

SENATE MEETING MINUTES January 21, 2022

The 632nd meeting of the Senate of Saint Mary's University was held on Friday, January 21, 2022, at 2:00 PM. Dr Takseva Chairperson, presided. This was a virtual meeting, and a zoom link was provided.

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

REGRETS: Dr Higgins, Mr Sydney, Mr Tumusiime,

The meeting was called to order at 2:04 pm with the territorial acknowledgement.

22054 **REPORT OF AGENDA COMMITTEE**
The Agenda Committee report was accepted.

22055 **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**
Posted as **Appendix A** for this meeting (10 min).

Key Discussion Points:

Discovery and Innovation in a Learning-Centered Environment

- We have just completed two successful weeks of on-line learning
- Two undergraduate Engineering students have won the Atlantic Engineering regional competition and will advance to national competitions. These are the same two students that won last year. These students succeeded over students from much larger engineering schools.
- Examples of research success over the past weeks were applauded. These including the announcement of funding from Canada's New Frontiers Research Fund for Arramãt, a new Canadian-based project led by Indigenous peoples, in response to the global biodiversity and health crisis and involving over 150 Indigenous organizations, universities, and other partners – including Dr. Tony Charles from Saint Mary's
- Our President has been appointed to the Research Nova Scotia Board, providing Saint Mary's with representation on this Board.

Intercultural Learning

- Our President has completed his four-year term on the Canadian Bureau for International Education.
- The President will continue to participate on the National Dialogue Advisory Committee (Scarborough Charter).

- Related, Senate's recommendation to the Governance Committee of the Board of Governors will be considered by that committee at its next meeting and conveyed to the Board thereafter. In addition, a small group (including the AVP Diversity Excellence and the Equity and Diversity Advisor) will meet early next week regarding immediate items in the action plan presented to Senate at the last meeting

Institutional Sustainability

- Discussions continue concerning gifts to Saint Mary's with a particular focus on scholarships for Diversity Excellence and other priorities identified in the campaign.
- The President continues to work with both provincial and federal governments to identify sources of funding for projects of value to Saint Mary's, including meeting this morning with the federal Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
- Diligent work continues through the Senior Management Group to mitigate budget challenges as we close fiscal 2022.
- Development of the budget for fiscal 2023 is underway, including consultation with the Budget Advisory Committee. We are currently on target for the timelines, including subsequent presentations to Senate and the Board in March
- Senate's attention was drawn to two collaboration discussions underway with partner universities:
 - First, with Atlantic School of Theology regarding incorporation of their needs for student information systems, learning management system and finance, and information technology. Senators may know that we have had an affiliation agreement with AST since 2002.
 - Second, initial discussions with Universite Sainte Anne regarding shared programming and delivery here in Halifax. I will update Senate as these discussions continue.
- We are in the process of populating a committee for the search for the position of Provost. We would like two faculty members to be chosen by Senate.

Action item: Bell

Questions:

- Question: Is there an update on the hiring on a new advisor in the positions of indigenous and black African advisor? Answer: These positions are ready to post on Monday. We had a failed search early last term and are having to initiate another search.
- Question: Concerning the item under Institutional Sustainability related to collaboration with AST, we already have a collaboration between SMU and AST for the graduate program in the study of religion. A couple of meetings ago Senate members discussed the joint committee we have for that purpose. Has Sarty followed up? Answer: The President's discussions are part of that follow-up.

22056

VICE-PRESIDENT ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH REPORT

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

Key Discussion Points:

- We did not see the expected bump in enrollment this term due to many factors. There are positive signals for the future, but many of the related factors remain out of our control, for example the restrictions related to international travel.
- Enrolment statistics were presented to Senators.
- Dr Strang has stressed the importance of returning to in person education in the post-secondary institutions.
- Dr VanderPlaat has volunteered to field inquiries related to COVID's impact on educational factors. There may be a situation that could require a call for action that will require a special meeting of the Senate.
- Question: SMUFU recently circulated a request that is gaining a certain amount of support from faculty related to the return to in-person classes. Is there and update? Answer: There are conditions related to accommodation for medical conditions.
- After the last announcement from Dr Strang, there is an expectation for a return to campus. We must work towards that expectation, and it will be important to help people overcome the fears that have been generated over the past two years.
- The President advised that a letter from SMUFU was received at the end of last week and a response is being prepared. We are continuing to work with everyone to get the questions answered.

22057

SMUSA PRESIDENT'S REPORT (Academic)

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

Key Discussion Points:

- At the virtual CASA advocacy week in Ottawa in February, SMUSA will address the following: financial barriers to post-secondary education, health and wellness, educational materials, Indigenous students, and international students.
- SMUSA participated in Students Nova Scotia (SNS) lobbying the provincial government to reduce the time students must wait before having access to Medical Service Insurance (MSI) from 13 to 3 months.
- The President, SMUSA met with the immigration minister last week and lobbied for increased investments into Co-op programs, Graduate to Opportunity (GTO) programs, and other experiential learning opportunities that would afford our students more job experience opportunities.
- Participation at the virtual welcome week events was low. Those attending expressed interest in more guidance on under what circumstances in-person components would be suspended and how information will be communicated.
- The SMUSA Board and President election process has been initiated and calls for nominations will go out next week with the elections being held in February.
- The final calendar for black history month events should be complete by next week. It will include guest speaking event, trivia night, barbershop talk, movie night, and more.

22058

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

Key Discussion Points:

- Addressed after each presentation above.

22059

WINTER GRADUATION LIST

Documentation to be circulated at the meeting by the Registrar as **Appendix D**.
(Hard copies to Deans and Senate Office File only)

Key Discussion Points:

- There were four graduates on this list that asked that their names not be included on this list. This would be for valid personal reasons.
- There are 318 graduates, 12 of which are receiving more than one credential and 38 with distinctions.

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

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

22060

PROFESSOR EMERITUS RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation for Professor Emeritus status for Dr Pádraig Ó Siadhail, Department of Irish Studies, **Appendix L**.

Key Discussion Points:

- Dr. Ó Siadhail’s service to the university spans 1987 through 2022. He plans to retire in August 2022.
- During his tenure at Saint Mary’s, he has done extensive research, sustained excellence in teaching, and purposeful community engagement. He developed the profile of Irish Studies at home and abroad and been the driving force behind the ongoing collaboration with the Ireland Canada University Foundation.
- Dr. Ó Siadhail remains active as a researcher. He is presently working to complete a major research project, “Seán Breanach (1891-1967): From Ireland’s Irish-Language Revival to Apartheid-Era South Africa”. Access to scholarly resources will be critical, and the status of Professor Emeritus is a fitting way to provide access to these while recognizing Dr. O Siadhail’s ongoing productivity. We feel certain he will make judicious use of the honour and contribute even further to the international reputation of Saint Mary’s.

Moved by Summerby-Murray and seconded **“that Senate approves the recommendation to award emeritus status to Dr. Ó Siadhail of the Department of Irish Studies for forwarding to the Board of Governors according to 8-1001 Senate Policy – Professor Emeritus. Motion carried.**

22061

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

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

There being no objections or revisions, **the minutes of the meeting of December 17, 2021, were accepted into the recorded as posted.**

22062

BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS AGENDAS

None.

22063

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

1. Academic Integrity Committee (Dr Takseva)
Terms of Reference – revision as per Senate request, **Appendix F.**

Key Discussion Points:

- The committee approved the following revision.
 - 5.2.2.2 The composition of this committee shall be as follows:
 1. The Chairperson of Senate or designate (who shall chair).
 2. The Academic Integrity Officers.
 3. The Academic Discipline Officer.
 4. One representative from the Academic Discipline Integrity Appeal Board.
 5. One representative from the Registrar’s Office.
 6. One representative appointed by the library.
 7. One student appointed by the Students’ Association; and
 8. Secretary of Senate (secretary)

Moved by VanderPlaat and seconded, “**that the revision to the composition of the Academic Integrity Committee is approved as submitted in Appendix F.**”
Motion carried.

2. Academic Planning Committee (Dr Butler).
a) Revision to 8-1015 Senate Policy on the Review of Program at Saint Mary’s University, **Appendix G.**

Key Discussion Points:

- A typographical error was noted under m, see below:
 - m. The program will develop ~~of~~ an Action Plan based on the Senate Report, which is to be submitted to the Academic Planning Committee within 60days of receiving the Senate Report.
- Article 5 N and O – the articles of the Academic Plan hinged on the date of the approval of the program review in Senate. If there was any delay due to communications between the program and APC, that created a situation where a program did not have the 12-month time frame to accomplish the items in the action plan for the one-year report. In the spirit of fairness to all programs the APC proposed the following amendment:

Moved by Butler and seconded, “**that the revisions to 8-1015 Senate Policy on the Review of Program at Saint Mary’s University as submitted in Appendix G are approved as revised above.**” **Motion carried.**

- b) APC Terms of Reference, **Appendix H.**

Key Discussion Points:

- This is a minor change to item four. In the existing TOR, there is a qualifier that encourages overlap with Budget and Curriculum but because of the significant workload of APC member.
- Question: Why was there Initially a link to those two committees? 5.2.4.5 says to be mindful of article 5.1.2. Answer: That was trying to guide the link to budget and curriculum through membership. There are other ways

of accomplishing this. During the discussion APC members noted that the Deans serve on APC and are also part of the Budget Committee. There is also a link with the Curriculum Committee through Dr Will Kay and the current chair of that committee on the APC. There is a challenge of tying the members of APC to the members of Senate. It was there as a suggestion, but it has never practically been possible.

5.2.4.6 The composition of the committee shall be as follows:

- 1. The Vice-President, Academic and Research who shall chair the committee.
- 2. The Associate Vice President Academic & Enrolment Management.
- 3. The Dean of each Faculty.
- 4. Three faculty members, one from each Faculty, ~~including as far as possible one who is also a member of the Budget Committee and one who is also a member of the Curriculum Committee.~~
- 5. The University Librarian.
- 6. The Associate Vice-President, Teaching and Learning.
- 7. One student appointed by the Students' Association; and
- 8. Secretary of Senate (secretary).

Moved by Butler and seconded, **“that the revision to the composition of the Academic Planning Committee is approved as submitted in Appendix H.”**
Motion carried.

3. Agenda Committee (Dr Stinson)

Terms of Reference – revision as per Senate request, **Appendix I.**

Key Discussion Points:

- This was approved in December. No further action necessary.

4. Student Conduct Committee (Dr Stinson)

Terms of Reference – revision as per Senate request, **Appendix J.**

Key Discussion Points:

- These were minor changes. Discussion established that the term “members” was too vague. It was suggested to revise the line to read members of Academic Staff.
 - 5.2.16.3 4 The composition of the Committee on Student Conduct shall be as follows:
 - 1. Three ~~faculty~~ members **of Academic Staff** appointed by Senate, one of whom shall chair the committee, and one of whom shall be the ~~faculty~~ member appointed by Senate to the Adjudication Panel constituted for the purposes of an appeal.
 - 2. **Associate Vice President**, ~~Senior Director of~~ Student Affairs and Services or designate.
 - 3. Two students appointed by the Students' Association

Moved by Stinson and seconded, **“that the revision to the composition of the Student Conduct Committee is approved as submitted in Appendix J with the revision above.”** Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS FROM

1. Floor (not involving notice of motion)

a) 2021 Report on Positive Action to Improve the Employment of Women, Aboriginal Peoples, Visible minorities, and People with Disabilities at Saint Mary's University, **Appendix K**

Key Discussion Points:

- According to current Federal Employment Equity Act Guidelines, underrepresentation is considered significant if the number gap is -3 or greater (note that while the gap is referred to as -3 or greater, the actual numerical value is -3 or less, i.e., -3, -4, -5, etc.), and if the percentage gap is 80% or less of the labour market expectation. For purposes of applying this Guideline, the percentage gap represents the number of employees self-identified in relation to the labour market expectation. For example, 395 survey respondents self-identified as women; this represents 106.3 % of the labour market expectation of 372. Based on this Guideline, relative to survey respondents at Saint Mary's University, members of visible minorities and aboriginals are underrepresented.
- Attention was drawn to table 5b at the bottom of page 5 that speaks to those identified gaps. In Science and Arts there are significant gaps. This may only be one person because of our low numbers but we need to keep this in mind as we move forward. One of our challenges has been addressing these gaps and having processes follow. There will be a collaborative effort across the university to make progress in this area.
- Question: Are there any longer-term reports following the trends on an institutional basis? Answer: We have had conversations with Brothers-Scott about this and work will be done in this area going forward. Previously we have not had the tools to address this issue and that is being addressed now.
- Question: Would we be able to look at faculty rank in addition to the number of equity deserving faculty? Is there something within the contractors' program that makes this difficult? Answer: We need a deeper and more informative census on campus that tracks these things over time. We are finally in a place where we can do this. This will happen, probably not in the 10.4 report but in other areas.
- There are many recent studies that will inform our efforts. It will be important to create a more informed definition of inclusions as we define ourselves.

b) Presentation – role of AVP Diversity Excellence – Dr Bannerjee

Key Discussion Points:

- Bannerjee has been working with telecommunications groups and with our communications group to address the accessibility communication issues on campus.
- A lot of the work of Diversity Excellence will be outside of the parameters of the 10.4 report. A greater conversation is underway with Mark Moffat concerning greater representation on campus.
- It was noted that there are several challenges with populating Senate Committees. Bannerjee and Milton have also discussed opportunities for a different approach. It was noted that the call that goes out for members to

serve on these committees is generic and open. The call for those to serve on the Senate is accompanied by a list of those eligible. Perhaps we could change the approach to that process. As a minimum, we could include a statement from Senate that the desire is for a table that is diverse and inclusive.

- One of the issues in the current approach is that the same people are rotating through these committees and that is because of the low number of representatives of these equity groups on campus. We need to think about advocating that seats on Senate be filled by a member from an equity group.
- Unconscious bias training – Bannerjee and Brothers-Scott are working on developing training and hoping to offer it to Senate in the future. We are hoping to get good uptake of these offerings.
- Question: Is the statement you ask to be used in recruiting something like that used in the job description? Answer: Yes.
- When the call for nominations for Senators is circulated for an election, we could include a reminder that we are looking to diversifying our Senate. We could say something like we wish to ensure that the representation on Senate is as diverse as possible. The more we raise this idea the more faculty will consider this approach to populating Senate.
- **Action Item: Bell** to invite Bannerjee to attend the upcoming meeting of the Elections Committee.

c) 1 Vacancy – University Budget Advisory Committee (call for nomination)

Key Discussion Points:

- In some faculties, the individuals that represent equity deserving groups are serving in that capacity on several other groups both internally and externally. It becomes a challenge of workload and individual capacity. As a result, it becomes very difficult for the Deans to fill this requirement.
- It was acknowledged that we need more people representing these groups so that the same people are not serving repeatedly.
- No recommendation was brought forward.
- **Action Item: The Deans** were asked to follow up in the next week.
- **Action Item: Bell** to follow up with the Deans next week.

22065

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:35 P.M.

Barb Bell,
Secretary of Senate