



SENATE

Approved Minutes of the Meeting held on

Monday, March 11, 2019 at 3:00 pm

Theatre A, Sir Charles Tupper Medical Building, Carleton Campus, Halifax

The Senate met in regular session on Monday, March 11, 2019 in Theatre A, Sir Charles Tupper Medical Building.

Present: K. Hewitt (Chair); G. Adolphe-Nazaire; R. Agu; A. Aiken; V. Allen; A. Almallah; D. Anderson; M. Aston; T. Balsler; R. Barker; V. Bhargava; J. Blustein; D. Bourne-Tyson; A. Cochrane; R. Croll; L. Cutmore; P. Cyrus; T. Cyrus; C. Diallo; C. Dieleman; L. Diepeveen; P. Doyle-Bedwell; T. Duck; H. El Naggar; B. Foster; L. Goldberg; M. R. Goodday; D. Gray; D. Grujic; J. Hall; K. Harman; F. Harvey; S. Holmes; G. Horne; V. Howard; I. Joseph; D. Kelley; K. Kesselring; M. Khan; C. Kozey; M. Leonard; L. Macdonald; P. MacKinnon; C. Macy; D. McKeen; N. Nadeem; V. Nams; J. Newhook; T. Packer; S. Patles; D. Patterson; J. Phinney; S. Ponomarenko; A. Prosper; B. Rathgeber; A. Rau-Chaplin; A. Sarhan; A. Siegel; D. Silvio; L. Spiteri; S. Stackhouse; A. Steenbeek; F. Taheri; D. Thomas; P. Tyedmers; I. Waldron; E. Welsh; D. Westwood; H. Xu

Regrets: C. Cameron; R. Chang; B. Davis; L. Hackett; M. Pacurar; J. Penney; W. Phillips; C. Richardson; G. Scherkoske; S. Stone; S. Theriault; G. Warner

Absent: K. Dakin-Hache; A. Doucette; J. Fasuyi; N. Gear; A. Habib; F. Jones; J.S. Kim; W. Lahey; C. Moore; R. Orji; L. Turnbull; D. White; S. Wildeman

Guests: Iraj Fooladi (Professor & Douglas C. Mackay Chair in Finance, Faculty of Management); Ian Nason (Vice President, Finance & Administration); Margaret Robinson (Acting Coordinator, Indigenous Studies Program/Asst Professor Dept of Sociology & Social Anthropology); Mike Smit (Associate Professor and Acting Associate Dean-Academic, Faculty of Management); Susan Brousseau (Secretary of Senate), Sundari Pashupathi (Associate Secretary of Senate); Neny Kwasisu (Student Minute Taker)

The Dalhousie University Senate acknowledges that this meeting is taking place in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People.

1. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as **presented**.

2. Consent Agenda

2.1 Approval of the Draft Minutes of February 25, 2019 Senate Meeting

Approved by **CONSENT**.

3. Matters Arising from the February 25, 2019 Senate Meeting Minutes

3.1 Approval of Draft Minutes of January 28, 2019 Senate Meeting Minutes

As the proposed amendments to the minutes were not provided in time to be included in the meeting package, it was agreed to consider these at the March 25th Senate meeting.

4. Steps to Make Diversity and Inclusion a Reality

M. Robinson presented on this item, noting that Dalhousie University has good policies but needs to take concrete steps in terms of financial and institutional supports to make diversity and inclusion a reality at Dalhousie. Examples of institutional supports include dedicated space to promote the building of community among queer faculty and staff. She further commented that the responsibility of efforts to integrate diversity and inclusion into teaching and classrooms should not be borne solely by individual faculty members belonging to marginalized groups and that additional resources to assist faculty and students to take on this work is needed.

FOR ENDORSEMENT

5. Senate Planning and Governance Committee

5.1 Fossil Fuel Investment Review Report

M. Smit presented on this item, noting that the process started with the creation of an *ad hoc* committee of Senate on fossil fuel divestment in 2014. He reviewed the chronology of Senate's work on this issue as detailed in the meeting materials, and highlighted work to address issues through the collaborative efforts of Senate, students and the Investment Committee of the Board (now the University Investment Committee). After engaging with the Dalhousie Investment Committee and its Treasury & Investment Team, it was concluded that there should be inclusion of specific climate change-related risk (CCR) language in Dalhousie Investment policies. This was addressed in the report that was adopted by the Board on February 12, 2019. Dalhousie University is one of the first Canadian universities to adopt such comprehensive language to address climate change in its investment decisions.

THAT the Senate Planning and Governance Committee recommends to Senate that it publicly endorse the Statement:

Dalhousie University believes that anthropogenic climate change poses substantial risk ("CCR") to human and natural systems, and that local and international efforts to reduce dependence on fossil fuels are critical to addressing this risk. Dalhousie University believes how companies respond to this risk, and to efforts, is an important consideration when assessing long term value. Companies which deny the reality of climate change and fail to take actions to address this risk, or oppose actions to mitigate climate change, may pose an unwarranted risk to the Endowment Funds. Staff's formal reviews of investment managers will include specific questions on CCR in the respective investment strategies. Consistent with the Principles of Responsible Investing, related measures will be reviewed and reported on an ongoing basis.

Likewise, subject to assessment of business strategy, management and financial metrics, opportunities in alternative energy and other technologies to mitigate the impacts of CCR have the potential to be good investments.

During the discussion that followed the motion, senators acknowledged and appreciated the work undertaken by the *ad hoc* committee of Senate and other students, staff and faculty who have contributed to the discussions. Although it an important step forward, several senators added that Dalhousie needs to do more to address climate change and the existential threat it presents.

In response to a question regarding timelines and process for implementing the recommendations made in the report in relation to reviewing funds and fund managers, it was clarified that the environmental, social and governance (ESG) model will be embedded into the existing formal annual review process that currently takes place July/August each year. Additionally, Endowment Funds will include CCR assessment capabilities when evaluating investment managers for new mandates.

The motion **CARRIED**.

FOR APPROVAL

6. Senate Planning and Governance Committee

6.1 Delegation of Minor Policy Amendments

Senator Hewitt reported that the rationale for the proposed delegation is to ensure that University policies remain accurate and up-to-date and that minor, non-substantive changes be made in a timely manner without the need to bring the policies back through Senate (and other approving bodies as required).

It was confirmed that these minor changes would be reported annually to Senate for information and that Senate retains the right to revoke this delegation at any time.

THAT the Senate approve the delegation of minor, non-substantial changes to University policies requiring Senate approval to the University Secretary as follows:

- a. Amendments to reflect approved changes in position titles (where the duties and responsibilities under the new title are essentially unchanged);**
- b. Amendments to reflect approved new or amended Faculty, Department or unit names;**
- c. Amendments to reflect approved new or amended Policy titles;**
- d. Amendments to incorporate gender neutral language; and**
- e. Amendments to update references to website links included within Policies.**

Senator Spiteri proposed an amendment to the motion which was seconded by Senator Khan:

THAT the motion be amended to strike “essentially” from paragraph a.

CARRIED.

THAT the Senate approve the delegation of minor, non-substantial changes to University policies requiring Senate approval to the University Secretary as follows:

- a. Amendments to reflect approved changes in position titles (where the duties and responsibilities under the new title are unchanged);**
- b. Amendments to reflect approved new or amended Faculty, Department or unit names;**

- c. **Amendments to reflect approved new or amended Policy titles;**
- d. **Amendments to incorporate gender neutral language; and**
- e. **Amendments to update references to website links included within Policies.**

The motion as amended **CARRIED**.

FOR DISCUSSION

7. Budget Advisory Committee Report LVIII

T. Balsler and I. Nason presented on the recently-released report of the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC). Senator Balsler outlined the context for the report, the challenges faced by the University to balance its budget and the resulting shortfall that must be closed. She spoke to what BAC heard from the community in terms of the priorities and concerns of faculty, staff and students. She noted that while there is a need for a long-term solution that moves toward a model built around quality of experience rather than revenue generation, and consider levers such as planned enrolment growth to address the sustainability of the whole system, work on this will take time. In the meantime, the BAC draft report presents some recommendations that attempt to balance the range and complexity of competing needs and priorities across the university.

A robust discussion followed the presentation with comments focused on a variety of issues, including tuition fee increases, allocation of resources towards PhD students, resources for international students and the need for joint university-student efforts to lobby government to increase university operating grants. Senators also spoke to the importance of recognizing the decline in funding for the academic mission and that this eventually becomes unsustainable; the impact of cuts to Faculty budgets are particularly significant for small programs. It was noted that Dalhousie needs to have a transformative plan and that the government needs to hear that message from faculty, students, administration, alumni, the business community and others.

On the question of targets for increasing enrolment and percentage of international students, it was clarified that deliberations and discussions are taking place, but it is a decision that must be made carefully in terms of a range of consideration, including the resources and supports that are needed centrally and within individual Faculties to support a larger number of students. It was reiterated that government funding for universities has been decreasing steadily over several decades and that this essentially signals a move from a public to a private system that is occurring across the country with no public policy discussion or debate.

Reports

7.1 Provost's Report

Senator Balsler reported on a number of matters, including the search for the position of Associate Vice-President, Academic, the launch of a partnership with the DSU to address food security issues among students, and continuing Faculty and staff engagement meetings. She also spoke to faculty engagement in the Academic Leadership Certificate, and recent early enrolment data for 2019-20. Upcoming events include an Educational Advisory Board presentation on April 9th, and a university discussion on diversity and inclusiveness on March 18th. Lastly, Senator Balsler offered kudos to the Bissett Student Success Centre on its recent recognition for the success of its academic advising centre, and to student athletes and performing arts students and alumni on recent successes and accomplishments.

7.2 Questions for Reports

There were no questions for the report.

8. Question Period- Student Declaration of Absence Data

Senator Joseph addressed Senator Holmes' questions on "how the Student Declaration of Absence is leading to early identification of first year students requiring assistance" and "What percentage of students submitting the Declaration are being contacted?"

The Student Declaration of Absence (SDA) Form is currently being used in eight faculties. So far, only those SDAs submitted through Brightspace are counted. 24.1% of students in 1000-level have submitted these forms. There are no repeat users of the forms.

In the ensuing discussion, it was noted that the question posed by Senator Holmes was problematic as when this form was originally approved, the intent was to create a process for students to record absences and the form would not be further analysing the explanations provided for absences or allow tracking of such absences.

On the question of some Faculties not using the declaration form and students not having access to it, it was clarified that the use of the form was optional and decided by faculty members of each course. Not all Faculties are participating in this process.

Senator Holmes explained that her rationale for asking this question was that when the SDA was presented in Senate it was stated that it would provide an opportunity for early intervention and also because a marker of student failure is poor first year attendance. Senator Joseph explained that clearer answers would be had at the end of the reporting year.

Senator Packer clarified that for any course delivered via Brightspace, the course instructor can enable the SDA process through the system. The intent of the form is to help students who have to miss academic-evaluated work to declare absence for illness or academic reasons. It is not a measure of attendance and is not used for tracking student absences or for accommodation purposes.

Senator Prosper **moved**, Senator Cutmore **seconded** a motion to extend the meeting by 10 minutes.

Discussion continued regarding the SDA and there was a request to have further discussion at a future meeting.

9. Other Business

There was no new business arising.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10pm.