



SENATE

Approved Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, February 14, 2022 at 3:00pm Via Microsoft Teams

The Senate met in regular session on Monday, February 14, 2022 via Microsoft Teams

Present: L. Spiteri (Chair), G. Adolphe-Nazaire, R. Agu, A. Aiken, M. Ali Ulku, D. Anderson, M. Aston, J. Blustein, D. Bourne-Tyson, K. Brooks, C. Cameron, R. Chang, T. Cyrus, B. Davis, K. Dilcher, P. Doucet-Bernard, P. Doyle-Bedwell, H. El Nagggar, N. Ezzeddine, M. Farrimond, C. Flood, G. Gagnon, J. Gantar, D. Gray, F. Harvey, D. Iduye, D. Jakeman, S. Jeffrey, M. Keinast, S. Kirk, W. Lahey, C. Lake, M. Leonard, H. Maambo, C. Macdonald, L. Macdonald, C. Macy, S. McKibbon, B. Merritt, L. Meynell, F. Naghibi, B. Nassar, J. Newhook, H. Niu, M. Pacurar, N. Patil, T. Rajack-Talley, A. Rau-Chaplin, C. Richardson, H-S. Ro, K. Rosen, D. Saini, L. Sarson, S. Seth, M. Sharaput, A. Siegel, V. Simodoh, M. Stinson, S. Stone, F. Verth, T. Walker, D. Westwood, D. White, S. Wildeman, I. Yakovenko, E. Yiridoe

Regrets: O. Dryden, B. Foster, M. Fournier, H. Hall, A. Kermanshahi-Pour, R. Orji, L. Propper, E. Wunker

Absent: T. Adams, G. Alexander, D. Bilodeau, A. Doucette, Y. El Hiani, K. El-Sankary, D. Grantham, D. Grujic, J. Hall, G. Horne, M. Irwin, S. Keyamo, M. MacEachern, M. Nashnoush, D. Silvio, L. Perez, F. Taheri, V. Turpin, D. Tyers, D. White, S. Yurgel

Guests: Quenta Adams (Director, Student Academic Success), Susan Brousseau (Secretary of Senate), Leanne French-Munn (Assistant Vice-Provost, Planning and Strategy), Matthew Hebb (Assistant Vice-President, Government Relations & Economic Development), John Hope (Legal Counsel), Judy MacDonald (Director, School of Social Work), Claire Mercer (Student Minute Taker), Judith Ng'ethe (Associate Secretary of Senate), Suzanne Sheffield (Executive Director (Acting), Centre for Learning and Teaching), Nakita Strowbridge (Senate Coordinator), Jasmine Walsh (Assistant Vice-President, Human Resources)

The Dalhousie University Senate acknowledges that this meeting is taking place in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People.

1. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was **adopted** as presented.

2. Consent Agenda

2.1. Approval of Draft Minutes of January 10, 2022 Senate Meeting

Approved by **CONSENT**.

2.2. Extension of Proposed Waiver for Missed or Late Academic Requirements due to Student Absence to Eliminate the Need for the Production of Sick Notes by Students

THAT Senate waive, for the 2022 winter term and the 2022 summer term, the requirement for a medical certificate to verify a student's absence due to illness.

Approved by **CONSENT**.

3. Matters Arising from January 24, 2022 Senate Meeting

There were no matters arising.

4. Steps to Make Diversity and Inclusion a Reality

Senator Rau-Chaplin (in his capacity as Dean of the Faculty of Computer Science) gave a presentation entitled *We Are All CS - Steps to Make Diversity and Inclusion a Reality in the Faculty of Computer Science*.

Senator Rau-Chaplin outlined the importance of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in technology, noting that software played a pivotal role in all aspects of 21st century life. As software technology was not neutral, it was important that computer scientists reflected the diversity of society. Senator Rau-Chaplin noted that this was not the case currently.

Senator Rau-Chaplin noted that the Faculty of Computer Science at Dalhousie played a crucial role in the growth of Nova Scotia's technology sector and so EDI principles were critical. Senator Rau-Chaplin spoke to the *We Are All CS Initiative* launched at Dalhousie in 2018 in collaboration with K12 and industry partners, as an integrated diversity initiative. The initiative encompassed a number of areas including curriculum design, outreach, scholarships, designated hires and enhanced co-op experiences. The goals of the initiative were to create a diverse discipline, act as a catalyst for change and double the number of female students entering the first year of the Computer Science program.

5. Reports:

5.1. Chair of Senate's Report

Senator Spiteri highlighted elements of the Chair of Senate's report submitted in writing with the meeting material.

Highlights included an update on the President's COVID-19 Science Advisory Committee, setting out the membership of the committee, in response to a query made at the January 10, 2022 Senate meeting.

Senator Spiteri also drew attention to two documents circulated for Senators' information:

- Concept Paper for New Program – PhD in Management, Faculty of Graduate Studies; and
- Faculty Discipline for October-December, 2021.

5.2. President's Report

In highlighting items on the President's report circulated with the meeting material, Senator Saini acknowledged African Heritage month and noted his appreciation to Black students, faculty and staff members for their contribution to the strength of Dalhousie. Senator Saini noted the impact of the late Wanda Robson, an influential voice in the Canadian civil rights movement and thanked Dalhousie's African Heritage Planning Committee for arranging events scheduled throughout February, to which he invited Senators.

Senator Saini also spoke to an increase in Dalhousie's enrolment numbers, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Senator Saini also acknowledged several of Dalhousie's new global partnerships.

5.3. Questions for Report

Responding to a question regarding the vaccine mandate set to be rolled out by Dalhousie on May 1, 2022 and whether this should be taken into consideration for hiring, including job advertisements and job offers, Senator Harvey confirmed that the vaccine mandate should be included in calls for all applications, including faculty and residence applications. Senator Harvey noted that guidelines were available from the Human Resources Department.

Responding to a further query on the possibility of conducting in-person interviews for faculty positions, Senator Harvey confirmed that following the relaxation in Public Health's COVID-19 pandemic guidelines, Dalhousie would be updating its own guidelines to reflect the changes. The updated guidelines would be communicated to the Dalhousie community.

6. Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (SLTC)

Proposed Amendment of Section D(5) of the Student Feedback on Learning Experiences Policy

Senator Pacurar noted that at the December 13, 2021 Senate meeting, a proposal was received for Section D(5) of the Student Feedback on Learning Experiences Policy, formerly known as the Student Ratings of Instruction Policy and extensively revised in the 2020-21 academic year, to be amended to restore instructor opt-in rather than opt-out. Senator Pacurar reminded Senators that at that Senate meeting, it was agreed that the proposal be referred to the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (SLTC) to consult, research and discuss the proposed amendment and revert to Senate with a recommendation for Senate's consideration.

Senator Pacurar informed the meeting that after considering the proposal and receiving a presentation from the Centre for Learning and Teaching (CLT), it was the recommendation of SLTC that pending review of the student evaluation questions in the Student Learning Experiences Questionnaire (SLEQ), any sharing of data with students on the policy be suspended.

Senator Pacurar advised that this recommendation was based on the following:

- The technical issues associated with the manual process for sharing of quantitative results with students (Section A of the core SLEQ instrument) applied to both the opt-out and opt-in options.
- Irrespective of the option (opt-in or opt-out), the three criteria required for sharing limited the information available to students, unless SLEQ response rates substantially increased.

- Review of the student evaluation questions by the recently formed Student Learning Experience Questionnaire Task Force (an SLTC approved task force) would shortly commence.

Responding to a query, Senator Pacurar noted that the task force's work should be completed by June 2023.

Moved by Senator Pacurar on behalf of the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee:

That Senate approve that pending review of the student evaluation questions by the Student Learning Experience Questionnaire Task Force, any sharing of data with students per the Student Feedback on Learning Experiences Policy be suspended.

The motion **CARRIED**.

7. Dalhousie University Accessibility Plan

Senator Spiteri invited Jasmine Walsh, Leanne French-Munn, Quenta Adams and Judy MacDonald to present Dalhousie University's Accessibility Plan.

J. MacDonald led the presentation by advising the meeting that 30% of Nova Scotians identified with at least one disability and spoke to her personal experiences at Dalhousie as a staff member and, previously, as a student with a disability.

The meeting was informed that the Nova Scotia provincial government had set a goal to have a fully accessible province by 2030. Nova Scotia was the third province to adopt accessibility legislation. It was reported that Dalhousie had begun developing an accessibility plan in August, 2019. Additionally, the Third Century Promise laid out accessibility planning in all five of its pillars. The accessibility plan was in phase four and was ready to be submitted to the province.

Survey data, demonstrating the top five barriers which people with disabilities at Dalhousie often, or always encountered, was also presented. This comprised vehicular access and parking, building entrances and doors, signage and wayfinding, exterior stairs and ramps, and interior stairs and ramps. Further the top priority areas for students, faculty and staff were identified as washrooms, classrooms and auditoriums, and buildings and entrance doors.

It was noted that there was still a significant distance to achieving accessibility. However a strong foundation had been built at Dalhousie. Recommendations would be included in the accessibility plan, regarding teaching, learning and research.

The meeting was informed that a draft of the accessibility plan would be circulated for review and edits. Specific leaders and individuals would be responsible for actioning 81 specific items within the plan.

During the brief question period that followed the presentation, concern was expressed regarding funding access for making buildings accessible. In response, J. Walsh advised that there was some funding expected from the province. It was noted that Dalhousie would need to lobby for this funding.

Senator Spiteri, on behalf of the Senate, thanked J. Walsh for her contributions to Dalhousie and wished her best of luck in future endeavours as she moved on from Dalhousie at the end of February, 2022.

8. Question Period

Senator Spiteri opened the floor to further questions.

In response to a query, Senator Pacurar advised that any issues arising from the School of Nursing's recent announcements regarding acute care and long term care placements and changes to the 2022 winter term academic dates would be considered at the upcoming SLTC meeting and recommendations forwarded to Senate for approval, if required.

Senator Spiteri noted that the issue would be properly and appropriately considered by SLTC as part of its mandate and confirmed that the matter may not return to Senate if resolved at the SLTC level.

9. Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.