

**DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY
APPROVED MINUTES OF
SENATE MEETING**

Senate met in regular session on Monday, January 28, 2013, at 4:00pm, in University Hall, MacDonald Building

Present with Lloyd Fraser in the chair were the following: Amirault, Barrett, Baur, Beale, Becke, Bisset, Boran, Boudreau, Bourne-Tyson, Canning, Castleden, Chen, Cooper, Cox, DasGupta, Denike, Garduno, Gorsky, Grant, Harman, Helland, Hoyle, Hughes, Langille, Leach, MacLennan, Mansour, Marrie, McLarney, Miller, Moore, Oore, Packer, Persaud, Pinder, Rogers, Ross, Schellinck, Shepherd, Shukla, Stadnyk, Tennessen, Tillotson, Traves, Wach, Watters, Webster, Westwood.

Regrets: Ali, Cochrane, Cook, Crago, Cunningham, Doman, Gardner, Gibson, Leon, MacDonald, Manning, Mitchell, Rahemtulla, Summerby-Murray, Yiridoe.

Absent: Arron, Brooks, Hewitt, Johnston, Khan, Magill, Matte, Pegg, Smirnov.

2013:14

Adoption of the Agenda

The January 28, 2013 agenda was **adopted**.

2013:15

Consent Agenda

Approval of Draft Minutes of January 14, 2013

THAT Senate **approve** the draft Senate minutes of January 14, 2013.

Approved by Consent.

2013:16

Matters Arising from the Meeting of January 14, 2013

There were no matters arising from the meeting of January 14, 2013.

2013:17

Chair of Senate Report

Mr. Fraser, on behalf of Senate, expressed condolences to family, friends, and former colleagues of Bernard Murray (Bernie) MacDonald and Gillian Wood who passed away since the last Senate meeting. Mr. Fraser then provided an update on the SRI 2012 Fall Review Work Group. He reminded members of Senate that students were first sent a survey, and now the remainder of the university community has been sent a request for feedback. The survey will be open until February 8, 2013, and he encouraged members of Senate to provide constructive feedback. The Review Work Group will submit a report to the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (SLTC) in March, and SLTC will then report to Senate.

Mr. Fraser highlighted a document attached to the Senate meeting package called, *Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Research Universities* (The Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University). This document has been provided as additional reading for the discussion of academic innovation.

Finally, Mr. Fraser informed Senate that Carolan McLarney, Senate Vice-Chair (Academic Programs), had resigned

effective January 31, 2013. Ms. McLarney will be continuing in her role as a member of Senate, but will no longer be serving as Vice-Chair (Academic Programs). The Senate Planning and Governance Committee has proposed that a call for an interim Vice-Chair (Academic Programs) go out for February 12, 2013 to June 30, 2013, with an election to be held in the spring to fill the balance of Ms. McLarney's term (July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2015). Mr. Fraser noted that anyone interested in the position or wishing to nominate a member of Senate for the position should contact him within the week. He then thanked Ms. McLarney for her service to Senate, highlighting her work with the Senate Academic Programs and Research Committee.

2013:18

President's Report

Mr. Traves indicated that since he had provided a full report at the January 12th meeting, he had nothing further to report at this time.

2013:19

Senate Honorary Degree Nomination (In Camera)

Mr. Fraser announced that the Senate session would go in camera, and asked that all non-senators leave the meeting. When Senate returned to open session, Mr. Fraser announced that the Honorary Degree nomination had been approved.

2013:20

Academic Innovation: Positioning Dalhousie's Future

Mr. Fraser welcomed members of the university community who had joined the meeting for the discussion of academic innovation and academic planning. He suggested that the discussion of this item take place in a less formal manner than was usually the case at Senate, and encouraged guests to feel free to participate in the discussion.

Context for Academic Innovation

Mr. Fraser called upon Mr. Traves to provide a context for academic innovation and strategic academic planning. Mr. Traves' remarks are appended to the minutes.

Community Input

Final Report DALVision 2020: Senate Forum on Undergraduate Education

Mr. Fraser then called upon Fiona Black, Director of Academic Planning in the Office of the Vice-President Academic and Provost, to provide a report on DALVision 2020, the Senate Forum on Undergraduate Education that had been held in November 2012. Ms. Black noted that Alan Pinder, Chair of the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee, chaired the Forum Planning Group, and she outlined the challenges the University is facing, including maintenance of enrolment, evolving student and employer expectations, increased pace of technological change, a global environment for Higher Education, and an internationalization of campus. Taking these challenges into consideration, the goals of the University include fostering idea sharing, emphasizing and fostering an institutional commitment to innovation, and launching a longer-term process to support innovation.

Ms. Black noted that a broad range of participants attended the Forum and, based on participants' feedback, the expectations of DALVision2020 included ensuring learning and teaching methods support students' goals and needs, incorporating and anticipating the impact of technology, and increasing and improving the dialogue and exchange between instructors and students. Ms. Black noted that there were emerging themes that arose through various forms of feedback, including the quantity and quality of student/teacher interaction, more flexible program design and delivery (including greater interdisciplinary programs), more experiential learning, and a focus on learning and teaching processes.

Ms. Black then highlighted four key themes that emerged from the forum, and two significant environmental factors need to be borne in mind in pursuing these themes:

1. **Interaction:** Interaction includes providing a safe environment for idea-sharing, reviewing and revising courses with student and faculty engagement, sharing a learning community University-wide, and providing space and opportunities for students and staff to interact.
2. **Flexibility:** Flexibility involves removing interdisciplinary barriers; offering non-credit short courses as samples; supporting flexible programs, scheduling and class delivery; permitting deferral of scholarships out of high school for up to ten years; and combining goal-based learning with grade-based learning.
3. **Experiential Learning:** Experiential learning emphasizes hands-on forms of learning.
4. **Engagement:** Using a systems approach to engage all stakeholders in creating a developing a system that will support innovation and engagement, increased faculty engagement would foster student engagement, more communication outside the classroom, empowering students to take control of their education, an increase in student participation in the process of learning and teaching, and removing borders and the hierarchy of knowledge.

Environment Factors: Two environmental factors had been identified that would have a particular impact on the pursuit of the four themes. These were the global environment and technology. Feedback regarding the global environment included discussions among students from different cultures, disciplines, and years of study; promoting partnerships internationally and locally; strengthening links between Dalhousie and the wider community; short-term learning opportunities; and linking interdisciplinary studies to international studies. With regards to the technological environment, feedback included a desire for digital means to support learning, but not replace other approaches to learning; integrating media in the classroom; and including interactions across campuses and more globally.

With regards to the differences between the two DALVision2020 Forums, it was noted that the Truro campus is a small community; therefore, participants knew one another already, and they had a stronger faculty representation. The themes emerging from both forums, however, were similar. It was also noted that there are other open discussions related to academic innovation being planned through the Office of the Vice-President Academic.

Strategic Academic Planning: The Way Forward

Ms. Black then commented on the potential role of strategic academic planning. She noted that innovations need to be framed within a holistic plan. She highlighted the need to develop a strategic academic plan, and to ensure a clear relationship with other plans, including the strategic research plan, the enrolment management plan, and Faculty strategic plans. Town hall meetings, open to the university community are being planned, and a task force will be formed to prepare an interim report by May 2013. It is anticipated that some recommended components of the plan would be available by September 2013. The task force would report to Carolyn Watters, Vice-President, Academic and Provost, and membership of the task force would include faculty, students, and staff from the Centre for Learning and Teaching.

Ms. Black noted that institution-wide possibilities that had been suggested include: first-year seminars, summer institutes, expanded Undergraduate research opportunities, flexible program structures, 2+2 agreements (various models), and more online options (re: Letters of Permission). With regards to the online options, Ms. Black noted that patterns have been noted with regard to students taking on-line courses through other universities.

She highlighted academic planning components, including setting priorities, providing a framework for effective decision-making, and mapping interconnections across core curricula. Curriculum mapping could be based on student-learning outcomes and the relationship to quality assessment and the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission.

Issues in academic planning include teaching spaces (both on site and online); policies and processes (enablers or barriers); administrative structures and the development of shared goals; and intellectual contexts, skills, and knowledge of staff and faculty.

Questions and Discussion of Senate's Role in Strategic Academic Planning

Ms. Black then led a questions and discussion period regarding strategic academic planning. It was noted that while the forum was based on undergraduate education, academic planning is by no means limited to undergraduate education, rather it depends on the strategic goals that arise.

With regards to the actual Forum, it was noted that the various sources of ideas and comments were incorporated into the DALVision2020 report which will be made widely available. Ms. Watters emphasized the importance of exploring new initiatives in spite of budgetary constraints. It was noted that the involvement of faculty in the Forum was limited and many of those who attended the Forum were already engaged in innovative approaches to teaching and learning. It was noted that the poster session attracted a number of excellent entries from faculty and students. Ms. Black noted that the Academic Innovation website seeks information regarding current innovative work in all areas of the University community.

It was also noted that the DSU will be hosting a Ted-X conference in March to foster dialogue and explore global impacts on education. It was noted that this provides an additional opportunity for faculty to present their research and innovation.

Finally, it was noted that innovation is directly correlated to financial issues. Despite this being in a time of financial constraint, energy must be invested to discover the underlying problems and solutions. It was noted that strategic planning cannot be done by a large group. Feedback from the community will be obtained once a plan has been drafted. It is a multi-layered discussion that needs to be de-centralized. There must be an overview of what has been achieved, where the university is currently, and how the university characterizes itself.

2013:21

Other Business

There was no other business.

2013:22

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:40pm.

APPENDIX: Remarks by President Tom Traves Regarding Academic Innovation

I'd like to draw your attention to 2 significant events this year:

Forum on Academic Innovation

BAC report about continued budget cuts

Does the 2nd event cancel out the possibility of the first?

Actually, I would argue that it makes innovation even more important.

The natural first instinct when things get tough is simply to trim a little – cut one or two courses taught by part-time faculty, let classes get a wee bit bigger and so on.

This approach works well enough when resource constraints are temporary and will yield shortly to renewed growth – the BAC report, however, suggests that we cannot count solely on renewed growth in the next short while because of government spending restraints, government regulated tuition fees, and possible slowdowns in enrolment growth.

So, how can we manage under such circumstances?

I suggest that we return to basics and here I will take you back to the underlying principles of our Strategic Plan, which were drafted to answer one key question, “Why study at Dalhousie rather than any number of other universities?” – The success of our answers to this question will have a huge impact on Dalhousie’s future because, come what may, enrolments are the single most important component of our financial prospects, driving as they do government funding, tuition revenue and a collective sense of momentum and success.

The four principles that underpin our Strategic Plan are differentiation, excellence, focus, and flexibility –

Expanding on these concepts, the plan posits:

“We must develop a learning environment that sets us apart from our competitors.

We must meet our students demand for a world-class education.

We must target our resources to where they can have the greatest impact

And, we need the flexibility to support innovation and advance our collective priorities.”

So: Differentiation, Excellence, Focus and Flexibility

Clearly, simply trimming what we do now, over and over again, will never address these objectives. -

Rather, we need to think much harder and from fresh perspectives about what we do, why we do it, how we do it, what we should stop doing, how we organize ourselves administratively to pursue our goals, how we support our diverse activities and how we measure success.

Notice that these principles and tactical questions say almost nothing about money – rather they focus on our mission and purpose as a university – of course, in addressing these matters we will need to be mindful of resource questions, but these come under the Focus and Flexibility principles and they should follow from our initial discussion of Differentiation & Excellence.

You will have your own thoughts about where we start with innovation.

As your retiring president, I will not be here to influence the full discussion of these matters, but let me suggest a handful of big issues that I think need to be addressed:

- The basic unit of university organization is the degree program that typically is structured around an academic major that requires depth and focus – that structure has been with us for a long time but it is interesting that the organization that originally promoted this academic innovation among North American universities, the Carnegie Foundation, recently asked if it is time to move in new directions in academic thinking to take into account interdisciplinary approaches, problem based learning, thematic studies and other initiatives that have proven themselves and which fit poorly into these long established structures-

- Even prior to this issue, however, I think, we need to ask ourselves what do people need and want to learn? At the moment, we invite prospective students to enroll in a Faculty and then a disciplinary subfield within which to organize their studies and prospective career goals. Do today's students actually think that way or are they much more likely to focus on social problems, global issues or intellectual opportunities that they find meaningful? To answer my own question, I am struck that the two largest areas by enrolment in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences relate to the environment and international development issues. Historically, they are relatively recent initiatives and we have found it hard to divert resources to such fast growing areas because of our prior commitment to more established disciplines. Without arguing the point, let me simply suggest that if we want to differentiate ourselves within the academic marketplace, we should think more creatively about whether our program mix across the university addresses central issues of our time and consider carefully how our answers are reflected in the way we organize ourselves and assign our resources.
- A recent report by our national student recruitment team compiled feedback from prospective students about programs we currently do not offer that they would like to see: among the leading requests were visual arts, nutrition, criminology, communications, archaeology and aerospace engineering. An overwhelming majority of our recruiters report a very strong demand for "pre-" programs like pre-med, pre-law and pre-dentistry. These particular themes might prove to be good or bad ideas if we looked into them further, so without endorsing or even commenting on any of these interests in particular, I suspect that we actually offer a number of courses in several of these areas, but they are not packaged in a way that attracts attention or persuades students that they can pursue their interests at Dalhousie. That said, I do look forward to the imminent report of advanced discussions between the Faculties of Science and Medicine about how they can offer a Dalhousie version of pre-medicine or pre-health studies that draw upon the many courses and intellectual resources already offered in a number of our academic departments. I believe that this will attract excellent students to Dalhousie.

- if the major-based degree program historically is our core academic concept, the core administrative unit at the university is the academic department that contains and organizes the major program – this siloed approach to organization has virtues, to be sure, but it does come with costs, namely excessive boundary barriers with all the intellectual constraints and inflexibility that such barriers promote, the proliferation of courses that perhaps address faculty interests rather than student needs, and substantial administrative costs for office duplication and teaching course relief for administrative service to name but a few – So, do we have too many academic departments? Do we have too many Faculties? As we attempt to differentiate ourselves in a highly competitive academic marketplace, can we build enough innovation into such rigid program and administrative structures? Rather than trying to think about more majors and minors, do we need to think about academic innovation and the differentiation this produces in a more fundamental way?

What we teach and how we organize that process are two aspects of differentiation, but how we teach it is another – personally, I think the jury will be out for some time on Massive Open Online Courses, but I think it is pretty clear that there are exciting ways to utilize web-based learning materials to produce great-campus based learning opportunities – in time, I think these opportunities will help us create very different and effective courses– if Dalhousie wants to differentiate itself, should we be looking at these opportunities more systematically and helping introduce change at an institutional level rather than simply counting on the efforts of the creative few among us who are exploring these options? – there is a vast literature about these phenomena and many experiments elsewhere that we should be reviewing very carefully.

These are just some mega-issues that I think deserve your attention – none are prompted by budgetary concerns but I suspect that each of them holds out new ways to innovate and probably preserve scarce resources as well – I am sure you have many ideas of your own, so let me stop here and invite discussion not so much about what I have raised but about how you see the characteristics of the successful university of the future and how we can help Dalhousie flourish in that environment.