



SENATE

Approved Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, November 22 2021 at 3:00 p.m. Via Microsoft Teams

The Senate met in regular session on Monday, November 22, 2021 via Microsoft Teams

Present: L. Spiteri (Chair), R. Agu, A. Aiken, D. Anderson, G. Alexander, M. Ali Ulku, M. Aston, D. Bilodeau, J. Blustein, D. Bourne-Tyson, K. Brooks, R. Chang, T. Cyrus, B. Davis, K. Dilcher, A. Doucette, P. Doucet-Bernard, O. Dryden, P. Doyle-Bedwell, H. El Naggari, N. Ezzeddine, M. Farrimond, C. Flood, B. Foster, M. Fournier, G. Gagnon, J. Gantar, D. Grantham, D. Gray, F. Harvey, V. Howard, M. Irwin, S. Jeffrey, S. Kirk, M. Keinast, W. Lahey, C. Lake, M. Leonard, C. Macdonald, L. Macdonald, C. Macy, S. McKibbin, B. Merritt, L. Meynell, F. Naghibi, B. Nassar, J. Newhook, H. Niu, M. Pacurar, N. Patil, L. Perez, T. Rajack-Talley, A. Rau-Chaplin, C. Richardson, H. Ro, K. Rosen, D. Saini, L. Sarson, S. Seth, M. Sharaput, A. Siegel, D. Silvio, V. Simodoh, S. Stone, F. Taheri, V. Turpin, D. Tyers, F. Verth, T. Walker, D. Westwood, D. White, S. Wildeman, I. Yakovenko, E. Yiridoe

Regrets: D. Idyue, S. Kuzak, M. Stinson

Absent: T. Adams, G. Adolphe-Nazaire, C. Cameron, Y. El Hiani, K. El-Sankary, D. Grujic, J. Hall, G. Horne, D. Jakeman, S. Keyamo, H. Maambo, M. MacEachern, M. Nashnouch, R. Orji, L. Proper, E. Wunker, S. Yurgel

Guests: Jennifer Bain (Chair, SAPRC Research Sub-Committee), Susan Brousseau (University Secretary), David Burton (Professor, Department of Plant, Food & Environmental Sciences), Chris Culter (Professor and Associate Dean Research, Department of Plant, Food & Environmental Sciences), Dominic Groulx (Department Head, Department of Mechanical Engineering), John Hope (Legal Counsel), Claire Mercer (Student Minute Taker), Judith Ng'ethe (Associate Secretary of Senate), Nakita Strowbridge (Senate Coordinator)

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 **adopted** as presented.

2. Consent Agenda

2.1. Approval of Draft Minutes of September 13 and 27, 2021 Senate Meetings

Approved by **CONSENT**.

2.2. Senate Appointment to the Vice-President Research and Innovation Review Committee

THAT Senate approve the appointment of Noreen Kamal as the Senate representative on the Vice-President Research and Innovation Review Committee.

Approved by **CONSENT**.

3. Matters Arising from September 27, 2021 Senate Meeting

3.1. In Camera Status of Senate Standing Committee Meetings

Senator Spiteri encouraged Senators to respond to the call sent out by the University Secretariat for three Senator positions to be filled on the rapid task force established to explore a possible constitutional amendment to change the default *in camera* status of Senate standing committee meetings.

4. Steps to Make Diversity and Inclusion a Reality

Senator Spiteri invited Senator Tyers to present the Faculty of Open Learning and Career Development's steps to make diversity and inclusion a reality at Dalhousie.

Senator Tyers informed Senators about the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) centred courses and certificates offered by the Faculty of Open Learning and Career Development. Senator Tyers advised that the faculty hosted public online courses that collectively contributed to a certificate in EDIA. Senator Tyers also elaborated on standalone courses offered by the faculty, including Workplace Diversity and Inclusion, Interrupting Unconscious Bias and Understanding Diversity and Inclusion. Senator Tyers noted that in January 2022, a free course entitled The Intercultural Communication in a Higher Education Context would be available to all Dalhousie students, staff and faculty course and would be accessible through Brightspace. Internationalization of the Curriculum would also be developed as a certificate accessible to Dalhousie faculties and instructors in January 2022.

5. Reports:

5.1. Chair of Senate's Report

Senator Spiteri's written report provided an update on the issue of *in camera* status of Senate standing committees and an overview of the Interim Chair of Senate's attendance at meetings of the Board of Governors, various faculty councils, the Academic Term Dates Planning Working Group and the Search Committee for the Dean of Libraries. In addition, the report gave a summary of the Dalhousie Governance Review process now underway.

Senator Spiteri noted that as interim Senate Chair, she was a voting *ex-officio* member on all but two faculty councils. Senator Spiteri requested Deans to remind Chairs of faculty councils to forward meeting invitations to her and recommended that updates on Senate activities be included as standing items on meeting agendas of faculty councils.

In addition, Senator Spiteri reminded the meeting that thirteen items had been provided in the meeting package for Senators' information. These included a summary and a detailed overview

of the mandate and activities of the Return to Campus (RTC) from June, 2020-June, 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic, as provided by the Provost at the request of one of the Senators.

5.2. Provost's Report

Senator Harvey's written report included updates on enrolment figures, implementation of the Dalhousie new Strategic Plan (Third Century Promise), academic initiatives, student support, awards, the Digital Strategy, the Accessibility Plan, senior administration search committees and the newly formed President's COVID-19 Science Advisory Committee.

Senator Harvey spoke further to the report, noting that:

- 2021-22 overall enrolment numbers stood at 21,076.
- There was a 3.8% (770 students) enrolment increase compared to the previous year.
- Executive Sponsors and Strategic Leads for each of the five Strategic Pillars of the Dalhousie new strategic plan (Third Century Promise) had been identified and met in November, 2021 to kick off implementation.
- The Here We Code campaign, led by the Faculty of Computer Science, had been recently launched and aimed to generate excitement around Nova Scotia's digital economy and to help both the university and broader ecosystem attract new talent.
- An initiative was underway to expand academic programming on the Agricultural Campus.
- A new Ombudsperson had been appointed to serve as an independent, impartial and confidential resource for students, providing objective guidance around navigating university and Student Union policies.
- Work continued on Dalhousie's Accessibility Plan and this was on schedule for delivery to the provincial government in spring 2022.

5.3. Questions for Reports

In response to a question about how the governance review would be conducted, Senator Spiteri advised that the review was an initiative of the Chair of the Board of Governors and the exercise had been contracted out to consultants. Senator Spiteri further advised that extensive consultations would be undertaken and that the resulting report and recommendations would be shared with the Board of Governors and Senate.

Responding to a query questioning the mandate of the Board to undertake a governance review of Senate, Senator Spiteri noted that the governance review was included in the university's strategic plan and would examine both the Board of Governors and Senate.

Concern was expressed about seemingly continuous enrolment growth and the apparent assumption that constant expansion was a measure of success. It was noted that the optimal size for Dalhousie needed to be determined. In response, Senator Harvey noted that these were questions that the Strategic Enrolment Management Steering Committee considered.

It was noted that infrastructure and the capacity to support students, especially housing, should be considered with the rise in student numbers. It was noted that, for instance, Dalhousie had only one family residence that was shared with the University of King's College.

It was recommended that innovative ideas for dealing with social housing in the context of student housing be considered, including tapping into funds beyond the institution, including the provincial and federal governments.

Responding to a query regarding the Dalhousie Accessibility Plan, Senator Harvey responded that the draft Accessibility Plan would be presented to Senate in spring 2022 for feedback.

FOR APPROVAL

6. Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (SLTC) Student Feedback on Learning Experiences Policy – Proposed Suspension of Student Ratings of Course Content

Senator Pacurar reminded Senators that at its April 26, 2021 meeting, Senate approved the addition of a block of Student Rating of Course Content (SRCC) survey questions to the Student Feedback on Learning Experiences Policy (formerly known as the Student Ratings of Instruction Policy), with the intention that the SRCC survey questions would be integrated into the policy for the fall 2021 term Student Learning Experience Questionnaires (SLEQ).

Senator Pacurar explained that the SRCC were a block of mandatory questions that were to be asked across all courses for which data would be collected confidentially with the aim of identifying the levels of content that addressed equity and inclusion in Dalhousie course curricula for educational and nonpunitive purposes. Senator Pacurar noted that the SRCC results would be visible only by instructors though the aggregate data would be provided to Heads, Chairs, Deans and Faculty-level EDI Chairs.

Senator Pacurar informed Senate that a request had been made that the SRCC questions be suspended for the 2021-22 academic year. Given the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, faculty had not had sufficient time to adjust or to seek guidance, advice and support for changes that may need to be made to courses as a result of the new SLEQ questions.

Responding to a question, Senator Pacurar explained that, if the proposed suspension was approved, the SRCC questions would not appear in the SLEQ for the 2021-22 academic year.

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

THAT Senate approve the suspension of a portion of the Student Feedback on Learning Experiences Policy, namely Section E of the Student Learning Experience Questionnaire that contains the set of questions referred to as the Student Rating of Course Content, for the 2021-22 academic year.

The motion **CARRIED**.

7. Senate Academic Programs and Research Committee (SAPRC)

7.1. Proposed Termination of Program – Bachelor of Engineering – Materials Engineering, Faculty of Engineering

Senator Blustein presented the proposed termination of the Bachelor of Engineering - Materials Engineering undergraduate program in the Faculty of Engineering.

It was reported that the proposed termination of the program was due to extremely low enrolment, despite concerted efforts made to increase it. Senator Blustein also informed Senate that the last students in the program had graduated in May, 2020 and that the program was no longer accredited by the Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board.

Moved by Senator Blustein on behalf of the Senate Academic Programs and Research Committee:

THAT Senate approve the termination of the Materials Engineering undergraduate program, Faculty of Engineering, as presented.

The motion **CARRIED**.

7.2. Proposal for a Centre for Sustainable Soil Management

Senator Blustein presented the proposal for the creation of a Centre for Sustainable Soil Management within the Faculty of Agriculture.

It was reported that the proposal had been considered by the SAPRC Research Sub-Committee (RSC) and by SAPRC and that recommendations made at both levels had been incorporated into the proposal.

Moved by Senator Blustein on behalf of the Senate Academic Programs and Research Committee:

THAT Senate approve creation of the Centre for Sustainable Soil Management, as presented.

The motion **CARRIED**.

7.3. Proposal for Creation of Black Studies Research Institute

Senator Blustein presented the proposal for the creation of the Black Studies Research Institute.

It was reported that the proposal had been considered by the both the RSC and SAPRC.

Senator Blustein advised Senate that at its meeting, SAPRC expressed concern that the proponent had indicated that financial and in-kind support was in place for two years. This meant that the proposal was not in compliance with Section D.3.a. of the Research Centres and Institutes Policy, which provided that proponents for creation of centres and institutes should provide evidence of sufficient funding to cover infrastructure and operating costs for a period of at least five years. Senator Blustein explained that as this evidence was not available and so

not as to be in violation of the requirements of the policy, SAPRC had recommended to Senate that the proposal be approved with the proviso that this requirement of the policy be waived. Senator Blustein noted that SAPRC had also stressed the importance of the proposed institute's funding being confirmed beyond two years.

Senator Blustein reported that following the SAPRC meeting, the proponent had confirmed that financial and in-kind support had in fact been offered for three years by the faculties of Law, Management, Medicine, Engineering, Arts and Social Sciences, Dentistry, Computer Science, Health, Graduate Studies, Open Learning and Career Development, and Agriculture.

Moved by Senator Blustein on behalf of the Senate Academic Programs and Research Committee:

THAT Senate approve creation of the Black Studies Research Institute, with the proviso that Section D.3.a of the Research Centres and Institutes policy be waived.

The motion **CARRIED**.

Senators Spiteri and Harvey were joined by the other Senators in congratulating Senator Dryden on the significant accomplishment of having the proposal approved.

A Senator noted that this institute was of critical importance and expressed hope that all necessary support would be provided to ensure that the institute achieved its full potential.

FOR DISCUSSION

8. Question Period

There were no questions.

9. Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.