

Item: Senate Minutes, February 2003
Call Number: Senate fonds, UA-5

Additional Notes:

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DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

***APPROVED* MINUTES**

OF

SENATE MEETING

SENATE met in regular session on Monday, February 24, 2003, at 4:00 p.m., in the University Hall, MacDonald Building.

Present with Mr. M. El-Hawary in the chair were the following:

Ben-Abdallah, Blunden, Breckenridge, Caldwell, Caley, Campbell, Cercone, Cochrane, Coffin, Corke, Cunningham, DasGupta, Downe-Wamboldt, Earl, Emodi, Fraser, Finley, Galarneau, Grantmyre, Guy, Hart, Harvey, Huebert, Jalilvand, Jost, Keast, Kwak, Lahey, B. MacDonald, MacInnis, MacLean, Maes, McGrath, McIntyre, A. Mitchell, D. Mitchell, Neumann, Neves, Rajora, Rathwell, Rowe, Russell, Schroeder, Sommerfeld (Recording Secretary), Starnes, Traves, Ugursal, Whyte, Workman.

Regrets: Binkley, Coughlan, Hankey, Loudon, N. MacDonald, Macrae, McNiven, Moore, Parpart, Phillips, Rheault, Scully, Stroink, Stuttard, Watters.

Absent: Connolly, Murphy, Pelzer, Scott.

Invited Guest: J. Conrod

2003:013.

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was ADOPTED as circulated.

2003:014.

Draft Minutes of Previous Meeting (January 27/03) and Informal Notes of February 10/03

2.1 Approval

The minutes of the meeting of January 27, 2003 were ADOPTED as circulated.

2.2 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

2003:015.

Chair's Remarks

In view of the important discussion items on the agenda, Mr. El-Hawary deferred his report.

2003:016.

Question Period

Mr. Huebert asked Mr. Kwak about the new Canada Graduate Scholarships that were announced in the recent Federal Budget. Mr. Kwak commented that although details were to be forthcoming, it would appear that there will be 4000 scholarships including 2000 at the Master's level for one year and 2000 at the Ph.D. level for three years. These will be allotted by virtue of the nature of the population in the three research councils, that is with sixty percent going to the Humanities and Social Sciences. At Dalhousie that could mean approximately 50-100 scholarships per year. However, the influence on other programs including current SSHRC and NSERC programs, including the Killam scholarship program, remained unclear. Mr. Kwak stated that how these scholarships will be administered was as yet unknown although there was money budgeted for 2003-2004 in the Canada Graduate Scholarship program. He cautioned that Dalhousie needed to be flexible and ready to respond once the administration processes were known.

Mr. Campbell asked Mr. Traves about the security issues across campus, particularly in the McCain building where several offices have been broken into. Mr. Traves responded that while he was unable to comment on the McCain building situation specifically but would at a future date, he commented on past similar situations across campus. He indicated that the challenge for security has been choosing between our desire for strong security measures for property protection which would mean access restriction, particularly during off-hours, while at the same time wanting easy access to facilities. He commented that once he learned more of the safety concerns in the McCain building in particular, he would report back to Senate. Mr. Campbell asked that the possibility of surveillance cameras be considered. Mr. Hart reported that thefts have been reported in the Life Sciences Building including a set of master keys. The constraint in rectifying that situation had been lack of money to change all the locks in the Life Sciences building. Mr. Traves reported that they had recently spent over \$100,000 replacing locks on a priority basis as identified by departments, however, the larger issue of access to buildings continued to be problematic.

2003:017.

Nominations to Senate Committees

On behalf of the Senate Nominating Committee, Mr. El-Hawary moved:

THAT Pemberton Cyrus, Faculty of Engineering, be elected to serve on the Senate Computing and Information Technology Planning Committee, for the term February 2003 to June 30, 2004; and THAT Jason Gu, Faculty of Engineering, be elected to serve on the Senate Library Committee, for the term February 2003 to June 30, 2005.

After the requisite three calls for further nominations, the motion was CARRIED.

2003:018.

SAPBC:

- i) Proposed Master of Resource and Environmental Management

On behalf of the SAPBC, Mr. El-Hawary moved:

THAT the Senate approve the proposal to establish a Master of Resource and Environmental Management program, with the provision, that, if the Library Assessment for the new class in Environmental Informatics indicates a need to supplement existing resources, the Faculty of Management will provide a transfer to the Library for this purpose.

Mr. Kwak highlighted the non-thesis feature of this program which will be delivered along with the current Master of Environmental Studies program which has a thesis requirement. Mr. Jalilvand commented that this program will provide a professional dimension which will be attractive to joint program delivery in the Faculty of Management, for example with the MBA program.

The motion was CARRIED.

- ii) Proposed Master of Applied Health Services Research

On behalf of the SAPBC, Mr. El-Hawary moved:

THAT the Senate approve the proposal to establish a Master of Applied Health Services Research (MAHSR) program, to be offered jointly with Memorial University of Newfoundland and the University of New Brunswick.

Mr. Kwak commented that this program was innovative in terms of it being delivered jointly by three universities although the degree would be given by the universities separately. He added that the program has been funded through a training grant from the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (CHSRF). Mr. McGrath inquired as to the on-going review processes to which the program will be subjected given the intricacies of it being offered through three universities. Mr. Rathwell stated that at the program approval stage, the program had been reviewed at each university. Mr. Kwak clarified that for future reviews, it may require a different

approach than what has been done previously at Dalhousie as this was an innovative approach to programming, and that the review approach had yet to be determined. Ms. McIntyre commented that the CHSRF review process would be done in five years to re-new funding for the next five years.

The motion was CARRIED.

2003:019.

SCAA:

i) Academic Schedule Principles

On behalf of the SCAA, Mr. El-Hawary moved:

THAT the Senate approve the Academic Schedule Principles, dated November 4, 2002.

Mr. Ugursal inquired as to why no exams or classes were scheduled on Good Friday or Easter Saturday. Mr. Traves stated that it was his understanding that these were statutory holidays and the University was closed on such days.

The motion was CARRIED.

ii) Academic Dates 2003-2004

On behalf of the SCAA, Mr. El-Hawary moved:

THAT the Senate approve the Proposed Schedule of Academic Dates for 2003–2004.

The motion was CARRIED.

2003:020.

Budget Advisory Committee's Operating Budget Scenarios: Discussion

i) BAC XXVI Report

Mr. El-Hawary invited Ms. Conrod, the BAC Chair, to present a synopsis of the BAC Report XXVI. Ms. Conrod commented that previously she had discussed with Senate, the BAC Reports XXIV and XXV which were more strategically oriented, that is, to benchmark Dalhousie with comparator universities across Canada, and to address certain strategic avenues the University could consider in dealing with significant differentials that Dalhousie has in relation to its comparator group. Since the release of BAC XXVI, the President's Strategic Focus was released and the essence of BAC XXIV and XXV were encapsulated in that document, which outlined an

enrollment growth strategy and appropriate activities to support that strategy for future years. BAC XXVII which will contain the suggested operating budget for 2003-2004, will be informed by that strategic choice and be consistent with that strategic choice. Ms. Conrad commented that in the previous discussion with Senate, some senators had commented that they had felt manipulated by the tone and direction of the BAC Report XXV in that sinister alternatives were being suggested to make the outcome seem less draconian. She stated that the BAC had made the choice to put forward alternatives so that they may be discussed within a community of stakeholders, be those alternatives pleasant or otherwise. This same approach to inform and generate discussion was used in presentations of BAC XXVI. Ms. Conrad stated that the BAC has received more feedback on BAC XXVI than on any previous report, and this feedback was being seriously considered. In referring to the operating scenarios as presented on page 6 of the Report, Ms. Conrad commented that unknown variables, such as the amount of government funding, continued to be unknown; that while actual student enrollment numbers were unknown, the Committee was attempting to predict as realistically as possible what they might be; while indirect costs of research were included, the actual amounts and conditions were as yet unknown; that a zero percent increase in endowment funding was included; that continuation of the student facilities renewal fee was included; that there was no carry-forward of the 2002-2003 budget surplus or deficit; and a \$10 million marker for the pension deficit situation was included. In considering how the \$9 to \$11 million budget shortfall should be addressed, the usual avenues of across-the-board cuts and tuition increases had to be broadened significantly and the BAC is considering changes to the resource allocation mechanism (i.e., ERBA); the carry-forward policy; the reallocation of non-space grants; the policy regarding ERBA-exempt tuition revenues; the research overhead policy; the required contribution expected from ancillary units; in the extreme, reduced spending in student assistance, library acquisitions and facility renewal; and the possibility of a deficit scenario.

ii) DSU Response to BAC Report XXVI

Mr. El-Hawary invited the DSU senators to present the DSU Response Paper to the Dalhousie University Budget Advisory Committee Reports XXIV-XXVI (pre-circulated). Mr. McGrath stated that the DSU was very worried that the current financial situation at Dalhousie University was not sustainable, indicating that it was very frustrating from a student perspective. He highlighted reasons for this lack of sustainability including the freeze on government spending in spite of increased costs, and faculty salary and other contractual arrangements within the University. He commented on the effects of these issues on student assistance levels in relation to the comparator university group, and the impact of on-going deferred maintenance. Mr. McGrath also commented on the strategies proposed in the BAC XXVI Report for addressing the \$23.5 million deficit including enrollment and tuition fee increases and reduced expenditures. He emphasized that the issues of accessibility and quality of education at Dalhousie remain paramount from students' perspectives.

Ms. Galarneau presented issues in the DSU Report related to rising tuition levels, stating that Nova Scotia students face the worst financial situation in Canada with the highest tuition-fee levels and the highest debt loads with no debt-relief program. She stated that many students need

to rely on part-time jobs with increasing number of work hours in order to meet the costs of attending university. She stated that increases in bursary funding were needed as more students were needing to access bursaries to meet the increase costs. She commented on the critical need to focus on enabling accessibility for Nova Scotia students, rather than enlarging the pool of students from outside Nova Scotia who may be better able to pay higher tuition fees.

Mr. A. Mitchell commented on the issue of accessibility in the DSU Report in terms of students having to carry many hours in minimum-wage jobs in order to meet tuition and living costs. He commented on the high student-professor ratio which he described as being higher than some reports would lead one to believe, and commented on the need for attention to repair and maintenance of existing buildings.

Mr. D. Mitchell presented four recommendations from the DSU Report for the University as it lobbies provincial and federal governments for increased funding for post-secondary education. These recommendations were to establish a clear vision for the University regarding enrollment limits that incorporate such factors as faculty-to-student ratios; to increase the bursary pool to meet the new levels of student enrollment; to take steps to ensure that graduate student quality of education is not adversely affected by increased tutor-marker workload, and reduced faculty time as a result of increased enrollment; and for the BAC to look beyond tuition, enrollment and government grants to address the funding shortfall.

Ms. Galarneau commented that the issues presented have been presented previously but often seem to fall “on deaf ears”. She commented that the student perspective needed to be central in decision-making regarding the issues at hand.

iii) Open Discussion

Mr. Cercone commented that while increasing revenue was an alternative, we should be considering other possible alternatives that may be harder to quantify but could be essential to revenue utilization such as better use of our physical plant; changes to the Calendar that would enable fewer advising resources for interpretation of its contents in specific Faculties; consideration of differential fees; consideration of service costs such as the Banner system; consideration of out-sourcing; and introduction of novel classroom technologies to reduce paper costs. At the same time, he commented that there should be efforts to improve the quality of services to match the increase in expected enrollment.

Mr. Ugursal commented that in relation to the DSU Response paper, he found the Report lacking in specific evidence and encouraged the DSU to support their claims with statistical evidence, for example over the last ten years. He stated that in relation to the DSU claim that Dalhousie was lagging behind with decreasing quality, he wanted to know what specific criteria were being used to make these claims. He further queried the DSU claim that students were unfairly burdened financially, pointing to higher salaries made by university graduates as compared to the average salary of the Canadian worker. Ms. Galarneau responded that the report entitled *Price of Knowledge* from the Millennium Scholarship Foundation clarified with specific data that

students from families with higher family incomes were more likely to attend university. The McLean Annual Report on Canadian Universities provided additional data to support the points in the DSU Response.

Mr. El-Hawary relinquished the Chair to Mr Fraser. He commented that the DSU Response included pertinent points and direction for the University to move forward. He re-iterated the points presented in that DSU Response in relation to accessibility and policies related to assigning graduate student workload in each Faculty. Mr. El-Hawary then re-assumed the Chair.

Mr. Ugursal commented that in relation to the possibility of increasing workload for graduate students in Faculties with increasing enrollment numbers, he reminded the assembly of the Faculty of Graduate Studies regulation which limits graduate student workload to ten hours per week. Mr. Campbell commented that although students may make higher salaries after graduation, they continued to have financial pressures while attending university, thus needing more hours of part-time work while attending university which can impact on learning capacities. Ms. Corke supported this point, emphasizing that making up for lost salary while attending university, can take several years.

Mr. Jalilvand commented that structural changes to Dalhousie's operations seemed to be an essential step and wondered if this would be on-going process. Mr. Huebert commented that the large number of out-of-province students had not been acknowledged in financial arrangements with government. Mr. Emodi suggested that there were three points that Senate needed to address specifically, that is, in re-examining use of existing resources and facilities; incorporating qualitative as well as quantitative changes; and alternative and innovative strategies to meet the pension deficit. Mr. McGrath expressed appreciation for the previously-expressed acknowledgment of the potential impact of part-time work on student academic success, and commented that zero-based budgeting may be an alternative for the University to explore in addressing financial issues.

2003:021.

Report of the President

Mr. Traves responded to the issues of accessibility and quality raised in the DSU Response. He commented that while it may be perceived that when these issues which have been raised by students previously, had not been responded to, significant effort had been made by the University within the limitations imposed by government funding. He acknowledged that the need for more student support was an important issue. He emphasized that significant effort had been made in lobbying governments for increased funding. A recent effort to enhance university and government relations included plans to appoint a senior University official with responsibility for a government relations portfolio. He stated that the issue of sustaining quality is critical, such that enrollment growth would be matched by appropriate resources as outlined in the recent BAC Reports. He raised the question of examining not only how we deploy but also re-deploy resources to areas of underspending, meaning that we need to allocate resources on

areas that we have previously identified as being short-changed in the institution, not just on immediate-need areas. He suggested that we need to use our resources more fully and has asked for a report on classroom space use, commenting that all classrooms need to be available for scheduling by central booking to optimize use of that space. He commented that course scheduling needed to be re-examined to broaden the availability of courses that better meet students' needs rather than faculty preference. He suggested that budgetary flexibility will need to be incorporated in future to adequately respond to issues of quality demands and institutional flexibility vis-à-vis emerging priorities, and the core values as raised by the DSU senators. Mr. Traves commented on the issue of available housing and announced that the Board has approved a proposal for a new 400-space residence to be built on the University campus with a Fall 2004 completion date, with financing through a loan that will be re-paid by revenue from student rents collected over time.

Mr. Campbell asked Mr. Traves about the point raised by Mr. Emodi in relation to alternative strategies to address the pension deficit. Mr. Traves commented that while he acknowledged the moral points raised, that pension arrangements were complex and agreed upon after comprehensive discussions that involve all unions in the University, and hence not easily altered outside of contract negotiations. Mr. Cochrane commented on the extensive use of faculty and space in neighboring universities after 4 PM as compared to Dalhousie. He suggested that in the past Dalhousie had targeted its courses to a specific demographic and thus were missing other opportunities, such as continuing education offerings. He commented that Dalhousie was missing out on a large pool of potential students and significant income by not having such opportunities available. Mr. Traves agreed that while most efforts have been focused on the traditional full-time student, Dalhousie also had a collective agreement with faculty that limited the number of part-time faculty which was not the case at neighboring universities which employ such part-time faculty to teach many of the evening courses.

2003:022.

Other Business

Mr. El-Hawary invited members to forward comments on the Draft Notes from the Special January 13, 2003 Senate Meeting on the BAC XXIV and XXV Reports, and the Draft notes of the Senate February 10, 2003 informal discussion, to the Secretary of Senate.

2003:023.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Secretary

Chair