students enrolled in team-taught courses in the 2018-2019 academic year and interviewing faculty members teaching in teams in 2008-2019. This included surveying students in two courses that were team-taught in the fall of 2018 in the Faculty of Arts and interviewing 10 faculty members. Overall, five courses have been offered by teams of instructors since the 1990s. In comparison, the 2006 survey of team teaching at the University of Toronto included 50 courses in their study.
- Students have benefited from team teaching. They find it interesting and novel. They find multiple perspectives useful for their own critical thinking skills. Students appreciate when courses are coherent. This can be done in

several ways. Team teaching allows us to offer innovative content. It allows faculty to expand their pedagogical tools and they can incorporate more things into their courses.

- A key point to note is that the workload is not reduced. The more integrated and collaborative the teaching, the more time it takes. The university needs to recognize the work and time that is required to assist faculty to integrate pedagogies. Institutional culture will need to change to view team teaching as professional development.
- An example of institutional support is that UBC has a grant to support building these teams. There is work before and after the course and time related to negotiations and development related to integrating pedagogical approaches.
- We have examples at SMU. There are four course offerings that involve three in a team and one that involves five in a team.
- There will be more on this to come in the Fall.

21119 REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

.01 Academic Planning Committee

- a) Proposal to transform the International Development Studies Program into a Department with a new name: The Department of Global Development Studies (GDST), **Appendix E1** – APC Notice of Motion, **Appendix E2** – Proposal (Dr Fridell present to answer any questions)

Key Discussion Points:

- This program has become a large and complex program, and it was thought that the department structure would be appropriate.

Moved by Butler and seconded, **“that the proposal to transform the International Development Studies (IDST) Program to The Department of Global Development Studies (GDST) is approved as submitted in Appendix E2.” Motion carried.**

- b) MPHEC Program Modification Proposal - International Development Studies Program, **Appendix F1** – APC Notice of Motion, **Appendix F2** – Proposal, and **Appendix F3** – Appendices.

Key Discussion Points:

- The program remains the same. Only the program name is changing, but that must be submitted to MPHEC as a program modification.

Moved by Butler and seconded, **“that the MPHEC Program Modification Proposal to revise the International Development Studies (IDST) Program to The Global Development Studies (GDST) Program is approved as submitted in Appendix F2.” Motion carried.**

- c) 8-1015 Senate Policy on the Review of Programs at Saint Mary’s University revision, **Appendix G1** – APC Notice of Motion, **Appendix G2** – Revised Policy 8-1015.

Key Discussion Points:

- APC ran out of time at their meeting on June 9 and was unable to address this agenda item. It was deferred and will be submitted to Senate once approved.

.02 Academic Regulations Committee

- a) Revisions to Academic Regulations: **Appendix H1** – ARC Notice of Motion, **Appendix H2** – Glossary, Academic Regulations 8, 10, 18, & 30.

Key Discussion Points:

- Question: in AR 8 I on page 3 – Why is the last sentence, “Instructors should not request that students contact or visit medical professionals solely for the purpose of obtaining medical documentation for acute illnesses....” included in an academic regulation? What happens if a faculty member does ask for this? Answer: We do not require medical notes at Saint Mary’s. A few years ago, the Department of Health requested that Universities not require a medical note from students. It could be restated that “Instructors cannot require medical notes from students.” It is included to make it clear that medical notes cannot be required.
- There may be times when a student has had multiple opportunities to do a rewrite where this might be necessary.
- It was suggested that we revise this to read “**shall not normally**”. This phrase is found throughout the regulations. This was accepted as an amendment to the main motion. Revised text below:

In the case of extenuating circumstances that will or have resulted in a missed test or examination during the teaching period, students should complete and submit to their instructor a Declaration of Extenuating Circumstances form, available from the student’s Academic Advising Office. Instructors **shall not normally** ~~should not~~ request that students contact or visit medical professionals solely for the purpose of obtaining medical documentation for acute illnesses that impact assessments held during the teaching period.

- Concern was expressed that we need to improve the training process. When training new faculty, we need to provide clear guidelines on this issue.
- Question: AR 8d - It is unclear what the intent is regarding take home exams. These cannot be issued until the last day of classes, but what if the instructor wants to provide a 24-hour period for the exam? Answer: A take home exam cannot be sent out on the last day of classes with a 24-hour or 48-hour requirement because that would place the final evaluation component within the study days. It can be scheduled that way within the exam period with a 24-hour window.
- Question: Can a project that is assigned earlier in the course be required to be submitted by the last day of the exam period? Answer: Yes.
- Question: AR 8 j - What is meant by the term “in writing”? Answer: It does not necessarily mean on paper. It means electronic as well as on paper.
- Question: AR 18 - The AI change (page 11) appears confusing. In this situation why is the Dean getting involved? Answer: The point is that it is not reasonable to require the student to file an appeal if the faculty member has

obviously violated the Academic Regulation. The section is shown below with revisions highlighted:

If a student is subject to a penalty for an academic integrity issue that is applied outside of the processes detailed in this regulation, the student may file an academic appeal. In such a situation, if it is determined by the Dean of the Faculty in which the course is offered that the penalty imposed has affected the student's course grade, the Dean may impose an alternate grade for the course.

An example of a situation is where a faculty files an AI report, but then decides to contact the student for a discussion and then assigns their own consequence. That is the point where it is proposed that the Dean can act. Once the AI process is initiated, the faculty member must step away and allow the process to continue. This was the reason for this revision.

- The Dean can decide that the faculty member has violated the process and correct the situation so that the student does not have to file an appeal. Question: Perhaps we need to make this system more user friendly, so it is not onerous to the student. This is only the Dean's perspective.
- It was suggested that this revision be removed. Answer: This is the only time the Dean can take this authority. It is unfair to make the student appeal when there is clearly an error that has been made by the instructor.
- Question: Is the point that the faculty cannot appeal the Dean's decision? Answer: Yes.
- There should be a mechanism to correct errors. The current approach assumes infallibility by our Deans (as excellent as they might be, nobody is perfect).
- If the point is to save the student the trouble of appealing, then there is an issue with the sentence before this section which states that the student can file an appeal. One of the reasons for allowing an appeal is that the process has not been followed.
- Question: How would the Dean change the grade? Would they review the work? Answer: It would depend on the situation. If the faculty member has violated the process, the Dean would be able to intervene. Example: the AIO has given a decision and instructed the faculty member to submit a grade change, but the instructor failed the student anyway; the Dean can step in and correct that situation.
- It was noted that within AR 18, the revision to the name of the Academic Integrity Appeal Board has not been corrected. **Action item: Bell** to revise to include this revision.
- The proposed revisions to AR 18 were withdrawn.
- Question: On AR 30, Dean's List – We have changed from being specific on the grade. We will need to revisit this in several years, so we should reinsert the 4.3s. Answer: It is under b. (3.7 out of 4.3). This was necessary several years ago, but it is not the current situation. The minimum is 3.7. If a student has a GPA of 3.9, they will automatically be on the Dean's List. This is already stipulated in a.
- The suggestion was to change "3.7" to "**3.7 or above**". This amendment to the main motion was accepted (see highlighted revisions below).

c. Students who do not fall into the above two categories may officially apply for placement on the [Dean's List](#). Reasons for placement include:

i. Students who have completed both a work term and 15 credit hours from May to April with a GPA of 3.7 or above.

ii. Students, in their final year, who have completed at least 24 credit hours from May to April with a GPA of 3.7 or above.

iii. Students who have completed courses from another postsecondary institution with an approved LOP, when combined with courses taken at Saint Mary's, totals 30 credit hours from May to April with a GPA of 3.7 or above.

iv. Students who have completed 30 credit hours over consecutive months with a GPA of 3.7 or above.

- The revisions to Academic Regulations 18 and 20 will be submitted to the July Senate meeting.

Moved by Smith on behalf of the Academic Regulations Committee and seconded, **“that the revisions to the Glossary and Academic Regulations 8, 10 & 30 are approved as revised in the discussion above.” Motion carried.**

.03 Senate Committee on Learning and Teaching – Inclusive Language Statement (Takseva, De Fuentes, Krishnamurti,)

Key Discussion Points:

- Senate approved this statement previously and it has been posted on the website. We recently made updates related to disability. There are updates to the language in the document. Takseva worked on this document with external affairs and the studio to update the current version with an accessible version of it on the website.
- Updates to the document are welcomed annually.
- Inclusive Language is a section within the University Style Guide. It includes a link to the SMU Inclusive Language Statement which is the document developed by senate committee.
<https://www.smu.ca/styleguide/inclusivelanguage/>
- The document can be accessed at <https://www.smu.ca/about/inclusive-language.html>

21120 NEW BUSINESS FROM

None.

21121 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:27 P.M.

Barb Bell,
Secretary of Senate