

Item: Senate Minutes, April 2006
Call Number: Senate fonds, UA-5

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DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

APPROVED MINUTES

OF

SENATE MEETING

Senate met in regular session on Monday, April 10, 2006 at 4:00 p.m., in University Hall, Macdonald Building.

Present with Mr. Fraser in the chair: Adshade, Barker, Beazley, Binkley, Bond, Breckenridge, Butler, Camfield, Cercone, Chowdhury, Cleave, Cochrane, Cook, Coughlan, Dawson, Dunphy (Recording Secretary), Edelstein, Hicks, Hubert, Klein, Kwak, Livingston, Maes, McNeil, Murphy, Oppong, Pelzer, Rutherford, Scrimger, Scully, Slonim, B. Smith, K.E. Smith, Stone, Stroink, Sullivan, Traves, Urbanowski, Wallace, Whyte, Wright, Yeung, Zuck.

Regrets: Caron, El-Hawary, El-Masry, Geldenhuys, Lane, Leon, Phillips, Plug, Precious, Saunders, Schroeder, Swanston, Taylor, Thornhill, Wien.

Absent: Ben-Abdallah, Gray, Horackova, Johnson, Jordan, McMullen, Morgunov, Pegg, Rosson, Salmon, Wanzel, Webster.

2006:053

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was **ADOPTED** as circulated.

2006:054

Draft Minutes of February 27, 2006 Meeting

a) Approval

The draft minutes of the February 27, 2006 were **APPROVED** as circulated.

b) Matters Arising

Mr. Fraser reported that the Dalhousie University's Policy on Integrity in Scholarly Activity will be reviewed by the Senate Steering Committee with a report back to Senate.

2006:055

Draft Minutes of March 13, 2006 Meeting

a) Approval

The draft minutes of the March 13, 2006 were **APPROVED** as circulated.

b) Matters Arising

Mr. Whyte had asked Mr. Scully if disciplinary action would be taken against those who made allegations or acted unfairly in the matter concerning Dr. Gabrielle Horne.

Mr. Scully indicated that he was not aware of any complaints laid under the Policy on Integrity in Scholarly Activity in regard to the circumstances of Dr. Gabrielle Horne. The University administration has no standing in clinical circumstances but will continue to protest the unacceptable delays in this matter. The appropriate time to consider Mr. Whyte's question would be when the Capital District Health Authority has done its duty.

2006:056

Question Period

Mr. Stroink referred to a matter reported in the media recently regarding the affordability of public universities in North America, a survey entitled Beyond the 49th Parallel to the Affordability of University Education, which is an in-depth analysis of what students are paying and how well they are able to afford to go to different universities in North America. He quoted from the conclusion from the Executive Summary: "The least affordable jurisdictions were Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, and by some considerable distance, Nova Scotia." Nova Scotia was also the least affordable jurisdiction overall in North America. He is very concerned because if we want to promote Dalhousie University and get more students, this is not a very good ranking. In his opinion, there are many factors that would come into this kind of judgment and this kind of ranking, and he found some of those factors very important and he hopes that someone with the University will study this in order to see if some of these aspects can be dealt with.

Mr. Traves responded that certainly on one level the conclusion is not a great surprise, not perhaps in its detail, but in the general claim that we have long insisted that Nova Scotia has provided insufficient support for the university-system as a whole, and this has always been connected in our various discussions with the government, student body, and the public; that there is a relationship between the level of tuition fees and the level of government support. Mr. Traves indicated that it is important in the future that we see two kinds of government action: First, an increase in operating grants to the university. There has been some recent improvement in this regard, and it is hoped to see a continuation of this direction of public policy. Second, in terms of the issue of net affordability, there is a need to see an increase in a variety of forms of student aid and, in particular, student grants, as opposed to student loans, which will then reduce the net costs of going to university for students who most need this kind of support.

Mr. Slonim stated that international fees are hurting both sides of the equation because as a researcher, not having a good research student to work with is a very difficult thing and in the Faculty of Computer Science there are a lot of foreign students that the faculty needs to pay for. There is very little that you can support from other sources like government, because government does not support foreign students. Mr. Traves said he appreciates the concern and so did the Budget Advisory Committee and the Board last year when they exempted all students who are involved in thesis-based programs from paying the international differential fee, so the students that Mr. Cercone was describing, who presumably would be supported by faculty members' research grants, do not pay this fee and will not pay this increase. Mr. Scully added that they will pay the basic 3.9% increase and they will continue to pay, again for a second year, a different rate of increase on the international differential fee. Fundamentally, Dalhousie is competitive in the international area with universities which we would be competing with for students.

Mr. Cercone noted that at a few other universities where he has been, where money was charged for differential fees, half of the money was returned to the faculty, whereas here we centralize it to improve student services. He added that he does not think that this is something that has been felt yet by the students because it has only been going on for about a year. He said that he would like to see a report on what has happened with that half of the money that we were told last year would go into student services and into the graduate programs.

Ms. Stone asked the President if in negotiations with the provincial government for enhanced funding for the universities, if he has approached them on the issue of international students and tuition fees. Ms. Stone felt we were working against, not only the interest of the university, but the immigration agenda of the provincial government which sees international students as an extremely important way of attracting more immigrants to the province. In terms of approaching the provincial government, it would seem that they might be open to the idea of providing special funding and infrastructure in the form of subsidies for international students that might attract them to Nova Scotia. Mr. Traves affirmed that at the time the universities collectively negotiated with the provincial government the three-year funding agreement under a general Memorandum of Understanding, there was a full discussion about the issue of international students and the recommendation to exempt them from the cap on tuition fees that had been negotiated between the universities and the government. There was full consideration at that time, and a clear understanding that international student fees, which were comparatively low in Nova Scotia, would go up. Mr. Traves indicated he would be pleased to go back to the government and see if they are interested in the idea of providing special supports for international students, whether undergraduate or graduate. He indicated he would pursue that issue, perhaps with a different ministry than education, because they are the ones who granted leave to raise the fees. This would essentially be a reversal of the earlier position, but perhaps the department responsible for immigration policies would be interested in pursuing this issue and he would be happy to raise it with them.

Mr. Traves reminded Senators that the university's funding formula has not been adjusted since the late 1990s in terms of the numbers of students who are accounted for under the operating grant paid to the university. Effectively half the international students are fully unfunded. That is to say that the University received no operating grants for roughly the increase in international students, (about double what we had in the late 1990s). Consequently, these students are coming here and their only support is their tuition fees. As we are not receiving an operating grant, that puts a special burden on the university to carry the costs of their education. Mr. Traves felt that the government is actively planning to look at the funding formula, and presumably that will begin to take account of the significant enrolment growth that has occurred across all categories of students since the last time the formula was addressed.

Ms. Bond's understands that in the current Memorandum of Understanding, it talks about reviewing the funding formula. She asked if there is any initiative from the Nova Scotia university presidents to renew the funding formula, or is that something that is not really being looked at right now? Mr. Traves said that his understanding is that the Ministry of Education has been doing some preparatory work to put them in a position to open a conversation with the universities some time during this current year. Certainly at Dalhousie we are operating under an assumption that this topic will come forward for review. This is a very complex question because it obviously looks at not only the level of funding available, but the level of funding as it relates to all the different programs in the university, and the inter-relationship between all the different programs with respect to their costs.

2006:057

Budget Advisory Committee Report XXXIII

Mr. Fraser called upon Mr. Scully, Chair of the Budget Advisory Committee, to introduce the report, and in doing so, he recognized the presence of other members of BAC and welcomed them to the meeting and to the discussion. Mr. Scully recognized Mr. Jan Kwak, Mr. Bryan Mason, and Ms. Susan Zinck. He explained that, in many ways, this was a simpler set of questions for the BAC this year than in previous years. The salient facts were set out on page one under "Highlights". These include the Memorandum of Understanding, which provided a firm commitment with regard to the increase in the government grant; and secondly, the Board's requirement that we present a balanced budget. This latter point is a challenge this year given the current decline in the enrolment and the anticipated further decline in enrolment this coming year, and to try to address this issue through the commitment to provide additional resources to the undergraduate enrolment management initiative. The budget is going to grow by about 4.4% year over year, approaching a \$10 million increase. The bulk of that increase is coming through government funding; with the second of the three years of this Memorandum of Understanding is a 5 ¼%

increase. Where Dalhousie does not match previous years, is in terms of tuition revenue because of the projected enrolment decrease, using the numbers that were provided at the time of this report. We anticipate that tuition revenues would increase by only 1.2%. The basic capping on tuition is 3.9% and in virtually all of the undergraduate direct-entry programs, the increase will not be 3.9%, but 3.6%. The biggest single cost continues to be compensation, which is compounded by our continuing pension costs. Compensation in the New Year will go up by 5%. Strategic initiatives were reviewed. Facilities renewal and the continuing attention to classrooms and student assistance will go up by 4.1% (about \$514,000 additional going into student assistance), and library acquisitions (which in addition to the 2%, the library acquisition budget will go up by an additional \$125,000) resulting in a 4.1% increase. BAC is recommending that the remaining shortfall be handled through an across-the-board reduction of 2.1%, which will be levied on all eligible units (if this budget is approved).

Mr. Scully pointed out that tuition was the area that BAC had spent the most amount of time on. BAC produced a different recommendation for the three professional programs from last year, where all programs had previously been subject to the same increase. BAC met with student representatives from Law and Medicine, and received correspondence from Dentistry students. BAC continued to be guided by principles that have been set out by the Board. The Board is currently reviewing a variety of issues through the long-term financial planning committee. The Board will be reviewing its policy and guidance to the Budget Advisory Committee. In reference to the international differential, Mr. Scully explained that if one takes an example of an international student at the undergraduate level in the Faculty of Science for the current year, working toward a Bachelor of Science, the Dalhousie fee including the differential is just over \$12,240. A student taking the same program at McGill, who is an international student, will pay \$12,600. At the University of Western Ontario that student would pay \$12,500. At the University of Alberta that student would pay \$15,091. At the University of Alberta the differential fee is \$10,554. The Dean of Graduate Studies recognized the complexities of the differential fees and the challenges this represents, as there are a small number of units which rely heavily upon international students for their graduate student population, and clearly Computer Science is one such area. Dalhousie University has a very large issue to address for funding graduate students, and particularly, graduate students in thesis-based programs. The Dean of Science is working with a small group of colleagues, using the Department of Chemistry as a test case, which has a substantial number of international graduate students, in order to see whether there are ways to deal with the very real concerns that exist. Last year the Budget Advisory Committee examined the international differential fee and came forward with a five-year plan in order to deal with this issue on a long-term basis. A similar plan is needed to address the issue for thesis-based students, where those programs are heavily dependent upon such students for both the educational and research mission of the unit. Such students are almost exclusively in Science, Computer Science, and Engineering.

Ms. Bond reiterated her comment that when we are looking at international differential fees in different universities, she feels it is not showing the whole picture just to show the differential fees and where we are on that scale. We must look at the level of support services for international students. She said that if we did look at those things in comparison to other universities, we would find that we are lacking. We do not have English as a second language, nor support services for our students. These are the sorts of things we need to look at when we are looking at how much we are charging international students for differential fees in comparison to other schools.

Mr. Kwak mentioned that comparisons with other universities are very difficult because the Dalhousie system is somewhat unique. Each department gets a substantial allocation of University-budgeted funding for graduate students, and it is up to the unit to determine how to use that, and they could use it to cover international fees if they wished. In many other universities, that is done on a one-to-one basis. At Dalhousie it is up to the departments to decide how to use the graduate students funding that is made available.

Mr. Scully emphasized that the total fee increase for international graduate students in thesis programs will be 3.9% (3.9% on both the tuition and the international differential fee).

Mr. Fraser asked if the question concerning the funds that are directed to student services for international students could be reported on at a future meeting. Mr. Scully agreed to do so for the next meeting of Senate.

Ms. Stone asked if it would be possible to report back on comparisons with other universities in terms of their support services for international students, because she does not think that kind of information has been included in the BAC reports. She also wondered if there were any statistics on retention rates amongst international students, because she understood there is anecdotal evidence about a whole cluster of international students in one program relocating to a Toronto university where they found they could get ESL and other kinds of support free of charge. Mr. Scully once again said he would be happy to bring back answers to these questions. He added that it would be helpful to have some definition of what it meant by “service to international students”, as there are various interpretations. He added that BAC is looking at a whole variety of retention issues, and he thinks that the data that Ms. Stone has identified has been collected, therefore, he plans to bring back broader information on the question of student retention at the May or June meeting. There is a retention opportunity at Dalhousie, not just with international students, but more broadly in the undergraduate programs.

Mr. Traves commented that he thinks that whilst the international student issue is important, we are talking about approximately 1200 students at the university. Half of them are undergraduates, so they do not fall within the scope of most of the questions that have been asked. Another quarter are not in thesis-based courses, and are not relevant to concerns about researchers and who pays what. Ultimately we are talking about 300-400 students. Mr. Traves indicated that it would be best to talk about student services with the Vice-President, Student Services, Ms. Bonnie Neuman, who could make a presentation to Senate.

Mr. Sullivan indicated that the province of Nova Scotia has recently been experiencing difficulties with immigration in terms of the number of people that have left this province and it is looking for a way to address that issue. He indicated that the University could help the province with this, which in turn might involve some financial assistance from the province.

2006:058

Senate Committee on Learning and Teaching Awards: Sessional and Part-Time Instructor Awards of Excellence for Teaching

Mr. Fraser explained that the Senate Committee on Learning and Teaching had two awards, which were established in 2002, that are presented annually to two instructors who have displayed the qualities of superior teaching, enthusiasm for the subject and interest in the needs of students. The awards are directed to sessional and part-time instructors. Mr. Fraser and Mr. Reg Urbanowski, Chair of SCOLT, presented the awards to Ms. Kristine Peace (Psychology Department) and Ms. Letitia Meynell (Philosophy Department).

2006:059

Senate Academic Priorities and Budget Committee

Proposed Name Change Request: Master of Arts (Health Education) to Master of Arts (Health Promotion)

On behalf of SAPBC, Mr. Fraser **MOVED:**

THAT the Senate approve the proposed name change from Master of Arts (Health Education) to Master of Arts (Health Promotion).

The motion was **CARRIED.**

2006:060**Chair's Report**

Mr. Fraser reported that on March 21, 2006 the Chair of Senate received notice that the Master of Science (Rehabilitation Research - Physiotherapy) had been approved by the MPHEC. Secondly, he reported that the Senate Office has been attempting to find an appropriate means of circulating Senate documents digitally to Senators. The plan is to implement a system beginning in July with the change of some of the Senate membership. There will be a protected section on the Senate website that all Senators could access with a username and password.

Mr. Fraser agreed to take Mr. Cercone's suggestion into consideration that prior to putting new Senate documents on the website, old documents be archived. He advised that any further comments and suggestions from Senators would be appreciated.

2006:061**Report of the President**

Mr. Traves congratulated Ms. Susan Sherwin, Department of Philosophy, for successfully being awarded the Killam prize, the highest prize for academic excellence awarded in Canada by the Canada Council. She is a recipient under the Humanities and Social Sciences. Mr. Brian Hall (Biology) received the Killam prize last year.

Mr. Traves noted that the School of Planning in the Faculty of Architecture and Planning has received a full accreditation.

Mr. Traves noted a change that has been in the Memorandum of Understanding between the University and the government. The NS government prepaid the increase that would be coming to the universities in the 2006-2007 fiscal year, roughly \$8,000,000 to the universities on the last day of the old fiscal year, so we will go forward with a large surplus. This results from this prepayment of next year's money on the last day of the old year. Mr. Traves noted that this is the fourth year in a row that the University has had such a prepayment, without an adjustment to the base, and there is a mounting risk that one day a negative scenario might come to pass.

2006:062**Other Business**

There were no other items of business.

2006:063**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.