



SENATE

Approved Minutes of the Meeting held on

Monday, September 25, 2017

3:00pm – 5:00pm

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

The Senate met in regular session on Monday, September 25, 2017 in Theatre A, Sir Charles Tupper Medical Building.

Present: with Kevin Hewitt in the chair were the following: A. Abawajy, N. Ali, D. Anderson, M. Aston, R. Agu, J. Blustein, V. Bhargava, D. Bourne-Tyson, T. Cyrus, B. Davis, M. Denike, L. Diepeveen, T. Duck, S. Faridi, G.A. Finley, R. Florizone, J. Gahagan, J. Gantar, M. Ghasemi-Ghodrat, L. Goldberg, R. Goodday, J. Graham, D. Gray, L. Hackett, J. Hall, F. Harvey, S. Holmes, J. Hoyle, D. Kelley, Muhammad Khan, Masuma Khan, S. Kuzak, M. Leonard, L. Macdonald, C. Macy, B. Merritt, C. Moore, R. Mopoho, T. Packer, M. Pacurar, R. Parker, D. Patterson, J. Penney, S. Ponomarenko, A. Prosper, C. Richardson, K. Sherren, S. Somogyi, F. Taheri, G. Wang-Pruski, C. Watters, E. Welsh, H. Xu

Regrets: A. Aiken, C. Brown, C. Cameron, S. Charlebois, N. Gear, J. Leon, C. MacDonald, N. Savage, L. Spiteri, D. White, J. White

Absent: S. Adamo, A. Cochrane, R. Croll, K. Dakin-Hache, C. Dieleman, B. Foster, D. Grujic, C. Helland, E. Johnson, L. Lahey, R. MacDonald, N. Nadeem, A. Rau-Chaplin, A. Steenbeek, L. Turnbull,

Guests: Sarah Boucaud, Student Minute Taker; Eddy Ng, Professor, Faculty of Management; Andrea Power Recording Secretary; Christian Blouin, Associate Dean, Academic, Faculty of Computer Science; Arig al Shaibah, Vice-Provost, Student Affairs; Mike McAllister, Registrar; Emily Huner, Director of Operations, Student Health and Wellness

2017:113

Approval of Revised Agenda

The revised agenda **was approved** with the following revisions: Item #5, the Dalhousie University Strategic Update, was moved to be discussed after Item #3, Steps to Make Diversity and Inclusion a Reality. Item #6.3, the DSU President Report, will be deferred to October. Furthermore, Senator Watters has relinquished her time under Item #6.2, Provost's Report, to permit a more thorough discussion around Item #5, the Dalhousie University Strategic Update.

2017:114

Matters Arising from the September 11, 2017 Senate Meeting Minutes

The September 11, 2017 draft Senate meeting minutes were not yet available and when the draft minutes come forward at the October 23, 2017 meeting, there can be further discussion of matters arising from the minutes.

2017:115

Steps to Make Diversity and Inclusion a Reality

Mr. Eddy Ng presented on diversity and inclusion in education. He discussed the difference between diversity, tolerance, and inclusion. While diversity can be represented numerically, inclusion is more complex to capture. It is about being "invited in". Three messages were relayed in his presentation:

- 1) Avoid reinforcing stereotypes in the classroom. Discussions on gender, race, and other dimensions of diversity or inequality, might unintentionally contribute to increased biases and reinforced stereotypes by creating an “us” and “other” categorization.
- 2) Weaken the fault lines in workgroups. Fault lines are divisions that split students into groups based on demographic attributes (for example, “Canadian” and “international”). Mr. Ng adopts a different technique. When teams are formed in the classroom, students make teams based on guidelines, such as each group must represent five languages. This ensures that workgroups are made in a way where every member adds value.
- 3) Pay attention to and mentor one student. It has the potential to promote inclusion in unexpected ways.

2017:116

Presentation: Dalhousie University Strategic Update

Senator Florizone presented an overview and update on Dalhousie University’s advancements toward its strategic directions. The five strategic directions are: 1) Teaching and Learning, 2) Research, 3) Service, 4) Partnership and Reputation, and 5) People and Infrastructure. He emphasized the relationship between listening and action. The strategic directions started five years ago with the 100 Days of Listening. Reporting mechanisms and Town Halls provide continued avenues for listening.

1) Teaching and Learning: Teaching and Learning is at the heart of Dalhousie University. Senator Florizone spoke to several achievements in this category. Fifty-three programs at Dalhousie University have accreditation, speaking to the quality of work accomplished. Dalhousie University has continued to innovate in academic programming and has attracted award-winning faculty. Enrolment is steady and retention has been the biggest area of focus. While Dalhousie University does well at attracting a diverse student body, it was noted during the 100 Days of Listening that the question of how to continue to support students was a key concern. Senator Florizone ended this section by noting the great year Dalhousie University had for athletics, an important factor for retention, and the Rhodes Scholarship awarded to a student in the School of Nursing.

2) Research: It was a historic year for research at Dalhousie University. Dalhousie University earned the largest federal research grant in Canada in 2016 for its Ocean Frontier Institute. There were further many great awards achieved by faculty. Dalhousie University is also proud of its Syrian Refugee Consortium. While in some areas, it was noted that there was a lack of funding in the system, there is much to look forward to as advancements are made toward this strategic direction.

3) Service: Senator Florizone acknowledged the challenges of discussing this strategic direction. Service is a very broad area, covering community development through creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship on the part of Dalhousie University. Senator Florizone spoke to initiatives of different faculties, including the Dalhousie Legal Aid Service and the Dalhousie Dental Clinic. He emphasized the opportunities for experiential learning, including co-op placements. One hundred percent of students have access to experiential learning, of which eighty-seven percent of students take part. Senator Florizone closed the presentation of this strategic direction by speaking to a proud moment for Dalhousie University in service, when Senator Thomas Bernard was appointed to the Senate by Prime Minister Trudeau.

4) Partnership and Reputation: Senator Florizone emphasized the record year at Dalhousie University for fundraising. While base operating support is often an issue, Dalhousie University has been able to raise targeted funds for student scholarships and infrastructure. He further took the opportunity to thank those engaged in planning Dalhousie University’s 200th anniversary.

5) People and Infrastructure Support: Dalhousie University is one of Canada’s greatest employers for the second year in a row. The university is further proud of its progress on diversity and inclusion. Dalhousie University has launched itself on a journey, where it is beginning to close the gap and is becoming a better reflection of the

communities it serves. It was proudly noted that the Mi'kmaq Grand Council Flag was permanently installed at Dalhousie on both Halifax and Truro campuses, a symbol of a safe learning environment for all.

Senator Florizone closed his presentation by thanking everyone for their contributions during the past year.

2017:117

Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (SLTC)

Academic Calendar Regulation: Missed or Late Academic Requirements due to Student Absence

Senator Tanya Packer, Chair, SLTC, presented the draft Academic Calendar Regulation on Missed or Late Academic Requirements due to Student Absence. The regulation introduces the option of limited student self-declaration in lieu of sick notes or medical certificates for short-term absences. She emphasized the evidence-based approach taken in its development. The draft regulation has been benchmarked against other universities and was the subject of pilot projects.

Ms. al Shaibah further emphasized that the regulation was not meant to respond to concerns related to class attendance. It does, however, allow for faster identification of students who might be in distress. Brightspace can remind the student when they have reached the maximum number of self-declarations for a particular course and can offer a list of potential supports, at the option of the instructor. Most students will demonstrate academic integrity and the regulation aligns Dalhousie University with U15 best practice and human rights legislation. Instructors are provided with the flexibility to control the reassessment process for missed or late academic requirements. Ms. al Shaibah further clarified that the requested approval for the regulation did not include approval of the self-declaration form itself.

Mr. Christian Blouin noted that the Faculty of Computer Science had piloted the draft regulation over the past year, and he personally used it in a large first year class; resulting in a wide-range of experiences. He stated that most faculty members did not notice any change before and after the implementation of the draft regulation, but there was a greater sense of ownership by the students when declaring.

Tanya Packer, on behalf of the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee **MOVED**:

THAT the Senate approve the Academic Calendar Regulation: Missed or Late Academic Requirements due to Student Absence, as presented.

A question was raised asking for clarification on whether instructors could investigate reasons for absences as part of the draft regulation and whether the regulation encompasses bereavement absences. While no evidentiary information has to be included in the self-declaration, instructors can create flexibility in their respective syllabi. Furthermore, bereavement is a long-term absence and a student would look to the appropriate Dalhousie University policy for the right process.

Senator Duck **MOVED**, seconded by Senator Khan:

THAT the discussion on the Academic Calendar Regulation: Missed or Late Academic Requirements due to Student Absence be extended by ten minutes.

The motion **CARRIED**.

The potential for abuse of the regulation was questioned, particularly the possibility for a student to select which of two mid-term exams, if held on the same day, that they would prefer to attend. While the concern was acknowledged, it was also recognized that a similar risk is inherent in the current system and that the regulation is not meant to necessarily resolve all issues with the current absence model.

A question was raised as to the feasibility of central tracking when a variety of submission methods for self-declaration forms are made available. The variety of submission methods accommodate different course structures where Brightspace is not used. Brightspace is, however, the best available tool to track baseline date for a full year.

In response to questions related to attendance and retention issues in first year classes and the prevalence of mental health issues among students, it was emphasized that the regulation has not been created to solve these issues as the regulation currently stands. These concerns must be targeted, but in different ways.

Senator Hackett **MOVED**, seconded by Senator Faridi:

THAT the discussion on the Academic Calendar Regulation: Missed or Late Academic Requirements due to Student Absence be extended by an additional ten minutes.

The motion **CARRIED**.

Questions regarding the implementation of the regulation, led to several clarifications. As with all new policies, this regulation will be reviewed after a year of implementation. It was noted that an absence can still cause a student to lose participation grades. It is up to individual instructors to decide what will happen with missed work. It was further noted, that in terms of implementation, the self-declaration submission feature will be included on Brightspace at the beginning of the winter term. Suggestions can be made to instructors on appropriate syllabi language. However, this choice on how to present the regulation would remain with the instructor.

In relation to the continued concerns about dishonest student behaviour, Senators were encouraged to be open to data collection during a one year implementation of the regulation. Following this trial, data would be available to assess the potential risk.

Senator Watters called the question on the motion.

The motion **CARRIED**.

Two abstentions were noted; one was Senator Amado.

Academic Calendar Regulation: Challenge for Credit

Mr. McAllister presented the draft Academic Calendar Regulation on Challenge for Credit by providing a brief overview of the proposal and addressing the main questions that arose at the last meeting. Challenge for credit provides academic course-level credit for prior learning. It is a means for Dalhousie University to recognize the value of experiential learning outside of the university environment.

The choice to participate, which courses are open for challenge, and the mode and method of assessments are choices that remain within the discretion of each Faculty. Mr. McAllister then spoke to certain limits in the scope of the policy's application, including that it is limited to undergraduate students in good standing. He further emphasized that the assessment and distribution of fees would be implemented outside the policy itself, for later determination.

A question was raised as to whether this policy would permit students to receive a 'certification' for their academic programs, rather than complete academic requirements. In response, it was emphasized that Faculties have the ultimate decision as to which courses have a pedagogical element that could be challengeable. Faculties can further determine which grade in a challengeable course would be required to pass. Once receiving a grade through the challenge for credit regulation, the grade would go on a student's transcript. A student could retake the course if they desired.

Senator Packer, on behalf of the Senate Learning and Teaching Committed, **MOVED**:

THAT the Senate approve the Academic Calendar Regulation: Challenge for Credit, as presented.

The motion is **CARRIED**.

2017:118

Chair of Senate's Report

Senator Hewitt acknowledge the devastation in the Caribbean and Mexico. The thoughts of the Senate are with those in these regions and the students, faculty, and staff members connected to these regions.

Senator Hewitt briefly highlighted some of the items from his report:

- *The Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent on its mission to Canada* is currently before the United Nations Working Group. A copy of the Report was shared with Ms. Michelle Williams Director, Indigenous Blacks & Mi'kmaq Initiative, Schulich School of Law, to determine where common ground might exist with Dalhousie University's Strategic Plan.
- The Senate Membership Composition Work Group has prepared a proposal in draft form, which was presented to the SPGC for discussion. It was further reviewed by University Legal Counsel. Senator Hewitt is optimistic about the potential for a resolution at a special meeting of the SPGC on October 11, 2017 and if agreement can be reached, the proposal will come to Senate for discussion on October 23, 2017.
- The Senate Work Group on Academic Freedom has continued its work and a further report is anticipated by the SPGC later in the fall.
- Senators were also reminded of the Senate mentorship program that was mentioned at the orientation. Three mentees are looking for mentors. It was advised that Senators should send their names to senate@dal.ca if they are interested in this opportunity.

Questions for Reports

There were no questions on the report.

2017:119

Question Period

A comment was brought forward regarding the *Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent on its mission to Canada* suggesting that Dalhousie University consider several of the recommendations. Senator Florizone asked that these comments be forwarded in an email to himself and Ms. Michelle Williams.

Senator Florizone was asked to speak further to the research strategy as referenced in the Strategic Update. He acknowledged that while priority research areas serve as the supports for the research strategy, other areas must equally be examined, ensuring grants are supported for graduate students in a variety of areas.

Senator Florizone further responded to a question about building capacity. The interconnections between capacity and infrastructure were briefly explained. Developing human capacity to use various infrastructure and supports is considered across the mission and values.

A question sought clarification on supports available specifically for international graduate students. It was explained that the cost of education for international students is currently unfunded, leaving universities to rely

on other areas to support these students. The University is currently working with student donors and examining tuition across the university in addressing support for international graduate students.

A response was offered to a question on whether there were plans to recruit faculty who teach courses. Senator Florizone acknowledged that more work in this area is needed.

2017:120

Other Business

There was no other business.

2017:121

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:00pm.