

Item: Senate Minutes, November 2002
Call Number: Senate fonds, UA-5

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DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

***APPROVED* MINUTES**

OF

SENATE MEETING

SENATE met in regular session on Monday, November 25, 2002, at 4:00 p.m., in University Hall, MacDonald Building.

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

Binkley, Breckenridge, Campbell, Cercone, Cochrane, Coughlan, Cunningham, Downe-Wamboldt, Earl, Emodi, Finley, Fraser, Galarneau, Guppy, Hamilton, Hankey, Hart, Jost, Keast, Kwak, Lahey, B. MacDonald, N. MacDonald, MacInnis, MacLean, Macrae, Maes, McGrath, McIntyre, McNiven, Mitchell, Moore, Neumann, Neves, Pelzer, Rheault, Rowe, Russell, Schroeder, Sommerfeld (Recording Secretary), Stroink, Stuttard, Traves, Ugursal, Watters, Whyte, Workman.

Regrets: Caldwell, Caley, Coffin, Corke, DasGupta, Jalilvand, Parpart, Phillips, Rathwell, Scully, Starnes.

2002:115.

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was ADOPTED as circulated.

2002:116.

Draft Minutes of Previous Meeting

i) Approval

The minutes of the meeting of October 10, 2002 were ADOPTED as amended.

ii) Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

2002:117.

Chair's Remarks

Mr. El-Hawary announced that Mr. Cercone, Dean of Computer Science, has been recognized as a Fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, and extended congratulations.

Mr. El-Hawary reported that on October 30, 2002, the 2002/2003 meeting of the Statutory Joint Senate and Board of Governors Committee – the annual meeting of six representatives of the Senate and six representatives of the Board of Governors – was held. He stated that the meeting was very successful and had provided a forum for a cordial and productive discussion of a range of issues which included new and

discontinued programs, Faculty Reviews, Board planning, university and student finance, physical facilities, and enrolment trends.

Mr. El-Hawary reported that the Quality Assurance Self-Study for Dalhousie University had been submitted to MPHEC. The University had been asked to submit the self-study to facilitate MPHEC's monitoring process of the University. The purpose of MPHEC's monitoring process is to provide answers to two questions: first, "How well is the institution achieving what it set out to accomplish in its quality assurance policy?", and second, "Is it doing what it should be doing in the area of quality assurance?" Mr. El-Hawary pointed out that the MPHEC will be assessing the University's quality assurance policy and related processes, but will not be assessing the quality of specific programs or units. He stated that preparation of the document was facilitated by Mr. Brian Christie with participation from others including the Senate Officers. He stated that Dalhousie volunteered to be one of the two initial institutions to participate in the process; the second being St. Thomas University.

Mr. El-Hawary reported that the Senate Academic Priorities and Budget Committee is engaged in pursuing various strategic issues in relation to discussions and responses to the BAC XXIV and XXV Reports. He stated that this initiative was being spearheaded by a sub-committee chaired by Mr. Fraser, whom he invited to comment. Mr. Fraser then briefly described that the process which was still in the early stages of beginning to formulate questions and to identify information that will be needed to critically address and respond to the challenges and options as presented in the BAC XXIV and XXV Reports. He stated that from this work, focused discussions will be on the agenda of Senate meetings in December and January. The other members of this SAPBC Sub-Committee are Ms. Macrae, Mr. Campbell, and Mr. Blunden.

Mr. Whyte commented that the scenarios presented in the BAC XXV Report are deserving of serious consideration and discussion at Senate at this time.

2002:118.

Question Period

Ms. Macrae posed a question to Mr. Traves. She stated first that the Social Activist Law Students' Association (SALSA) had sent a letter to Mr. Traves on October 16, 2002, outlining their displeasure with the rising cost of tuition fees of the Law School. Their concern was the high fees that Law students now pay which make the Law School inaccessible to many members of the community and eliminate choice for students when deciding on careers because of the higher debt loads. Their specific request in the letter was one of procedure. Ms. Macrae stated that students had no notice of the 24% increase they had incurred this year and only found out about it when applying for student loans or registering for classes. SALSA has requested that a policy be implemented that requires Faculties to be transparent and that fair notice be given if radical fee increases are being considered and approved. She suggested that at a minimum, this could be a letter to students outlining their fees for the upcoming year. Ms. Macrae stated that since sending the letter which was also copied to the Dean of the Law School, SALSA had received no comment from the President' Office, and further e-mail attempts had met with no reply. She asked Mr. Traves if he would be responding to their letter and request. Mr. Traves responded that he had received the correspondence but found it unfortunate that they had not included any identification of the members of the organization sending the correspondence, and so was unclear of where to send a response. As to the issue, Mr. Traves stated that there was a transparent process in that it was considered fully in the Faculty Council

of the Law School where there was student representation and participation. The nature of fee levels and the strategies behind them, that is, to create a fund to enable program improvements as a long-term strategy, had been part of those discussions. He stated that once he knew specifically to whom he should send a response to these issues, he would do so. He suggested that Ms. Russell may have further information to add.

Ms. Russell commented that in July she had received communication from the President to the DSU on behalf of a group with whom she had been communicating. She stated that she had responded to SALSA describing the process and including a three-year budget proposal. She described other avenues of student communication that had been followed, including the Law Students' Society and the student editors of the Weldon Times. Ms. Macrae pointed out that many of the meetings that were held over the summer and hence limited student participation and abilities to be informed.

Mr. El-Hawary commented that processes by which tuition fees are determined and communicated to students is a generic issue, and will be taken into consideration in the Senate Office.

Mr. Stuttard inquired as to how Senate might learn of the views of the Board on strategic matters such as the BAC Reports and enrolment, as those discussions of the Board are held *in camera*. He asked if the concern of communicating *in camera* discussions of the Board to Senate was discussed at the recent 6+6 Meeting. Mr. El-Hawary replied that it was not discussed. Mr. Traves commented that the Board had found in reviewing its processes, that by discussing *in camera*, reports that are accessible to others including Senate, they focused less on routine administrative matters and more on exploring strategic directions for the University, and were more productive and understanding of University issues. Mr. Stuttard commented that the Senate still does not know the opinions of Board members on strategic issues. Mr. Traves responded that views will be known when action plans come forward from what were to date, preliminary discussions. Mr. Urgusal commented that from the perspective of appearance, one might wonder as to the reasons for confidentiality in such discussions by the Board. Mr. El-Hawary responded that he would take this issue to the Board for comment.

Mr. Mitchell commented that as a first-time attendee of the 6+6 meeting, he had not found the meeting as productive as it could have been had there been more structure to the meeting, and that there were some apparent tensions between sides. Mr. El-Hawary pointed out that while there may be some misapprehensions, the discussion this year did enable a more productive meeting than was reported from previous years. Mr. Fraser commented that this joint meeting might in future serve as a more specific opportunity to discuss critical issues of substance such as those raised in the BAC Reports.

2002:119.

SAPBC:

i) Proposed Bachelor of Community Design Program

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

“THAT the Senate approve the Bachelor of Community Design program proposal, with the program transferring to the Library a one time payment of \$3,500 to bring the book collection up to an acceptable level, plus a permanent, continuing base budget transfer of \$750 per year after year one.”

Mr. El-Hawary introduced Mr. Emodi and Ms. Jill Grant who were available to respond to questions.

Mr. McGrath asked if this program was going to cause increased financial constraint on an already desperate University operating budget. Mr. Emodi replied that it would not, and that included in the proposal were the financial dimensions of the program as per the five-year financial model of the Faculty of Architecture and Planning (FAP). He commented that this program would bring a positive revenue to the Faculty and will ease some of the constraints which currently exist.

Ms. Binkley noted that on page 8 of the proposal where increased demand on service teaching is mentioned, two Science and one Architecture and Planning class are listed yet in the Appendices several Faculty of Arts and Social Science (FASS) classes are listed that would be taken in conjunction with the program. As these classes are not included in the increase in service teaching, Ms. Binkley asked for an explanation. Ms Grant responded that the list of courses in the Appendix are potential electives for the students and the list is quite long. It was assumed that for most of those classes there would be potentially only one or two students taking a particular class at any one time. She explained that in the increased demand on service teaching estimate, they had included only courses which would be highly recommended for students. Ms. Binkley responded that if there was a wish to have spaces in those elective courses saved for students, the FASS would have to know ahead of time. She also pointed out that as numbers of the program cumulatively increase, it becomes a greater concern particularly in courses which are already at close to capacity. She stated that having numbers more clearly identified would be useful.

Mr. McGrath asked if Mr. Maes could comment on any long-term implications which the addition of this program might have in terms of additional constraints on the Library's operating budget. Mr. Maes responded that the subject specialist had addressed those concerns in the proposal, and that the intent was not to include factors that often change, such as unexpected increased costs from publishers. Mr. McGrath commented that from the perspective of BAC XXV, the issue of sustainability of such programs over time is of concern. He commented that while the program does fill an academic niche in the University, he remains unconvinced that this program will not cause a further strain on the operating budget. He added that the DSU current policy was not to support new programs that may create further strain on the operations budget without further resources. Mr. Emodi was supportive of the DSU in a general way but the unique feature of this program was that the School of Planning doubled its enrolment eighteen months ago due to the move of 2 ½ positions from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD) to the FAP. This had created new capacity, with a total of 5 ½ faculty members. Also the understanding was that the undergraduate program at NSCAD would be phased out and a new undergraduate program would be phased in at Dalhousie, with this new program being resourced with the additional faculty complement. He added that this program, when enrolment levels are met, will enable the School to move from being marginally sustainable with one graduate program and some joint programs with small numbers, to being highly sustainable with the higher enrollments carrying the expenditures. He re-iterated that this program should be viewed from a unique perspective as it is a result of the merger of the NASCAD program to Dalhousie.

Ms. Binkley expressed concerns of FASS in terms of the need to encourage mobility between programs and the current practice of FASS to provide foundation courses across disciplines to enable that mobility should students wish to change programs. She commented that this seamless feature was missing from the proposal under discussion. Ms. Grant responded that concerns of mobility and flexibility had been incorporated into the proposal as much as is feasible in a specialty undergraduate program.

Mr. Traves expressed concern that details as had been raised in the discussion, should have been raised, addressed and resolved at SAPBC before being brought to Senate. He further commented that issues

raised by the DSU in relation to the BAC are welcomed responses. He also questioned though, why we might favor older existing programs over new programs, and suggested that the merits of the programs should be carefully considered and not only the financial implications which will in the end, be borne by the Faculties proposing and assuming financial responsibility for them.

Ms. McIntyre expressed support for the proposal. Mr. Hankey commented that the concerns of FASS had been forwarded to FAP, and were in the proposal's appendices, and expressed the opinion that they had not been taken seriously enough. Mr. Stuttard commented that the DSU policy previously described did provide a trigger to re-consider the manner in which we decide on programs, particularly in view of the challenges raised in the BAC Reports. Mr. El-Hawary commented that all input from Faculties to the proposal and as appended to the proposal were seriously considered by the SAPBC. However, if Senate believed SAPBC should be reviewing the proposal again, then SAPBC would need specific directions from Senate for that re-consideration. He added that the process of Faculty Reviews is currently being reviewed by SAPBC.

Mr. Traves commented that hopefully the issues surrounding resource base and activity level will be part of future Senate discussions.

In response to a suggestion from Mr. Hankey re: possible deferral of the motion, Mr. El-Hawary responded that it was not appropriate as the proposal had been under consideration since May 2002 and had been discussed at SAPBC twice. Mr. Urgusal asked if the program proposers had responded to the written comments submitted and attached to the proposal, particularly those raised in Mr. Schroeder's memo of September 30, 2002. Mr. Emodi stated that these had been responded to by the program planners, and discussed by SAPBC and found satisfactory. Mr. Schroeder commented that neither he nor FASS had received any response to the issues he had raised in the aforementioned letter. Ms. Guppy commented that all concerns were addressed at SAPBC which decided to forward the proposal on to Senate with confidence.

Ms. Macrae called for the question. The motion to call for the question was **CARRIED**.

The motion on the table was **CARRIED** with a hand vote of 22 in favor, 17 against.

Mr. Hankey requested that the vote outcome be recorded in the minutes. Mr. Traves asked the Chair to follow-up on the differences as expressed in the discussion, with the FASS and FAP. Mr. El-Hawary agreed.

ii) Proposed Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science Program

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

"THAT the Senate approve the Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science program, with the program transferring to the Library a base transfer of \$5,000 for journals."

Mr. El-Hawary invited Mr. Moore and Ms. Tarah Wright, the Coordinator of the Environmental Studies programs, to speak to the proposal. Mr. Moore invited questions. Mr. McGrath asked if this program would create any undue financial constraint on the University and/or Faculty budgets. Mr. Moore responded that, as described in the proposal, by the third year of the program, there will be significant

positive income from this program, based on conservative estimates of enrollment. Ms. Binkley noted that in regards to related programs, the proposal on page 5, neglected to acknowledge the BA in Environmental Studies offered through FASS, and asked that it be noted. Mr. Cercone expressed support for this program and the one previously discussed in regards to the social relevance of the programs, as well as for the potential interdisciplinary perspectives. He also noted that in the proposal in Section 4: Related Programs, that there were not full descriptions and explanations to fully address the questions posed. He suggested that fuller consultation with other universities with similar programs would have resulted in fuller descriptions, and perhaps enable collaboration amongst universities. He also noted that in Section V: Program Characteristics, Parts C and D, that there were opportunities that could be tapped and be of mutual benefit to the University and external agencies as well as to students and by not including such opportunities may appear to be somewhat “sloppy”.

Mr. Moore expressed appreciation for the comments and stated that he had talked to the Dean of Science at St. Mary’s University regarding the program and believed that he was supportive of it. He noted that he had not talked to the Dean at Acadia University. He stated that the Faculty had received several inquiries regarding environmental science offerings. Ms. Wright provided some clarification regarding the differences between the environmental science focus of the proposal versus the environmental studies focus of FASS. She also noted that several informal discussions held with relevant external bodies that were not included in the proposal. She added that a new internship course was being included in the program that would add experiential learning activities.

Mr. Campbell commented that he had requested revisions to the proposal at SAPBC but that these had not been incorporated in the circulated draft. Ms. Wright responded that this was an oversight but that his comments were included in the final proposal.

Ms. Macrae commented that the DSU policy of opposing new programs had existed for the last year and hence was not that new. She pointed out that the recent round of Faculty Reviews had taken approximately seven years to complete, and as well BAC XXIV and BAC XXV had identified serious financial concerns. While the DSU would like to express support for the program, at the same time they wanted it to be able to be accessible and affordable to students. She urged sound academic decisions that reflect understanding of the financial issues involved.

Mr. Stuttard commented that the discussion reflected an apparent lack of communication between different Faculties, and hoped that the situation would improve particularly as it related to the work of SAPBC and the interdisciplinary issues involved.

The motion was **CARRIED**.

2002:120.

Report of the President

Mr. Traves called attention to the recent report from Vice-President Mason in relation to the current deficit in the University’s Pension Plan due to recent external market performance. He noted that in order to assure that the pension fund was fully funded, the University would have to increase its annual contributions to the fund. While the exact amounts were not yet known, they would be covered by the University’s operating budget. Similarly, the University’s Endowment Fund had been affected and shortfalls in those funds would result in no increase in funding to programs supported by the Fund. He commented that the University expected serious funding shortfalls during the coming year to cover

commitments and expenses, and was continuing to vigorously seek government support to help address the anticipated shortfall. However, there were likely to be further impacts in terms of enrollments and tuition fees. BAC XXVI was expected to articulate options to be considered.

Mr. Stuttard commented that in the previous week, under the auspices of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, there was a mass lobby of about 60 individuals with Members of Parliament in Ottawa, for increases in core funding for university operations.

2002:121.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Secretary

Chair