

**DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY
APPROVED MINUTES OF
SENATE MEETING**

Senate met in regular session on Monday March 11, 2013, at 4:00pm, in University Hall, Macdonald Building.

Present with Lloyd Fraser in the chair were the following: Amirault, Arron, Bisset, Castleden, Cochrane, Cooper, Crago, DasGupta, Denike, Doman, Gardner, Garduno, Gibson, Harman, Hewitt, Hoyle, Hughes, Johnston, Leach, Leon, MacLennan, Magill, Mansour, Marrie, Matte, Miller, Mitchell, Moore, Pegg, Persaud, Pinder, Rahemtulla, Ross, Schellinck, Shukla, Smirnov, Stadnyk, Summerby-Murray, Tennessen, Tillotson, Watters, Webster, Westwood, Yiridoe.

Regrets: Ali, Barrett, Baur, Beale, Boran, Bourne-Tyson, Brooks, Canning, Chen, Cook, Cox, Cunningham, Gorsky, MacDonald, Macy, Manning, McLarney, Oore, Packer, Rogers, Traves, Wach, Woodman.

Absent: Becke, Boudreau, Grant, Helland, Khan, Langille, Shepherd.

2013:35

Adoption of the Agenda

The March 11, 2013 agenda was **adopted** with one amendment: item #9 – The Dal Libraries: Digital Curation, Collaboration and Perpetual Collections will be postponed.

2013:36

Consent Agenda

Approval of Draft Minutes of February 11, 2013 Senate Meeting

THAT Senate **approve** the draft Senate minutes of February 11, 2013.

Approved by Consent.

Senate Nominating Committee: Approval of Senate Standing Committee Nomination

THAT Senate **approve** Nouman Ali, Faculty of Engineering, for the term March 12, 2013 – June 30, 2015 to the Senate Planning and Governance Committee (SPGC).

Approved by Consent.

2013:37

Matters Arising from the Meeting of February 11, 2013

There were no matters arising.

2013:38

Chair of Senate's Report

Mr. Fraser, on behalf of Senate, expressed condolences to family, friends, and former colleagues of Yalaguresh Yalawar who passed away since the last Senate meeting.

With regards to items for information, Mr. Fraser noted that the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission has prepared revised information requirements for the preparation of all academic program proposals and major program modifications and these are available on the Senate website. The Atlantic Advisory Committee for Health Human Resources Planning has also prepared new forms for those preparing program proposals which are health related and those are available on the Senate website. The 2013-2014 meeting schedule for Senate and Senate Standing Committees recently approved by the Senate Planning and Governance Committee is available for review. One graduand was approved between convocations on March 4, 2013 and the Senate Nominating Committee Call for Nominations for the Senate Vice-Chair (Academic Programs) will close on April 15, 2013.

2013:39

Budget Advisory Committee Report: Operating Budget Plan for 2013-14

Mr. Fraser called upon Carolyn Watters, Chair, Budget Advisory Committee, to provide a report on the Operating Budget Plan for 2013-14. Ms. Watters began her presentation by noting that the plan is based on the following factors:

- A balanced budget proposal.
- The Faculty of Agriculture is not included in the plan; however, their enrolment numbers are taken into account for the tuition increase.
- With regards to revenue, the plan takes into account a 3% reduction in the allocation from the Province, a 3% tuition increase cap, and a flat enrolment. However, new initiatives to increase enrolment are in progress, and initiatives also are being taken to assist in the retention of students.
- With regards to expenses, the plan takes into account a salary compensation lift of \$9.7 million, which is a fixed cost and increased pension valuation costs of \$4 million.

Ms. Watters emphasized that a balanced scenario requires the achievement of at least flat enrolment. The scenario presented in the report also provided for a reduction in heating costs by transitioning to natural gas; a delay in the usual increase in the deferred maintenance budget; the application of budget cuts of 3.5% to Faculties and academic units, 1% to both scholarships and library compensations, and 3% to the strategic initiative fund; and the use of \$6 million from the operating and pension stabilization funds, which is a one-time transfer. With regards to the reduction in scholarship funds, Ms. Watters noted that the plan is to shift the division of funds based on financial need, and the current reduction addresses the over expenditure in previous years. She anticipates an overall increase in available scholarships in the following years.

In going forward, Ms. Watters noted the importance of steady enrolment, further use of the remaining \$2 million from the operating and pension stabilization funds, and tuition increases of 3%, and a 2% increase in the government grant. Future plans could also include budget cuts of 3.5% in 2014-2015, and additional budget cuts of 2.4% in 2015-2016. Ms. Watters emphasized that she can be contacted for further comments, suggestions, and questions.

2013:40

Strategic Academic Planning—Update

Mr. Fraser called upon Fiona Black, Director, Academic Planning, to provide an update on Strategic Academic Planning. Ms. Black noted that a Rapid Task Force will provide high level principles to underline all levels of academic planning, and to consult units across the university. She noted that suggested principles include consultation, transparency of planning, integration of planning, sustainable planning processes, and support for evidence-based initiatives. Ms. Black noted that an environmental scan of academic processes, as well as a scan of Faculty level processes would identify important themes across various Faculties. She indicated that the Task Force meets regularly and they will meet a few more times before providing a final report in May 2013. Pursuing academic planning at a time of budget constraint may seem counter intuitive; however, it was noted that this would be a particularly appropriate time to review academic strategy and use this as an essential guide and tool in university decision making. It was emphasized that academic planning leads to creative initiatives, which in turn lead to more financially viable outcomes.

2013:41

Academic Senates and University Governance in Canada

Mr. Fraser noted that Senators were sent a survey in February 2012 and were asked to participate in a nation-wide study of academic governance at various Canadian universities. The results are presented in two documents: 1) Academic Senates and University Governance in Canada: Changes in Structure and Perceptions of Senate Members and 2) Canadian University Senates Project: A Summary for Dalhousie University. The study includes data on 37 of 84 universities. Twenty universities participated in the study, and half of our Senate members in 2012, completed the survey.

Mr. Fraser provided a brief overview of the survey results and noted that members of Senate will receive an Opinion survey in late spring regarding feedback on Senate and the Senate Standing Committees.

2013:42

2012 Fall Student Ratings of Instruction Review Work Group—Progress Report

Mr. Fraser called upon Alan Pinder, Chair, SRI Review Work Group to provide a progress report on the 2012 Review of the Fall Student Ratings of Instruction. Mr. Pinder began by noting that the final report is expected by May 2013. He stated that the data analysis compares the 2012 Fall term with the 2011 Fall paper version, with much of the analysis based on paired data, comparing data from the same instructor and the same class. Mr. Pinder noted that the response rate for Fall 2012 is down moderately, but there was no significant change to the scores from question 8. He noted that the standard deviation is significantly large, but there is no comparison of the two years when the survey was done on paper to determine what the normal standard variation is. He also indicated that questions regarding location of survey completion, effect of location on response rate, and effect of location on scores could not be addressed; however, the 2013 Winter survey will ask students where they completed the evaluation. It was also noted that students may be more likely to make thoughtful comments if they have more time to complete the survey outside of class. It was also indicated that if the survey were to be available only in class, it would ensure that the respondents are students who attended class that day, though not necessarily on a regular basis; however, due to lack of universal access to mobile devices and to Wi-Fi limitations in some locations, relying entirely on in-class completion would not be feasible.

As a part of the review, a student and university community survey was issued to identify any user issues. Mr. Pinder noted that 17% of those students who completed the survey indicated that they had technical problems; the Center for Learning and Teaching (CLT) has already identified and solved the vast majority of these issues. With regards to class instructor responses, approximately 60% of respondents indicated that their experience with the online distribution was worse than the paper format. Issues with the online delivery included concern for lower response rates, lack of mobile devices for students, and a concern for having the survey accessible outside of class. General comments regarding the SRI focused on instructors' lack of control over the timing of the survey since it is now released on one specific date.

With regards to the data analysis, Mr. Pinder indicated that most evaluations were completed during working hours. He indicated that suggestions from other universities to increase response rates included reminders from faculty, posting of results, and promoting SRI culture through faculty comments on its importance, informal mid-term evaluations, articles, banners, and student groups. With regards to posting SRI results, it was noted that although it is too early to determine if posting results affects response rates at Dalhousie, studies suggest that it does increase response rates, and other universities that have gone online recommend this approach. One suggestion to increase responses was to require students to submit their SRI in order to receive their final grade; however, there are several negative aspects of such systems, so this approach is not recommended. He also noted that improvements for winter term include reducing technical problems through training sessions, verification manual, and fewer "anomalous classes"; updating FAQs on the CLT website; and changing anchors to agree and disagree. He also noted that the notification to students concerning SRI is likely to move from email to either MyDal or BBLearn in the future. It was noted that some academic units did not participate in the online Fall 2012 SRI and Mr. Fraser emphasized that the policy regarding SRI delivery is universal and the intention is that a single instrument be used throughout the university.

Mr. Fraser noted that those with questions or concerns not addressed would be given the opportunity at a future Senate meeting. Questions regarding the actual SRI instrument, such as bias of anchors and chosen scale will be noted. The review work group's mandate deals specifically with the transition and impact of the electronic rollout.

2013:43

Question Period

There were no questions.

2013:44

Other Business

There was no other business.

2013:45

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:00pm.