

SENATE
Approved Minutes of the Meeting held on
Monday, January 11, 2021 at 3:00 p.m.
Via Microsoft Teams

The Senate met in regular session on Monday, January 11, 2021 via Microsoft Teams

Present: K. Hewitt (Chair) G. Adolphe-Nazaire, R. Agu, A. Aiken, V. Allen, D. Anderson, F. Annan, M. Aston, R. Baker, P. Bennett, N. Bird, J. Blustein, D. Bourne-Tyson, K. Brooks, T. Cyrus, B. Davis, R. Devlin, A. Doucette, P. Doyle-Bedwell, O. Dryden, H. El Nagggar, K. El Sankary, N. Ezzeddine, M. Farrimond, B. Foster, M. Fournier, L. Goldberg, D. Gray, D. Grujic, A. Habib, J. Hall, B. Hansson, F. Harvey, V. Howard, M. Irwin, S. Jeffrey, Z. Jones, S. Kirk, M. Leonard, L. MacDonald, B. Merritt, L. Meynell, A. Mohan, F. Naghibi, B. Nassar, J. Newhook, M. Pacurar, L. Perez, J. Phinney, L. Propper, T. Rajack-Talley, B. Rathgeber, A. Rau-Chaplin, C. Richardson, H. Ro, K. Rosen, D. Saini, E. Seelemann, S. Seth, M. Sharaput, A. Siegel, D. Silvio, A. Sophocleous, S. Sparks, L. Spiteri, S. Stackhouse, M. Stinson, S. Stone, F. Taheri, V. Turpin, D. Tyers, M.A. Ulku, G. Warner, E. Welsh, D. Westwood, D. White, E. Wunker, I. Yakovenko, S. Yurgel

Regrets: C. Diallo, C. Moore, P. Tyedmers, I. Waldron

Absent: A. Cooper, T. Duck, Y. El Hiani, G. Horne, A. Kermanshahi-Pour, W. Lahey, R. Orji, B. Schick, S. Zahoor

Guests: Susan Brousseau, Robert Hanff, Heidi Lauckner, Judith Ng'ethe, Nakita Strowbridge

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 December 7 and 14, 2020 Senate Meetings

Approved by **CONSENT**.

2.2 Senate Nominating Committee: Senate Standing Committee Nomination

THAT the Senate approve the nomination of Clifton Johnston (Faculty of Engineering) to the SLTC for the period January 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022, as a voting member, as presented.

Approved by **CONSENT**.

3. Matters Arising from December 7 and 14, 2020 Senate Meetings

3.1 Senate consultation on candidate profile for the position of Provost and Vice-President Academic (December 7, 2020 meeting)

Senator Hewitt noted that highlights of the December 7, 2020 Senate special meeting break out room discussions, as shared by the breakout room facilitators with Senate, had been included in the meeting material. Senators were encouraged to reach out should any information be missing.

3.2 Draft Policy for Academic Unit Consolidation, Renaming, Establishment, Transfer and Termination (AU-CRETT) (December 14, 2020 meeting)

Senator Hewitt noted that highlights of Senate feedback from the December 14, 2020 Senate meeting break out room discussions had been provided with the meeting material, for information.

Senator Hewitt informed the meeting that the AU-CRETT Taskforce received feedback from a number of stakeholders through November and early December, 2020, including student leaders, Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA), Associate Deans' Academic Council (ADAC), legal counsel, Deans' Council, Equity caucuses including Black Faculty and Staff Caucus (BFSC), Queer Caucus and Disability advocates and the Senate Planning and Governance Committee (SPGC). Senator Hewitt advised that the taskforce had reconvened the previous week and considered feedback from the consultations. Senator Hewitt noted that the taskforce was working on the issues brought forward, addressing misunderstanding of the special role that Senate and the Board jointly play in quality assurance, oversight and governance of Faculties and discussing how to better enable marginalized voices to be heard.

3.3 Senate Input to the BAC 2021/2020 BAC Budget Process (December 14, 2020 meeting)

Senator Hewitt noted that highlights of Senate feedback from the December 14, 2020 Senate meeting break out room discussions had been provided with the meeting material, for information. Senators were encouraged to reach out should any information be missing.

Senator Hewitt provided a response to a query raised at the December 7, 2020 special meeting, regarding the "Campus Renewal" annual budget line, relating to capital projects. Senator Harvey added that they could provide further information on the topic should there be any further questions.

3.4 e-vote Senate Endorsement Statement

Senator Hewitt informed Senators that the Senate Endorsement Statement, written in collaboration with the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU), was approved by e-vote. The statement recognized the challenges being experienced by students during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting from adjustment to online learning.

It was confirmed that the Secretariat would work with the Provost Office to communicate the statement to the University community.

3.5 e-vote Senate Retroactive Pass/ILL Option for Summer 2020 Term

Senator Hewitt advised that the Retroactive Pass/ILL Option for Summer 2020 Term was approved by e-vote.

3.6 Amendment to Retroactive Pass/ILL Option for Summer 2020 Term Motion to include Faculty of Graduate Studies

Senator Hewitt informed the meeting that following approval of the retroactive Pass/ILL Option for Summer 2020 Term motion by Senate, through e-vote, and due to an inadvertent omission, a request had been received to apply the retroactive Pass/ILL Option for Summer 2020 Term to the Faculty of Graduate Studies. Senator Hewitt advised that the inclusion could be achieved through amendment of the approved motion, to modify the wording of the motion to include the Faculty of Graduate Studies. A two-thirds majority vote would be required.

Moved by Senator Howard, seconded by Senator Spiteri

- 1. That Pass/ILL grading in Summer 2020 be available to students in the Faculties of Management, Computer Science, Architecture and Planning, and Agriculture (excluding Veterinary Technology) meeting all of the following criteria:
 - (a) The student was enrolled in a minimum of 9 credit hours during the Summer 2020 term, with at least one course being a core course;**
 - (b) The student's structured degree progression required a summer academic term;**
 - (c) The student was enrolled in courses that are normally taught in-person but were offered online; and**
 - (d) The student is enrolled in a program where Pass/ILL grading is available in Fall 2020 and Winter 2021.****

- 2. That Pass/ILL grading be available to the Assistant Deans of Students in the Faculties of Science and Arts and Social Sciences and the Associate Deans in the Faculty of Graduate Studies, to use in exceptional circumstances for students who experienced undue hardship in their Summer 2020 courses and were not granted accommodation or consideration.**

Two-third majority vote required.

In response to a query from a Senator, Senator Howard clarified that the intent was to apply the retroactive Pass/ILL option to any graduate program, in exceptional circumstances, and with the Associate Dean consulting with the particular home faculty.

The motion **CARRIED**.

4. Steps to Make Diversity and Inclusion a Reality

Senator Hewitt advised that continuing with the re-introduced five-minute segment to address steps that are or can be taken to make diversity and inclusion a reality at Dalhousie and in the wider community, Senator Silvio, in their capacity as Black Faculty and Staff Caucus Co-Chair, had been invited to make a short presentation to Senate entitled *The Barking Dog: DBFSC Efforts to Make Diversity and Inclusion a Reality*.

Senator Silvio presented on actions taken by the BFSC to bring attention to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) issues at Dalhousie University, including writing a letter to the Deans' Council requesting to be advised of steps taken by each faculty with respect to making EDI a reality. Senator Silvio thanked the faculties that had responded and noted that there was still an opportunity for the remaining faculties to respond.

Senator Silvio also highlighted activities and achievements over the past year, noting that the BFSC had turned its attention to the issue of Student Ratings of Instruction (SRIs). Senator Silvio advised that SRIs can be problematic when used for promotion and tenure decision making purposes, due to the possibility of rating being affected by racial bias.

5. Reports

5.1 Chair of Senate's Report

Senator Hewitt presented the Chair of Senate's Report, noting upcoming issues at Senate and committee level, including upcoming Senate think tank sessions. The first session, on the draft Dalhousie Digital Strategy, was scheduled for January 25, 2021 and would be led by Senator Bourne-Tyson. Senator Hewitt informed the meeting that a query made regarding the *in camera* status of Senate standing committee meetings would be addressed at each core standing committee with views being brought back to Senate. A query received from DSU on additional academic accommodations for students would also be addressed. Senator Hewitt advised that he would also be attending the January 19, 2021 meeting of the new College of Continuing Education (CCE) Governance Council to discuss the CCE's transition to a new governance model and respond to queries about the collegial process undertaken to effect the changes.

Senator Hewitt also made a personal announcement, informing the meeting of his intention to step down as the Chair of Senate, effective June 30, 2021. Senator Hewitt reflected on his past six years as the Chair of Senate and eleven as a Senator and thanked students, faculty, senior leaders and Senators, noting that it was the encouragement of Francoise Baylis that led him to apply for the Chair of Senate role. Senator Hewitt reflected on outcomes and achievements during his period as Chair, including the joint position of Senate and the Board on fossil fuel divestment that was adopted by a group of universities and bringing of diverse voices to discussions at Senate through the membership reform.

A number of Senators expressed their disappointment at Senator Hewitt's decision to step down and gratitude for his service as Chair of Senate.

5.2 President's Report

Senator Saini presented the President's report thanking Senator Hewitt for his service as the Chair of Senate. Senator Saini also welcomed Robert Hanff to the Senate meeting and his role as the Chair of the Board.

Senator Saini outlined goals for the year and updated the meeting on the status of the draft Strategic Plan, which would be presented to multiple groups including Senate, for feedback.

5.3 Questions for Reports

There were no questions.

6. Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (SLTC)

6.1 Classroom Recording Protocol

Senator Pacurar introduced this item from the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (SLTC), informing the meeting that, in August, 2020, a notice was issued to disregard the requirement to use the media release form in the Classroom Recording Protocol as the means of obtaining permission to record guest lecturers in class. Senator Pacurar advised that it was noted that the form was more useful for in-person classes and was not created with the online teaching environment in mind. The notice advised that consent to be recorded should instead be sought via email or text message and all guests should be advised how the recordings would be used and how long the recordings would be kept.

Senator Pacurar noted that the SLTC discussed the revision to the Classroom Recording Protocol at its meeting of October 7, 2020 and determined to proceed through issuance of guidelines on various aspects of the Protocol (including privacy, consent and notification) while, in due course, also updating those areas of the Protocol that needed it. The SLTC agreed that a motion be developed on that basis which was considered at the November 4, 2020 SLTC meeting and recommended to Senate.

Moved by Senator Pacurar on behalf of the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee:

THAT:

- **The notice to disregard the requirement to use the Media Release Form in the Classroom Recording Protocol posted on Brightspace remain in place during Fall 2020 and Winter 2021 terms.**
- **Guidelines be developed by staff in the Academic Technology Services unit of the Dalhousie Libraries and the Centre for Learning and Teaching around the use of the Classroom Recording Protocol in an online teaching environment.**
- **Further consultations conducted by Academic Technology Services and Centre for Learning and Teaching take place regarding the Classroom Recording Protocol, and any proposed revisions be presented by the Dean of Libraries to the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee for approval by March 31, 2021.**

The motion **CARRIED**.

6.2 Review of CASPer at Faculty of Medicine and School of Nursing

Senator Pacurar presented this item from SLTC advising that in November, 2016, Senate approved the modification of admission requirements for the Doctor of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine and the Bachelor of Science, Nursing, Faculty of Health Professions programs to include the use of CASPer as an interview selection tool and admission requirement, respectively, effective 2017-18.

Senator Pacurar advised that Admissions and Faculty Council in the Faculty of Medicine approved the use of CASPer for two admission cycles. Nursing planned to have CASPer in place for five years, with a minimum of three to ensure that the direct entry students completed the program to assess the predictive value of the test and both faculties committed to monitor the use of CASPer and review it after two admissions cycles. Senator Pacurar noted that the SLTC considered the issue at its January 6, 2021 and recommended that Senate request the faculties for an update.

Moved by Senator Pacurar on behalf of the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee:

THAT Senate request that the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Health, Nursing provide an update by March 31, 2021, on their evaluation of the use of CASPer, with particular attention to the impact of this test on underrepresented group member applicants.

In the ensuing discussion, it was noted that the School of Physiotherapy also used CASPer and it would be beneficial to hear from them too, should data be available.

Moved by B. Merritt, seconded by J. Blustein

THAT the words “School of Physiotherapy” be inserted after the word “Nursing” in the motion.

The motion to amend **CARRIED.**

The motion before Senate was now as follows:

THAT Senate request that the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Health, Nursing and School of Physiotherapy, provide an update by March 31, 2021, on their evaluation of the use of CASPer, with particular attention to the impact of this test on underrepresented group member applicants.

In the ensuing discussion regarding the amendment, it was suggested that the words “ – School of Nursing and School of Physiotherapy” be inserted into the motion to ensure that there was no ambiguity.

Moved by D. Siani, seconded by L. Spiteri

THAT the words “ – School of” be inserted before the word “Nursing” in the motion and words “ and School of Physiotherapy” be inserted after the word “Nursing” in the motion.

The motion to amend **CARRIED.**

The motion before Senate was now as follows:

THAT Senate request that the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Health – School of Nursing and School of Physiotherapy, provide an update by March 31, 2021, on their evaluation of the use of CASPer, with particular attention to the impact of this test on underrepresented group member applicants.

In response to a query from a Senator, Senator Pacurar clarified that the presentations from the Faculties of Medicine and Nursing on the use of CASPer, supported by written reports, would need to be made at SLTC first.

The motion **CARRIED.**

7. SRI Policy Suspension for Winter, Spring and Summer, 2021 Terms

Senator Pacurar introduced this agenda item explaining that at the November 4, 2020 SLTC meeting, the members considered whether to recommend to Senate to suspend the Student Ratings of Instruction (SRI) policy for the Winter 2021 term as it had for the Winter and Fall 2020 terms. Senator Pacurar informed the meeting that the SLTC discussed the effect to students and faculty of extending the SRI policy suspension to the Winter, 2021 term, as well as the appetite for an extension of the suspension and that in the ensuing vote, the motion that had been put forward, to recommend to Senate that the SRI policy be suspended for the Winter 2021 term, was defeated. Senator Pacurar noted that a request had since been received from Senator Westwood, for Senate to consider SRI Policy Suspension for Winter, Spring and Summer, 2021 Terms.

Senator Westwood outlined the rationale for suspension, noting that the motion to suspend was guided by the growing recognition that, like students, instructors were facing serious mental health issues arising from the challenges of teaching during a global pandemic. Senator Westwood stated that Instructors had shouldered an extreme workload in developing and teaching online courses while working from home without regular University resources and without the level of support and training that would normally accompany the purposeful development of online courses. Some faculty would also be teaching online for the first time in the Winter 2021 term and had not yet had the opportunity for feedback. Senator Westwood noted that with the suspension, students would still be able to provide feedback but it would not be used for evaluation for purposes of career progression. By removing only the evaluative aspect of SRIs, some burden and stress would be reduced and hopefully mitigate some of the emerging mental health issues faced by instructors.

Moved by Senator Westwood, seconded by Senator Mohan

THAT Senate approves the following:

Notwithstanding anything in the Student Ratings of Instruction Policy, any data gathered and obtained through Student Ratings of Instruction for courses offered in the Winter 2021, Spring 2021, and Summer 2021 semesters will be used to provide feedback for formative but not evaluative purposes.

The committee discussed the motion noting that:

- An informal survey of student from the Faculty of Engineering indicated a lack of support for this motion, with students expressing a desire for accountability from instructors.
- The majority of courses being taught online were not online courses but courses adjusted under extenuating circumstances. SRIs should be limited to constructive feedback.
- Instructors of colour were judged more harshly and were concerned about that this would be reflected in SRIs in these conditions.
- For faculties that had accreditation, SRIs were helpful in holding teaching to a consistent standard.
- Consideration should be given to having a waiver for faculty to not have their SRIs considered for evaluation.
- Student were less likely to fill out SRIs should their feedback not be used for faculty promotion and tenure decisions.
- Junior faculty members up for tenure might not have many SRIs to include and sessional instructors from the Fall 2020 term could not be evaluated without SRIs.

A Senator noted that in addition to evaluation of faculty, SRIs were used by Deans to evaluate infrastructure use and asked if SRIs would still be provided to Deans for that purpose. Senator Westwood noted that all the

information should still be shared with relevant parties and that the only restriction would be that they were not put into tenure and promotion files.

The motion **CARRIED**.

8. Senate Review Report – Faculty of Management

This item was deferred due to lack of time.

9. Dal Open

This item was deferred due to lack of time.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.