

Item: Senate Minutes, December 1996

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DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY
APPROVED MINUTES
OF
SENATE MEETING

SENATE met in regular session on Monday, 9 December 1996 at 4:00 p.m. in the University Hall, Macdonald Building.

Present with Mr. Colin Stuttard in the chair, were the following:

Adams, Apostle, Archibald, Bleasdale (Secretary), Bradfield, Brett, Burnside, Cameron, Farmer, Fraser, Hobson, Hooper, Kimmins, Klein, Lee, Lovely, Lydon, MacKay, O'Shea (for L. McIntyre), Moore, Morrissey, Oore, Patriquin, Pereira, Ricketts, Rosson, Scassa, Shafai, Starnes, Sutherland, Taylor, Traves, White, Wrixon.

Regrets: Andrews, Birdsall, Camfield, Conrod, Dickson, Egan, Hartzman, Kay-Raining Bird, MacDonald, MacInnis, Maloney, Siddiq.

96:141.

Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was approved as circulated.

96:142.

Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of November 18th, 1996 were approved as circulated. In the minutes of the meeting of November 25th, 1996, at item 96:135, p.3, line 25, "maiden" was changed to "first"; at item 96:136, p.5, line 13, "(FIPs) was changed to (F-PIPs)"; and the minutes were adopted as amended. Ms. Hobson wished to clarify that it might be more appropriate for Senators concerned about aspects of the Amalgamation Committee's academic coordination process to communicate with Mr. Stuttard, the Senate representative on the Academic Coordinating Committee. She would, however, be pleased to keep in touch with Senators about the process.

Mr. Stuttard welcomed to the meeting Mr. Burnside, the Vice-Principal Academic of the Nova Scotia Agricultural College.

96:143.

Matters Arising

Mr. Stuttard reported that the Senate Office had investigated the record concerning the Senate and Board meeting at which the idea for the proposed building for the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences had been raised. At the November 17, 1992, joint meeting of the BOG Buildings and Grounds Committee and the Senate Physical Planning Committee, a motion "[to] endorse the President's recommendation that detailed planning of needs for the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, School of Education, and Student Residences begin immediately" was unanimously approved. That appeared to be the extent of consideration of the matter.

96:144.

Requested Name Change -- Bachelor of Management

Mr. Stuttard asked the meeting to consider the notice of motion from SAPBC, circulated with the agenda:

That Senate approves the proposal to change the name of the undergraduate Bachelor of Commerce (Non-Coop) Program to the Bachelor of Management Program, and to allow students to register in this stream.

The motion CARRIED.

96:145.

NSAC Proposal for Bachelor of Applied Technology Degree

Mr. Stuttard asked the meeting to consider the second notice of motion from SAPBC, also circulated with the agenda:

That Senate approves the proposed Nova Scotia Agriculture College's Bachelor of Applied Technology with a Major in Landscape Horticulture.

The motion CARRIED.

96:146.

1995-96 Annual Report to Senate of the Senate Computing and Technology Planning Committee

The Committee moved:

That Senate receive the Senate Computing and Information Technology Planning Committee's 1995-96 Annual Report to

Senate.

Mr. Brett asked for comment on what appeared from the Report to be a lack of cooperation between the Administration and the Committee. Mr. Bradfield asked what response the Committee had received to its concern that a consortium approach to the delivery of academic computing services for all the Metro Halifax Universities would lead to a degradation of academic computer services for users at Dalhousie. Ms. Bankier was not aware of any formal response to their concerns, and did not know what discussion had taken place with the Director of UCIS. Ms. Hobson requested further information on the Committee's plans for the immediate future, given the substantial financial consequences which would attach to some of the recommendations.

Mr. Christie wished to publicly thank Ms. Bankier for her leadership, thoughtfulness and effort as Chair of the Committee for a number of years, and asked Senators to please pick up a copy of the Report's covering letter, which formally expressed the Committee's indebtedness. He reported progress on each of the three recommendations in the Report. The Budget Advisory Committee had asked SCITPC to consider an appropriate target budget allocation for information technology services and facilities; and the Committee would be working on an explicit recommendation with the goal of gradually increasing funding. The Committee intended to communicate more broadly with the University community. To this end it had introduced a Web page and would send minutes of meetings to the Senate Office, for distribution by e-mail.

The second recommendation expressed a general concern that services and facilities not be reduced, and that their quality and availability not suffer as a result of developments such as the merger and the consortium, and in particular the potential movement of Computing Science faculty to the TUNS campus. Concerning the third recommendation, discussions with the Vice President (Finance and Administration) had already begun, and he would attend the next SCITPC meeting to consider acquiring an administrative computing suite of applications. Vice President Mason had indicated that some of the breakdown in communication over the past year had been simply an oversight. The Committee members were committed to appropriate on-going communication, and trusted that would be reciprocated.

Ms. Hobson raised the question of whether the membership of the Committee should be revised to better reflect its dual responsibility for both academic and administrative computing. Should Mr. Mason be an ex officio member of the Committee? Mr. Christie reminded Senators that the present members of the Committee reflected the merging of a

previous Senate Committee on Computing and a Presidential Advisory Committee on Computing. The President appointed four members, and might wish to take the opportunity to appoint individuals with administrative expertise, when a vacancy occurred.

The question was called and the motion to receive the Report CARRIED.

96:147.

Dal-TUNS Amalgamation
Academic Coordinating Committee

Mr. Stuttard reported that the Academic Coordinating Committee had met again in the past week; two subcommittees were struck, and the first meeting of the Academic Affairs/Academic Administration subcommittee had begun to identify the issues which fell under its jurisdiction.

96:148.

President's Report

Mr. Traves drew attention to the most significant item in his circulated report, the Atlantic Universities Open Learning Accrediting Service. The Atlantic Association of University Presidents was committed to the proposal, in principle, but it remained subject to individual approval by the eighteen universities in the region. The document supporting the accrediting agency was not yet complete. However, during the past week the structure of the degree itself had taken shape, and the President hoped to forward a more detailed proposal to Senate for consideration in the near future. The Council of Maritime Premiers were enthusiastic about this approach to higher education, and saw it as a means of increasing accessibility. Personally, the President welcomed the initiative, though he did not think many students would be in a position to take advantage of it. From the University's point of view, the virtue of the proposal, in the form it appeared to be taking, was that it would be controlled and regulated by the Universities in the region.

The President's Report also addressed the latest Maclean's university survey. Mr. Pereira asked how the national reputation rankings in the survey were arrived at, and how that ranking differed from the overall ranking, in which Dalhousie had placed ninth. Mr. Traves believed that a questionnaire was sent to roughly 3400 individuals -- various university officials, guidance counsellors, corporate executives -- who were asked to comment on a range of questions, such as what was the most innovative university, and to rank participating universities on a scale of 1 to 5. As an individual

reasonably conversant with the Canadian university system, the President himself, in filling out the questionnaire, had felt qualified to give well informed comments on perhaps ten universities. That left him concerned that individuals from other sectors of society and the economy might not be able to do justice to the process. Despite serious reservations about the process, Mr. Traves hoped Senators shared his delight that we had improved our ranking in several areas, if not overall. He also hoped that we would learn from the exercise the value of effective public relations.

Mr. Brett wondered how objective criteria such as class size actually were. In his experience, students frequently came here because they felt alienated by the giant classes at the University of Toronto and McGill. Yet we rated worse in this area of the survey. He could think of a variety of ways in which data might have been manipulated to create misleading results. Mr. Traves also wondered about a number of such categories, and thought the results might be explained by the creative approach institutions adopted in filling out forms.

Returning to the issue of the Accrediting Service, Mr. Adams was concerned about the proposed requirement that students take half of their ninety credits above the second year level. Ms. Hobson shared his concern. Though this requirement was modelled on similar programs in the universities cited in the report, it imposed a real limitation on the number of potential candidates for such a degree. Mr. Lee noted that he did not see the value in offering a Bachelor of General Studies, and personally would not support the implementation of one, or the creation of any organization that would give one. He was disturbed that this was a proposal for the farming out of pseudo-degrees which could only reduce the quality of the degree awarded by a university. At the level of the third and fourth year the university experience should be a period of focussed study in a particular area. He could not see any of the classes offered in his Faculty fitting into this type of degree, because they represented advanced study in a specific area.

Mr. Traves attempted to put the proposal and the process in context, and focus on the issues Senators needed to consider. The proposal would come forward from the Atlantic Association of Universities, of which Dalhousie was a member. Our input into the process would take the form of advising the Atlantic Association of Universities as to whether or not to pursue this initiative. But the organization would make a decision, and if it decided to proceed, the government would pass legislation creating a body with degree-granting powers. That process completed, a student would take our classes as a matter of routine, enrolling in the normal way, and we would not know whether

that student would ultimately go on to apply for the Bachelor of General Studies. It would be another body which credited the classes from Dalhousie, and granted the degree. Mr. Traves understood Mr. Lee's position; he took it very seriously; this was a very difficult question; and he himself was torn.

Mr. Bradfield asked when Senate could expect to see the details of the proposal so that we could better assess it. Ms. Hobson had been working on the proposal for some time, but it was not yet in its final form. Potentially she could forward a finished document to Senate in the first week of January.

96:149.

Question Period:

Mr. Bradfield asked the Chair whether he could report any progress by the Dal-TUNS Joint Steering Committees in defining the terms of reference of the Academic Council. Mr. Stuttard responded that the Dal Steering Committee had considered the TUNS proposal for the Council, had suggested changes, and had sent a modified proposal back to the Chair of TUNS Steering. We were awaiting a response. Mr. Bradfield asked whether the final Consortium arrangements reflected the concerns forwarded by SCITPC. Mr. Traves responded that the concerns in the end had appeared groundless, in that the apprehended scenario had not materialized. Mr. Klein suggested that Senate discuss the recommendations contained in the SCITPC Report. Mr. Stuttard indicated we could return to these recommendations at a meeting in the new year.

96:150.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1650 h.

