



**SENATE**  
**Approved Minutes of the Meeting held on**  
**Monday, June 8, 2020 at 3:00pm**  
**Via Microsoft Teams**

The Senate met in regular session on Monday, June 8, 2020 via Microsoft Teams

**Present:** K. Hewitt (Chair), G. Adolphe-Nazaire, A. Aiken, V. Allen, D. Anderson, M. Aston, J. Blustein, D. Bourne-Tyson, K. Brooks, C. Cameron, M. Campbell-Yeo, R. Chang, T. Cyrus, B. Davis, C. Diallo, P. Doyle-Bedwell, O. Dryden, T. Duck, Y. El Hiani, H. El Naggar, B. Foster, M. Fournier, L. Goldberg, D. Gray, D. Grujic, A. Habib, J. Hall, K. Harman, F. Harvey, S. Holmes, G. Horne, V. Howard, I. Joseph, D. Kelley, A. Kermanshahi-Pour, J.S. Kim, S. Kirk, M. Leonard, L. MacDonald, B. Merritt, F. Naghibi, B. Nassar, J. Newhook, R. Orji, M. Pacurar, L. Perez, J. Phinney, T. Rajack-Talley, B. Rathgeber, A. Rau-Chaplin, C. Richardson, K. Rosen, D. Saini, G. Scherkoske, E. Seelemann, S. Seth, A. Siegel, D. Silvio, L. Spiteri, S. Stackhouse, M. Stinson, S. Stone, F. Taheri, P. Tyedmers, D. Tyers, G. Warner, E. Welsh, D. Westwood, D. White, S. Wildeman, E. Wunker, I. Yakovenko, S. Zahoor

**Regrets:** R. Barker, I. Waldron

**Absent:** R. Agu, P. Allen, A. Doucette, W. Lahey, C. Moore, V. Nams, J. Penney, S. Ponomarenko, S. Yurgel

**Guests:** Brad Wuetherick, C. Ragush, Susan Brousseau, Judith Ng'ethe, Ann Pyne, Joseph Behl (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 Draft Minutes of May 11, 2020 Senate Meeting**

Approved by **CONSENT**.

**3. Matters Arising from May 11, 2020 Senate Meeting**

There were no matters arising.

**FOR APPROVAL:**

**4. Senate Planning and Governance Committee (SPGC)**

**4.1 Extension to Senate motions re: COVID-19**

Senator Hewitt advised that the original meeting package contained a subsection of the motion (SRI policy suspension) which has been removed and is now being considered separately under item 5.1 on the Agenda for this meeting.

Senators Harvey and Howard presented this item. Senator Howard reminded senators that in March, 2020, a motion was passed by SPGC covering the period from March 18 to August 31, 2020. Since it has been proposed that classes should continue to be largely online in the Fall, there are three components that need to be extended: (1) delegating authority to deans or their designates to make changes affecting the winter term; (2) removing the requirements for sick notes, etc.; and (3) recognizing that the delivery mode will be largely online. Three key priorities of the motion are making sure that decisions will not negatively impact students' completion timelines, maintain degree requirements and learning outcomes, and avoid unnecessary financial burden on students.

Moved by Senator Hewitt on behalf of the Senate Planning & Governance Committee:

**THAT Senate approve the following measures as a result of circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic:**

- (1) For decisions made up to April 30, 2021, the implementation of which may occur at a later date depending upon the nature of the change, delegating authority to the relevant Dean or their designate, to waive any requirement, regulation, or policy under the authority of Senate pertaining to academic requirements which impacts admissions, academic courses and degree structure/progression, provided that the academic integrity of the course and degree is upheld; Waivers made under this delegated authority will be reported on for ratification at the next Senate meeting.**
- (2) Partially suspending the Academic Calendar Regulation Missed or Late Academic Requirements due to Student Absence by removing the need for sick notes during the Fall 2020 semester; and**
- (3) Notwithstanding anything in the Syllabus Policy and the accompanying Course Syllabus Guide, the mode of delivery for courses in the Fall 2020 and Winter 2021 semesters will be determined through the University's academic continuity planning process.**

Responding to a question raised by a senator regarding the academic continuity planning process, Senator Howard advised that there is a Return to Campus steering committee which has collected information from all faculties about plans for the Fall and is looking at decisions made about whether on-site delivery is required for accreditation, etc. Senator Harvey added that a communication would be made the next day regarding course delivery and what will be online and in-person, based on accreditation requirements.

In response to a query from a senator regarding what the process would be if the university "returns to normal" before the stipulated April 30, 2021 end date, and whether there is a provision for an early exit from these proposed changes, Senator Howard noted that changes will be made only if deemed necessary. Senator Harvey noted that there will likely still be a need for waivers, etc. for the foreseeable future.

The motion **CARRIED**.

## **5. Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (SLTC)**

### **5.1 SRI Policy Suspension for Fall 2020 Term**

Senator Hewitt reminded senators that the SRI policy was suspended for the winter and summer terms, and advised that this item is to request that the policy also be suspended for the fall term.

B. Wuetherick presented this item and noted that the Centre for Learning and Teaching (CLT) did move forward with the formative process related to the SRI and sent reports to faculty members, but not to others. B. Wuetherick informed the meeting that SLTC considered whether the SRI policy should be suspended for the fall term as well. Following robust debate, it was decided to suspend the SRI policy for an additional semester.

The primary rationale for suspending the policy was the unique circumstance of most classes having to move online for the Fall and faculty having less time to move to the new format than was ideal, making it inappropriate for SRIs to be used for decision making. B. Wuetherick added that the SLTC did recognize that there have been concerns around response rates in the formative process and that faculty coming up for tenure and promotion may have a big gap in their summative evaluations.

A senator asked whether there will be any other kind of mechanism for getting feedback from students. Senator Hewitt noted that SRIs will still run, and the feedback can still be used in the formative process but will not be shared with senior leaders. Senator Hewitt added that some faculties, such as Health and Computer Science, are undertaking evaluations on how the transition affects learners. Senator Siegel noted that a concern was raised at SLTC that students do lack a voice to some extent.

A senator commented that students have already expressed discontent with the upcoming tuition increase, and there are concerns that courses will not be made to the same standard of quality, and that student voices will not be heard at the decision-making level. The senator added that Dalhousie has not yet announced whether the winter semester will be primarily online, and feedback would be especially useful if online courses are used in the winter. K. Hewitt noted that the suspension is only for the fall, and it would be difficult to argue that this be extended into the winter.

A senator noted that student feedback would be valuable, and that faculty usually do not receive their SRI reports until mid-way through the next term, whereas it would be better if the process could take place earlier so that instructors can get faster feedback. B. Wuetherick noted that if the process is only formative, the feedback could be expedited.

Senators discussed the importance of collecting useful data. A senator commented that keeping senior leaders out of the process further restricts student ability to inform others about their experience. . The senator added that the focus should be on getting as much data as possible. Senator Hewitt noted that this had been a subject of discussion at a departmental meeting, where many felt that Dal Analytics should be involved in helping faculty understand if some students are being disadvantaged by online learning more than others. There was a call for Dal Analytics to help with addressing barriers created by the online learning process.

A senator commented that the principle of compassionate accommodation and “do no harm” should be followed in regard to faculty as it is with students, so if faculty have positive SRIs, they should be able to use them.

Senators also discussed the following:

- The issue of SRIs negatively impacting Black, indigenous, and other faculty. B. Wuetherick noted that this is an important concern and that Dal Analytics has supported analysis on this, but there is more work to be done.

- He added that SLTC is working on recommendations that open-ended questions be changed to more focused questions specific to the learning experience, which would help obtain more useful feedback.
- Student Affairs collected data from students at the end of the spring term in order to have feedback on whether student needs are being met.
- Whether a note could be attached to feedback from the Fall 2020 term mentioning the extraordinary circumstances. B. Wuetherick noted that when the transition to online was first made, a note was added to SRIs in that time span and that it is possible to add a note on the cover page, whether or not the SRI policy is suspended. B. Wuetherick opined that a note should be added regardless.
- Anonymizing faculty data, and new ways of collecting useful feedback. Senator Siegel advised that the Provost's Office is currently working on a holistic evaluation framework.

Moved by Senator Siegel on behalf of the Senate Learning & Teaching Committee:

**THAT Senate approve the suspension of SRI policy for the Fall 2020 term.**

The motion **CARRIED**.

## **6. Global Black Lives Matter Protests and Related Motion**

Senator Dryden presented this item in relation to the global Black Lives Matter protests. She provided some brief context for the timeliness of the motion, noting the recent deaths of George Floyd in Minnesota, USA, Regis Korchinski-Paquet in Toronto, and Tony McDade in Tallahassee, USA, among others. Senator Dryden noted the interconnected realities of anti-black racism and colonialism and that Black and Indigenous people are disproportionately subjected to surveillance, police violence and incarceration throughout Canada and in Nova Scotia.

Senator Dryden added that police brutality and anti-black racism must be understood as a public health crisis.

Senator Dryden discussed some of the work being done in the sciences by organizations such as Data for Black Lives. She noted that discussions of colonialism and anti-black racism must be centralized in each faculty. Senator Dryden added that in order for all lives to matter, Black lives must matter.

Senator Dryden introduced the motion, noting how it relates to Senate's responsibilities in approving new programs, approving the granting of degrees and diplomas, managing the reviews of faculties, centres and institutes, and setting academic regulations which affect the university as a whole. She also referred senators to the cover page for the motion which references several documents, including *Breaking Barriers: The task Force on Access for Black and Native People*, the 2019 Report on Lord Dalhousie's History on Slavery and Race, and a June 1, 2020 statement by President Deep Saini and Vice Provost, Equity & Inclusion Theresa Rajack-Talley.

Moved by Senator Dryden, seconded by Senator Blustein:

**THAT Senate approve the following:**

- **The office of the Provost and Vice-President Academic will work with Faculty-based leaders to establish a committee, appropriately resourced, to develop a proposal for an interdisciplinary major/honors program in Black and African Diaspora Studies; to be presented for consideration by Senate no later than April 30, 2021; and,**
- **The office of the Vice-President Research and Innovation will work with Faculty-based researchers to establish a committee, appropriately resourced, to develop a proposal for a**

**research institute for Black studies in Canada; to be presented for consideration by Senate no later than April 30, 2021.**

A senator suggested that the African Nova Scotian Strategy Working Group should be invited to Senate to discuss what additional curricular and research activities should be pursued as part of the mission to ameliorate the conditions of racism at Dalhousie.

Senators in attendance were unanimous in their support for the suggestion.

The motion **CARRIED**.

#### **FOR DISCUSSION:**

#### **7. Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (SLTC)**

##### **7.1 Code of Student Conduct Review Update**

Senators agreed to defer this item in the interest of time.

##### **8.1 Sexualized Violence Policy Report**

C. Ragush presented the Sexualized Violence Policy Report. She noted that the data in this report was presented to the President's Advisory Council on Sexualized Violence in December 2019. C. Ragush added that following this presentation to Senate, the information would be made public. The information relates to the 2018-2019 academic year and indicates the total number of disclosures and reports for as 95. There were 6 complainant-initiated reports and 3 university-initiated reports. Two were investigative reports, both of which had findings. The investigative reports resulted in sanctions – either disciplinary sanctions or a Senate Discipline Committee process. 11 complainants also reported their cases to the police. Complainants were 88% female-identified and respondents were 92% male-identified. 52% of incidents were reported to have taken place on-campus. The affiliation (undergraduate, graduate, staff, faculty, etc.) of complainants and respondents was also recorded. The data also shows the numbers of people accessing the services each year from 2016 to Fall 2020. C. Ragush noted that the new Sexualized Violence Policy was introduced in Fall 2019 and commented that the increase observed in the number of reports is likely reflective of the new policy and its promotion.

Senators discussed the report and:

- Inquired whether there is a plan to conduct a quality study to assess the process and outcomes. C. Ragush advised that a survey for students on sexualized violence on campus was being run by a Saint Mary's University (SMU) researcher before the COVID-19 pandemic, which was then put on hold. The survey would provide province-wide and Dalhousie-specific data. She added that this survey is expected to be re-launched in the Fall. There has also been discussion about ways of surveying individuals after visiting the office and obtaining feedback.
- Noted the Pegasus Program, which is run for adult sexual assault survivors during the fall and winter terms, where survivors do not have to report to the office to participate. C. Ragush noted that the program has been beneficial in creating a community among survivors of sexualized violence.

Senator Hewitt advised that it would be beneficial to have this matter return to Senate again in the Fall for further discussion.

Senators voted to extend the meeting by 15 minutes.

## **8.2 Racialized Violence Policy Update**

Senator Rajack-Talley provided an update on the development of the Racialized Violence Policy, which was started the previous semester. Senator Rajack-Talley emphasized the importance of addressing the policy through a holistic approach, looking at how to enact and support the policy, as well as developing it. This would include educational components, engaging with the community, academic programming, and ensuring appropriate measures are in place to respond to the policy when approved. Senator Rajack-Talley informed the meeting that a committee was convened the previous semester to look at options for reporting racialized violence, observing policy options at other institutions. The university's own policies were reviewed, looking for gaps and opportunities, and options to explore were put forward. Senator Rajack-Talley advised that the plan going forward is to reconvene the small committee, invite others, and contemplate and critically analyze the options and determine what is most effective and applicable to Dalhousie. A broader consultation policy will be developed and steps to move forward will be identified.

A senator asked about the planned timeline for the project. Senator Rajack-Talley advised that the aim is to have a proposal ready by next semester, at which point it will be possible to begin consultation.

## **9. Federal Contractors Program Report on Equity Targets**

Senators agreed to defer this item in the interest of time.

## **10. Reports**

### **10.1 Chair of Senate's Report**

Senator Hewitt updated senators on the approval by SPGC of the Terms of Reference of a task force to examine academic unit consolidation, renaming, establishment, termination or transfer – the AUCRETT Task Force. A call for members for the task force has gone out, seeking three academic unit senators. Expressions of interest can be submitted and nominations will be considered by SPGC at its next meeting. SPGC will also look at the revised ToR for standing committees, as well as the structure and function of the College of Continuing Education Faculty Council.

### **10.2 President's Report**

Senator Saini presented the President's Report. He noted the impact of the death of George Floyd in Minnesota, USA, noting that it has become a powerful metaphor for a long standing abomination in societies and why it must change. Senator Saini advised that as the university navigates the academic and financial impact of COVID-19, collaboration is taking place with the Vice Provost, Equity & Inclusion; the Vice Provost, Student Affairs; and deans to mitigate any negative effects of the move to online learning on underrepresented students, faculty, and staff. A priority has been determining how Dalhousie can provide resources to maintain and improve current EDI efforts. Senator Saini added that they have been in communication with Senator Hewitt to work on determining what actions can be taken to make a concrete and measurable difference now. Senator Saini noted that the Vice Provost, Equity & Inclusion will take a leading role in the ongoing conversation.

Senator Saini thanked the Vice Provost, Equity & Inclusion, their team, Senator Dryden, and other speakers, for organizing the Speak Truth to Power forum with close to 400 attendees, adding that the full recording is available on the Dalhousie YouTube channel.

Senator Saini noted that it is a busy time for the university, as planning continues for the fall term and advised senators of the recent departure of Dr. Teri Balsler from the position of Provost and VP Academic, while thanking Dr. Balsler for her contribution. Senator Saini advised that Senator Harvey will be filling in as Acting Provost, and that a search for the next Provost and VP Academic will be underway soon, when it is possible to shift attention to finding and attracting the best possible candidate for Dalhousie.

Senator Saini thanked the Dalhousie community for its patience and continued support, and emphasized the importance of continuing to come together as One Dal, focused on the university's mission, students, people, impact, and continued commitment to making real improvements for those who are underrepresented in the community.

### **10.3 Acting Provost's Report**

Senator Harvey presented the Acting Provost's Report providing a brief update on the Return to Campus planning committee and process. Senator Harvey advised that the process is proceeding well and making important decisions regarding faculty returning to campus, as well as facilities and services. Senator Harvey added that the team is immersed in re-energizing the strategic planning process and that together with Senator Saini will be meeting with the self-study planning groups and seeking to reinforce the commitment to the work that has already been done while incorporating lessons from COVID-19.

### **11. Other Business**

Senators congratulated and thanked the departing vice chairs of Senate, Senator Siegel and Senator Harman for their service to Senate and welcomed incoming vice chairs Senator Pacurar and Senator Spiteri.

### **12. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm.