

SENATE**Approved Minutes of the Meeting held on
Monday, November 27, 2023 at 3:00 p.m.****Hybrid****Windsor Foundation Room (Room 170) CHEB & Remote Link via Microsoft Teams**

The Senate met in regular session on Monday, November 27, 2023

Present

L. Spiteri (Chair), G. Adolphe-Nazaire, R. Affoo, A. Aiken, T. Akay, O. Akinkugbe, D. Anderson, O. Bankole, S. Bishop, D. Black, E. Black, J. Blustein, K. Brooks, C. Brown, R. Chang, I. Coutand, B. Davis, K. Dilcher, A. Doucette, P. Doyle-Bedwell, L. DuBois, R. Ezekiel, N. Ezzeddine, M. Farrimond, S. Forbes, M. Fournier, G. Gagnon, M. Goudreault, R. Goyal, D. Grantham, S. Harding, F. Harvey, G. Ilie, D. Jakeman, N. Kiepek, S. Kirk, M. Knakriah, Y. Kotlyarova, C. Lake, M. Leonard, J. Li, Y. Liu, C. Macdonald, L. Macdonald, S. McKibbin, C. McLarney, R. Meagher, B. Merritt, F. Naghibi, M. Pacurar, Y. Pan, N. Patil, L. Phillmore, T. Rajack-Talley, A. Rau-Chaplin, T. Richard, K. Rosen, R. Sampangi, L. Sarson, S. Seth, M. Sharaput, D. Silvio, V. Simedoh, D. Tyers, G. Wang-Pruski, D. Westwood, S. Wildeman, E. Yiridoe

Regrets

J. Andrews, D. Burnay, V. Chappe, O. Dryden, M. Keinast, W. Lahey, V. Maselli, T. Perrot, S. Stone, M. Vandenburg, R. Zaiotti

Absent

S. Berge, A. Bernard, S. Chitnis, C. D'Souza, Y. El Hiani, H. El Naggar, G. Horne, A. Kermanshahi-pour, P. Marignani, H. Niu, E. Oguntonna, R. Orji, A. Rudnick, M. Smit, M. Ulku, P. Wani

Guests

Leanne French-Munn (Assistant Vice-Provost, Planning and Strategy), Kevin Hewitt (Atlantic Region Co-Chairholder, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada), John Hope (General Counsel & University Secretary), Sapna Natarajan (Student Minute Taker), Judith Ng'ethe (Associate Secretary of Senate), Angela Siegel (Co-Chair, Review Committee, Holistic Review of Cyclical Academic Quality Assurance Project), Nakita Strowbridge (Senate Coordinator), Courtney Sutton (Member, Review Committee, Holistic Review of Cyclical Academic Quality Assurance Project)

The Dalhousie University Senate acknowledges that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People and pays respect to the Indigenous knowledges held by the Mi'kmaq People, and to the wisdom of their Elders past and present. The Mi'kmaq People signed Peace and Friendship Treaties with the Crown, and section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and Treaty rights. We are all Treaty people.

We recognize that African Nova Scotians are a distinct people whose histories, legacies and contributions have enriched that part of Mi'kma'ki known as Nova Scotia for over 400 years.

1. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

2. Consent Agenda

2.1 Approval of Draft Minutes of October 23, 2023 Senate Meeting

THAT the draft minutes of the October 23, 2023 Senate meeting be approved as circulated.

Approved by **CONSENT**.

2.2 Approval of Draft Minutes of November 6, 2023 Senate Special Meeting

THAT the draft minutes of the November 6, 2023 Senate Special meeting be approved as circulated.

Approved by **CONSENT**.

3. Matters Arising from October 23, 2023 Meeting

3.1 Proposed Revisions to Student Rating of Course Content Aspects of the Student Feedback on Learning Experiences Policy

The meeting was informed that following approval of the proposed revisions to Student Rating of Course Content (SRCC) aspects of the Student Feedback on Learning Experiences Policy at the Senate October 23, 2023 meeting, the proposed revisions were forwarded to the Board of Governors for its further approval. It was reported that the Executive Committee, on behalf of the Board of Governors, approved the proposed changes by e-vote on November 17, 2023, and that the Student Learning Experiences Questionnaire (SLEQ) had been circulated to students with the revised SRCC questions.

4. Steps to Make Diversity and Inclusion a Reality

Senator Spiteri invited Dr. Kevin Hewitt, in his capacity as one of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) inaugural team of chairholders for the Atlantic region as part of its Chairs for Inclusion in Science and Engineering (CISE) pilot program, to give a presentation to Senate entitled *NSERC Chairs for Inclusion in Science and Engineering in Atlantic Canada - Overview of Programs*.

Dr. Hewitt informed Senate that the CISE program was built on the successful NSERC Chairs for Women in Science and Engineering (CWSE) program, continuing to promote the participation and retention of women in science and engineering, while expanding to further address issues faced by a broader range of underrepresented groups. Dr. Hewitt advised that the goal of the CISE pilot was to support a team of researchers in the Atlantic region who contributed to a culture of inclusion in the natural sciences and engineering fields by catalysing networks of supporters of this work, promoting equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in the research ecosystem, and undertaking activities to enhance awareness and understanding of barriers and inequities faced by members of underrepresented groups in these fields. CISE was being launched as a two-year pilot program to replace the outgoing CWSE Chair in the Atlantic region with a team of three CISE Chairs at multiple universities across the region. If successful, it would be renewed for a further five years and expanded across five regions in Canada in a team-based approach.

5. Reports

5.1 Chair of Senate's Report

The Chair of Senate's report was submitted in writing with the Senate package and included updates on the Governance review and the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) think tank that would be held in

the 2024 Winter term. Senator Spiteri noted that the BAC questions poll would shortly be forwarded to Senators.

5.2 Provost's Report

The Provost's report was submitted in writing with the Senate package. Senator Harvey spoke about the second-annual Accessibility Week hosted by Dalhousie University. Senator Harvey noted that Dalhousie was currently at the mid-point of the Strategic Plan which identified the commitment to inclusive excellence under which inclusive spaces, services and communities must be accessible to Dalhousie students, Faculty, and staff. Senator Harvey also congratulated the 2023 Legacy Awards recipients, as well as the 2023 University-Wide Teaching Award winners.

5.3 VPRI Bi-Annual Report

Senator Aiken, in her capacity as Vice-President Research and Innovation, gave an update to Senate regarding the Research and Innovation Strategic Direction 2024-29.

Senator Aiken informed Senate that in 2023, the Office of the Vice-President Research and Innovation embarked on a consultation process of the Dalhousie research community and external partners to renew and refresh Dalhousie's research and innovation strategic direction and spoke to the consultation process, survey respondents, inclusive research excellence at Dalhousie and guiding principles.

The meeting was informed about the resulting six refreshed research clusters, as follows:

- Sustainable Ocean;
- Healthy People Communities and Populations;
- Sustainable Food Systems;
- Culture and Society;
- Climate Tech and Clean Energy; and
- AI and Digital Innovation.

Senator Aiken confirmed that the United Nations Strategic Development Goals (SDGs) would still be considered within the research clusters and explained that emphasis would be placed on the impact of the research at Dalhousie. In closing, Senator Aiken explained how the initiative aligned with Dalhousie's Third Century Promise.

5.4 Questions for Reports

In response to a question regarding the application of the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) principles to research at Dalhousie, Senator Aiken explained that currently, these guiding principles were not in use at Dalhousie.

In response to a question regarding how the concerns brought forward following the recently released *Understanding our Roots Report* with respect to settler misappropriation of Indigenous identity and verification of claims of Indigenous community membership would be addressed, Senator Harvey explained that consultation and engagement with Indigenous bodies was underway and that further information would be forthcoming. Senator Spiteri also advised that a presentation of the report would be made to Senate in the near future.

FOR DISCUSSION

6. Senate Consultation on Holistic Review of Cyclical Academic Quality Assurance

Senator Spiteri informed the meeting that in May, 2021, the Senate Planning and Governance Committee (SPGC) approved a project charter (the Holistic Review of Cyclical Academic Quality Assurance) for a holistic review of Dalhousie's approach to cyclical academic quality assurance (AQA) and that as part of the review process, Senate feedback was sought prior to submission of recommendations, as academic quality was a core function of Senate.

Senator Spiteri invited Senator Phillmore (in her capacity as co-chair of the review committee undertaking the holistic review of cyclical academic quality assurance) to undertake the Senate consultation on the holistic review of cyclical academic quality assurance at Dalhousie.

Senator Phillmore gave a presentation that included the goals of the holistic review, the approach taken, consultations and engagement to date, data synthesis and interpretation, finding highlights, and a summary of the draft recommendations.

The meeting was informed that while the process was still in the consultation stage, draft recommendations included the following:

- That Dalhousie should establish an overarching framework for academic quality assurance;
- That there be an increase in dedicated, central administrative and project management support for program reviews to supplement the human resources in academic units to ensure greater consistency and quality of reviews; and
- That the *Senate Reviews of Faculties: Policy and Procedures* had outlived its usefulness.

Senator Phillmore opened the floor to Senate with the following discussion questions:

- Are there any recommendations that were unclear and require further explanation and/or context?
- Are there any recommendations that were surprising and/or unexpected?
- Are there any areas of focus or issues that appear to be missing from the recommendations?

In the ensuing discussion:

- Concern was expressed that the draft recommendation to terminate the *Senate Reviews of Faculties: Policy and Procedures*, while based on ensuring efficiency and eliminating redundancies and duplication, would mean that a level of Senate oversight was lost in ensuring accountability and follow up. In response, it was noted that the exercise of undertaking a Faculty review may be inefficient and that there was redundancy in doing the same things through different cycles (including accreditation, program reviews and Faculty reviews) while Senate oversight could be attained through sharing of information.
- An opinion was expressed that Faculty time and efforts should not be wasted through overlapping exercises, especially where no action was taken on exercises already undertaken. Rationalizing the AQA process to ensure a well aligned process with no redundancies was an admirable goal.
- An opinion was expressed that with the approval of the Senate Policy for Academic Unit Consolidation, Renaming, Establishment, Termination and Transfer (AU-CRETT) in 2021, Faculty reviews may be more important now than was the case previously.
- The function of Senate in establishing policies related to the review of Faculties was outlined in Section 1.2 (g) of the Senate Constitution was noted;

- Concern was expressed about centralization of reviews and having these undertaken by individuals without the relevant Faculty background. It was clarified that the draft recommendation regarding centralization being mainly focused on program reviews. Units would still be responsible for undertaking the program reviews but with increased support. Specialized knowledge would remain with the unit undertaking the program review.
- Clarification was sought regarding the streamlining of the program review process to emphasize external reviews and eliminate or downsize internal reviews. It was explained that the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) minimum recommendation was for two external reviews and one internal review. Most of the other institutions included in the environmental scan undertaken as part of the holistic review had two external reviews, one internal review and one report, while Dalhousie had two reports (one external and one internal). The draft recommendation was based on having Dalhousie adopt a nimbler program review process.
- It was noted that there was no specific recommendation made regarding actioning equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility (EDIA) principles. In response, it was noted that as part of a program review, a Faculty would need to demonstrate progress in EDIA and that this requirement could be included in procedures and reviewed as needed.
- It was confirmed that no date had been set for a town hall meeting to gain diverse views on the process but that one would be set at which the same presentation that had been given to Senate would be given.
- It was confirmed that the various caucuses would be consulted at the implementation stage once recommendations had been approved.

7. Question Period

In response to a question raised regarding the VPRI Bi-Annual Report's, Senator Aiken explained that the presentation given to Senate was a highlight of research areas rather than all research initiatives at Dalhousie.

Responding to a query raised on the VPRI Bi-Annual Report, Senator Aiken clarified that it was the role of Dalhousie to ensure necessary supports were in place to meet increased research productivity and that action had been taken to ensure that increased support was in place.

8. Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 pm.